

## Governor Phil Murphy

# First Lady Tammy Murphy Hosts 24th Nurture NJ Family Festival in Camden

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*Family Festival Event Series has Served More Than 16,850 Families Over Seven Years and 11 Counties*

**Camden** – First Lady Tammy Murphy today hosted her 24th Nurture NJ Family Festival at Cooper’s Poynt Waterfront Park in Camden. Over the past seven years, the Family Festival event series has targeted New Jersey cities that experience the highest rates of infant mortality in the state, seeking to connect families with critical services at the state, county, and local levels. Since 2018, these festivals have provided resources to more than 16,850 families across New Jersey – offering support for expectant and new moms, housing support, food assistance, aid accessing health care and child care and more.

As part of her statewide Nurture NJ campaign, First Lady Tammy Murphy previously brought her Family Festival series to Camden in 2019, hosting the third-ever Family Festival at Octavius V. Catto Family School. Camden is an incredibly diverse community, with 52% of its residents identifying as Hispanic or Latino and 42% identifying as Black. Of the cities with the highest rates of infant mortality between 2018-2022, Camden ranks second with 10.5 infant deaths per 1,000 live births.

“Over the past seven years, our Family Festivals have served as one-stop shops for thousands of families – including new and expecting parents – to access crucial services. With the help of our many dedicated partners, I am thrilled to bring this resource back to the Camden community,” **said First Lady Tammy Murphy**. “Elevating the quality of maternal and infant health care for all mothers and babies in New Jersey requires a multi-faceted approach, and these festivals have been an integral part of our strategy. We have made tremendous progress over the past seven years and have put a plan in motion through our Maternal and Infant Health Authority to continue our mission – to make New Jersey the safest, most equitable place in the nation to deliver and raise a baby – long after the end of the Murphy Administration.”

Launched by First Lady Tammy Murphy in 2019, Nurture NJ is a statewide program committed to reducing the maternal mortality rates in New Jersey and ensuring equitable care among women and children. In January 2021, the First Lady unveiled the Nurture NJ Maternal and Infant Health Strategic Plan, a blueprint to make New Jersey the safest, most equitable state in the nation to deliver and raise a baby.

Since Nurture NJ’s inception, New Jersey has made significant progress in maternal and infant health care and outcomes including: seeing over 70 pieces of maternal and infant health legislation signed by Governor Murphy; starting or completing over half of the Nurture NJ Strategic Plan recommendations; establishing the Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority, tasked with overseeing the New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center based in Trenton, [which broke ground in July 2025 \(https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562025/approved/20250722a.shtml\)](https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562025/approved/20250722a.shtml),

and serving as the arm of government that continues the vital work of Nurture NJ past the Murphy Administration; and launching Family Connects NJ, the most robust-in-the-nation universal nurse home visitation program to ensure that every new parent is visited by a nurse in their home for free within two weeks after bringing home a new baby. Through these groundbreaking policies and programs, New Jersey has become a national leader in the fight against the maternal and infant health crisis.

The Camden Family Festival was hosted by Nurture NJ, the First Lady's statewide maternal and infant health initiative, in partnership with U.S. Congressman Donald Norcross, Senator Nilsa Cruz-Perez, Assemblyman William Moen, Assemblyman William Spearman, Camden County, City of Camden, Be Inc Collective, CAMcare, Camden Coalition, Camden Community Partnership Camden School District, Center for Family Services, Community Doulas of South Jersey, Cooper University Health Care, Healthy Families and Communities, Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of NJ, New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority, Osborn Family Health Center, Rowan-Rutgers Joint Board of Governors, The Burke Foundation, The Cooperative, and Virtua Health.

"Every family should be able to get the care and support they need and that starts with meeting people where they are," **said Congressman Donald Norcross**. "The Camden Family Festival gives families a chance to learn about services, ask questions, and have some fun at the same time. I'm thankful to First Lady Tammy Murphy and all our local partners for helping support South Jersey families."

