

Governor Phil Murphy

# First Lady Tammy Murphy Hosts 21st Successful Family Festival in Vineland

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**VINELAND** – First Lady Tammy Murphy today hosted her 21st Nurture NJ Family Festival in Vineland, creating a one-stop-shop for 1,500 attendees to access crucial resources to aid them in growing their families and raising children in the Garden State. The event connected families with information on accessing state, county and local resources spanning from health and child care to housing support and food assistance, among many more supports to help new parents.

“Our Family Festivals have proven to be a powerful tool in connecting New Jerseyans with the resources necessary to help support their growing families,” **said First Lady Tammy Murphy**. “We know that raising children comes with a whole host of challenges and rewards, and we are committed to being there every step of the way through our innovative initiatives to uplift mothers and babies. In a rural county like Cumberland, accessing care can be burdensome. That’s why I am thankful to our dedicated partners for helping to make today a success and for their constant partnership as we all work to make Cumberland County – and all of New Jersey – the safest and most equitable place in the nation to have a baby and raise a family.”

Vineland has a [43 percent](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/map/vinelandcitynewjersey/PST045222) (<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/map/vinelandcitynewjersey/PST045222>), Hispanic and Latino population. New Jersey’s Maternal Mortality Report for the years 2016-2018 showed that Hispanic mothers were three and a half times more likely to die of maternity-related complications than white mothers. According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the mortality rate for Hispanic babies is nearly one and a half times that of white babies. Among all demographics, Cumberland County has the highest infant mortality rate and teen pregnancy rate in the state.

Launched by First Lady Tammy Murphy in 2019, Nurture NJ is a statewide program committed to reducing the maternal and infant mortality crisis in New Jersey and ensuring equitable care among women and infants of all races and ethnicities. Since its inception, Nurture NJ has seen over 60 pieces of maternal and infant health legislation signed by Governor Murphy. The initiative has also developed and implemented groundbreaking programs and policies, such as the first-of-its-kind in the nation Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority (MIHIA), which is tasked with overseeing the groundbreaking New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center based in Trenton, and will be the arm of government that continues the vital work of Nurture NJ past the Murphy Administration.

Under First Lady Murphy’s leadership over the past six years, Nurture NJ has made significant policy achievements including: developing the Nurture NJ Maternal and Infant Health Strategic Plan – of which over half of its more than 80 recommendations have been started or completed; becoming the second state to expand Medicaid coverage to 365 days postpartum; establishing Medicaid reimbursement for doula care; increasing all perinatal Medicaid provider reimbursements to 100 percent of Medicare rates; and launching the most robust-in-the-nation universal nurse home visiting program so that every new parent is visited by a nurse in their home for free within weeks after bringing home a new baby. Through these innovative policies and more, Nurture NJ has positioned New Jersey as a national leader in the fight against the maternal and infant health crisis.

The Vineland Family Festival was hosted in partnership with the Office of First Lady Tammy Murphy, Nurture NJ, Senator Michael Testa, Assemblyman Antwan McClellan, Assemblyman Erik Simonsen, Vineland Mayor Anthony Fanucci, Vineland Public Schools, Vineland Health Department, CompleteCare Health Network, Community Foundation of South Jersey, Family Health Initiatives, Gateway Community Action Partnership, Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of NJ, Inspira Health, The Cooperative, and The Burke Foundation.

“It was truly a privilege to host the First Lady Tammy Murphy’s Family Festival right here in Cumberland County. In these challenging times, this festival served as a beacon of hope and unity, bringing families together from across the region to access invaluable resources all in one place. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the First Lady for orchestrating such an inspiring and impactful event for our kids,” **said Senator Michael Testa**.

“The First Lady’s Nurture NJ initiative is a beacon of hope for maternal and infant health, especially in Cumberland County which has the unfortunate statistic of having the highest mortality rate in the state,” **said Assemblyman Antwan McClellan**. “By raising awareness, providing essential resources, and fostering partnerships with community stakeholders and government entities, we are paving the way for a healthier future for our children and their mothers.”