"I am thankful to First Lady Tammy Murphy and the Murphy Administration for making the Camden Family Festival a reality, an event that brought the community together and connected families to energy, food, and healthcare assistance programs, pediatric providers, and more," **said Senator Nilsa Cruz-Perez**. "Camden's historic progress on public safety and direct investments into our communities and families has been a monumental achievement, but that work must be continued. Events like this are an important part of ensuring that Camden's families have access to the resources they need to thrive, feel connected to their community and neighbors, as well as to keep the City of Camden on its path of progress."

"It is a pleasure to welcome the Family Festival back to Camden City," **said Assemblyman William F. Moen, Jr.** "The Festival is a special opportunity to connect our families with a variety of health and wellness resources. I thank First Lady Tammy Murphy and Nurture NJ for bringing together local, state, and federal services to support our Camden community."

"The Camden Family Festival is about making families feel seen, supported, and cared for," **said Assemblyman William Spearman**. "By working together to provide resources directly in the community, we are helping families thrive today and for generations to come."

"I want to applaud the First Lady for not only bringing these resources directly to the residents of Camden City and Camden County, but also recognizing the need for many of our residents who may not be able to access them during the regular work week," **said Camden County Commissioner and Rowan University/Rutgers-Camden Board of Governors CEO Jeffrey Nash**. "Ensuring and facilitating a one-stop shop in one of the most popular park venues in the city is a perfect way to match clients and families up with providers in a wonderful third place outside of their work and school."

"We are pleased to be working alongside First Lady Tammy Murphy as we provide essential services through the Camden Family Festival," **said Camden Mayor Victor G. Carstarphen**. "The City of Camden is making tremendous progress as a result of collaboration and strong partnerships. The Camden Family Festival is another example of coming together to support our families and care for the needs of our residents. I am grateful to all the partners who

have helped make these free resources available and lift up the Camden community.”

“Be Inc Collective stands with First Lady Murphy in her commitment to helping ALL NJ families thrive. Maternal health is a key factor in assuring the health of the entire family unit. When we heal, we impact our children, families and communities. Every family deserves access to all the resources necessary to access healing pathways that support their overall health & well-being,” **said Siomara Wedderburn, CEO, Be Inc Collective.**

“CAMcare Health is honored to be included in the First Lady's Camden Family Festival. We look forward to working with our community partners to provide healthcare resources that help people live better,” **said Duane D. Myers, President and CEO of CAMcare Health.**

“The Camden community welcomes the opportunity to host the Camden Family Festival and connect hundreds of families with important resources right where they live,” **said Kathleen Noonan, CEO of the Camden Coalition.** “These gatherings go beyond fun, they are lifelines, bringing care, information, and support directly into our community. We stand with the Nurture NJ team and our local partners in ensuring every parent and caregiver in Camden feels seen, supported, and empowered to help their families thrive.”

“Camden Community Partnership is honored to welcome and partner with First Lady Tammy Murphy and the Nurture NJ initiative to our city,” **said Dana L. Redd, President & CEO of Camden Community Partnership.** “This event reflects the power of collaboration in addressing critical issues like maternal and infant health. Camden is a city of resilience and hope, and events like this reinforce what’s possible when we come together to care for one another and invest in the wellbeing of every child and parent. We are proud to stand with partners across the state to help create a healthier, more equitable future for every mother, baby, and family in Camden.”

“We are grateful to First Lady Tammy Murphy and all the partners who are bringing the Camden Family Festival to our community. Events like this give our families the chance to come together, enjoy themselves, and connect with resources that can make a real difference,” **said Acting State District Superintendent Dr. Davida Coe-Brockington.**

“An event like the Nurture NJ Family Festival in Camden is a great convening of partners and resources for parents and children in the community,” **said Merilee Rutolo, President & Chief Strategy Officer for Center For Family Services.** “Having the opportunity to engage with residents is a wonderful way to connect and create a dialogue around what they need to be successful in their lives.”

“Community Doulas of South Jersey is excited to once again participate in the Camden Family Festival right here in our hometown, Camden, NJ. This festival is about celebrating the amazing maternal health partners, programs, and resources that are making a difference in our community and across the state,” **said Ronsha A. Dickerson, Doula, Co-Founder, and Director-Community Doulas of South Jersey.** “We thank Mrs. Murphy and her team for uplifting community doulas and helping to grow a strong, supportive workforce in New Jersey. Together, we continue to show families the powerful social, emotional, racial, economic, and personal impact that having a doula can bring to their care and their journey.”

“We appreciate First Lady Tammy Murphy for her commitment to reducing maternal mortality rates and for bringing the Nurture New Jersey Family Festival to support the mothers, and expectant mothers, in the City of Camden,” **said George E. Norcross, III, Chairman of Cooper University Health Care.** “As the leading academic health system in the region, Cooper’s maternity specialists are committed to the First Lady’s goal of reducing maternal mortality rates, providing needed services to mothers, and to excellence in maternity care as evidenced by Cooper University Hospital’s ranking among the Best Hospitals for maternity care in the nation by Money Magazine and as a High

Performing Hospital by U.S. News & World Report.”

“The Camden Family Festival is more than a celebration—it’s a powerful reminder of what we can accomplish when we come together as a community. It brings much-needed awareness to the challenges our families face while also shining a light on the incredible work being done every day by local leaders, organizations, and residents,” **said Michel Acevedo-Zmuda, Chief Executive Officer, Healthy Families & Communities.** “At Healthy Families & Communities, we are honored to be part of this event. It reflects our commitment to building stronger families, healthier neighborhoods, and a more connected Camden. Together, we’re creating lasting impact and shaping a brighter future for our city.”

“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.**

“As a proud South Jersey resident, it’s especially meaningful to see the Nurture NJ Family Festival come to Camden—a city full of strength, resilience, and potential,” **said Lisa Asare, President and CEO of the New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority.** “These festivals are more than events—they’re a promise to our communities that equitable, respectful, and culturally responsive care starts at home. Through connection, celebration, and access to vital resources, we are continuing the mission of Nurture NJ through the work done at NJMIHIA and building a healthier future for every mother, baby, and family in our state.”

“We are honored to partner with First Lady Tammy Murphy and Nurture NJ to support the Family Festival in Camden, N.J. Events such as this provide vital services directly to the Community,” **said Sabrina Cannady, President/CEO of Osborn.** “We continue to work closely with our families in our servicing and surrounding area to address disparities that affect the health and well-being of mothers and their babies. What better way to coordinate our efforts with Nurture NJ’s innovative approach as we strive together for healthier outcomes.”

“The Burke Foundation is proud to support the First Lady’s Nurture NJ Family Festivals — joyful, community-centered events that connect parents and children with trusted resources close to home,” **said Atiya Weiss, Executive Director of the Burke Foundation.** “Camden has such a strong spirit of care, and this festival celebrates that by bringing families together with the services and supports they need to thrive. It truly does take a village to raise a child, and we’re honored to support today’s community celebration.”

“We are profoundly grateful for the opportunity to partner with First Lady Tammy Murphy for her final Family Festival in Camden. On a deeper level, we offer our heartfelt appreciation to the First Lady for her staunch commitment to the Nurture NJ initiative over the last 8 years, and applaud the First Lady for her relentless advocacy to elevate the important conversation about New Jersey’s maternal and infant health crisis,” **said Helen Hannigan, President & CEO of The Cooperative, one of the partner agencies for the First Lady’s Camden Family Festival.** “It has been our honor to stand with the First Lady - igniting and implementing meaningful change to inspire healthier, stronger futures for the residents of Camden and families across New Jersey.”

“Virtua Health is proud to join First Lady Tammy Murphy and all our government and community partners to meet

families where they are and ensure that every resident of Camden has the resources and support they need to thrive,” **said Dennis W. Pullin, FACHE, president and CEO, Virtua Health.** “This Family Festival is a powerful reminder of what is possible when we come together in shared purpose to lift up communities and be Here for Good.”

## Governor Phil Murphy

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