“The Nurture NJ initiative exemplifies the power of strategic cooperation between local hospital networks and social services agencies. By working together, we are able to address health disparities and ensure that all our residents have access to the care and resources they need. This collaborative approach is essential for improving health outcomes and building a healthier future for our communities,” **said Assemblyman Erik Simonsen**.

“I would like to express my sincere appreciation to First Lady Tammy Murphy, and the many organizations and individuals including the Vineland Health Department, who helped bring the Family Festival to Vineland,” **said Mayor Anthony Fanucci**. “It is critically important that we support families, especially those with young children, by making available information regarding the variety of programs and services available to help them when needed. By doing so, families are stronger, and have a better opportunity to stay healthy, and achieve their individual goals and aspirations.”

"We are thrilled to be part of the Vineland Family Festival. It's heartwarming to see our community come together to provide families with easy access to valuable resources. This event is a fantastic opportunity for everyone involved, and we're proud to have been part of an effort that prioritizes the well-being of families in our area," **said Mr. Alfonso Q. Llano, Vineland Public Schools' Superintendent.**

"The Family Festival was such a great opportunity to bring county resources together with the families of our youngest and most vulnerable population, our children. Gateway was pleased to be part of an event designed to improve the quality of life and promote self-sufficiency," **said Bonnie Eggenburg, Head Start Vice President, Gateway Community Action Partnership.**

"It has been an honor to host the First Lady here in Vineland. This event fostered connections and created lasting memories," **said Meghan Spinelli, Vice President of Community Services & Infection Control Prevention, CompleteCare Health Network.**

"The Burke Foundation is proud to support the First Lady's Nurture NJ Family Festivals," **said Atiya Weiss, Executive Director of The Burke Foundation.** "We're committed to improving maternal and child health in New Jersey by investing \$15 million over the next five years in programs that will improve families' health and well-being, and these festivals bring together so many of the community resources families need to thrive. It truly takes a village to raise a child, and we're honored to be part of that village by supporting today's community celebration in Vineland."

"A thriving South Jersey isn't possible if it isn't a safe, equitable place to birth and raise our next generation of neighbors," **said Andy Fraizer, Executive Director of the Community Foundation of South Jersey.** "We appreciated the opportunity to partner with Nurture NJ in bringing together so many of the great nonprofit and community partners who support our South Jersey families every day."

"We are heartened and humbled to join First Lady Tammy Murphy at her Vineland Family Festival. Through the Nurture NJ Strategic Plan, Mrs. Murphy has been a steadfast leader and tireless advocate of maternal-child health reform in New Jersey," **said Helen Hannigan, President & CEO of The Cooperative and Family Health Initiatives.** "The Cooperative has made meaningful investments in Cumberland County as we work to improve health outcomes in the community. New and notable – our Family Connects NJ program, which offers home visits by specially trained nurses to check the health of mom and baby, screen for potential complications, answer questions and address any unexpected changes the family may be experiencing during the first two weeks after delivery."

"Inspira Health is committed to creating greater access to vitally important health care and services to mothers, babies, parents and families in underserved areas like Cumberland and Salem Counties. It takes a collaborative effort to help make life a little easier for our South Jersey residents. We applaud First Lady Tammy Murphy in her tireless work and leadership in this area and especially for bringing these essential resources to our region at the Vineland Family Festival," **said Amy Mansue, President and CEO of Inspira Health.**

"Improving maternal and infant health is central to creating a healthier New Jersey and that is what the Family Festivals are all about. Everyone deserves access to affordable healthcare no matter who they are or where they live and we are grateful for the opportunity to continue our partnership with the Governor and First Lady. As New Jersey's health solutions leader, Horizon is meeting our neighbors where they live and helping them achieve their best health through partnerships like this one," **said Wendy Morriarty, VP and Chief Medicaid Officer, Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of NJ.**

## Governor Phil Murphy

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