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Governor Phil Murphy

First Lady Tammy Murphy Hosts Family Festival in Jersey City to Fight New Jersey's Maternal and Infant Health Crisis

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JERSEY CITY– On Saturday, January 11, First Lady Tammy Murphy hosted 2,100 mothers, fathers, grandparents, and others involved in taking care of a child at her sixth Family Festival in Jersey City. As part of Nurture NJ, her statewide awareness campaign to combat the maternal and infant health crisis in New Jersey, the First Lady developed the Family Festival event series in cities with high rates of maternal and infant mortality. The Family Festivals create a one-stop shop for state, county, and local resources.

“Family Festivals are a wonderful opportunity for caregivers to meet with state, county, and community partners,” **said First Lady Tammy Murphy**. “By providing support for our mothers and babies across a range of economic and social factors, we can begin to eliminate the racial inequities in our health care systems. Together, we will reach our goal of making New Jersey the safest place in the nation to give birth.”

The Jersey City Family Festival, which is funded by The Nicholson Foundation, is hosted in collaboration with the Office of Mayor Steven Fulop, York Street Project, New Jersey City University, and Jersey City public schools, and featured over 100 participating community organizations. Attendees had access to prenatal care and midwives, eye exams, pediatric services, mental health and addiction services, energy assistance programs, child care centers, food and housing assistance programs, and more. There were also performances from local artists, raffle prizes, face painting, balloon animals, free food, and more.

Black women in New Jersey are five times more likely than white women to die from childbirth-related complications, and New Jersey's urban centers like Atlantic City, Newark, Trenton, Camden, and Paterson have the worst outcomes. The Jersey City Family Festival is the sixth in the series, with previous festivals held in Atlantic City, Paterson, Trenton, Camden, and Newark. The previous five festivals helped over 3,450 families meet and interact with over 475 providers to learn more about state, county, and local programs and services.

Nurture NJ is committed to reducing infant and maternal mortality and morbidity and ensuring equitable maternal and infant care among women and children of all races and ethnicities. The campaign, which is devoted to serving every mother, every baby, and every family, includes a multi-pronged, multi-agency approach to improve maternal and infant health among New Jersey women and children. Nurture NJ includes internal collaboration between departments and agencies; an annual Black Maternal and Infant Health Leadership Summit; the First Lady's Family Festival event series; and a robust social media strategy to inform and raise awareness.

“It is wonderful to have the First Lady's Family Festival here in Jersey City. The racial and socioeconomic disparities we see in maternal mortality rates are deeply disturbing and we must do all that we can to address them,” **said Senator Cunningham**. “As we work on the issue in the legislature, I am grateful the First Lady has chosen to champion this cause and do all that she can to connect the people of New Jersey with existing programs and services.”



"I thank First Lady Tammy Murphy for coming to the Jersey City to host her fifth Family Festival to combat New Jersey's maternal and infant health crisis by raising awareness. By supporting mothers through their pregnancy and after giving birth, we strengthen families. That is the reason why the Assembly introduced 14 measures improving maternal healthcare-- to ensure better outcomes for mothers, babies and their families as a whole," **said Assemblywoman Angela McKnight.**

"Reducing the excessive rates of mothers' and babies' deaths in New Jersey requires a multi-pronged approach to improving our maternal healthcare system. Ensuring families are supported in the way they should be supported during pregnancies will create stronger families and safer childbirths in the state," **said Assemblyman Nicholas Chiaravalloti.**

"I applaud First Lady Tammy Murphy for creating the Family Festival event series to raise awareness about the high rates of maternal and infant mortality in cities like Jersey City. Childbirth is about life and we must make every effort to preserve the joy of life and motherhood for all New Jersey families. We accomplish this by supporting families and raising awareness of the importance of prenatal and postnatal healthcare for New Jersey moms through events like this one," **said Assemblywoman Annette Chaparro.**

"We have worked to increase accessibility to a variety of critical services in order to help some of our most vulnerable residents, and this Family Festival is a great way to help further our outreach efforts," **said Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop.** "Our collaborative goal is to help residents stay healthy and achieve the best quality of life possible - from our new Healthy Corner Store initiative and food assistance programs to the free prenatal care and free children's immunizations provided by our Health Department - we strive to not only offer these types of valuable services, but also to make sure everyone is aware of the resources available."

"The Nicholson Foundation is proud to partner with the office of the First Lady in hosting the Family Festival in Jersey City," **said Arturo Brito, Executive Director of The Nicholson Foundation.** "By helping to connect families to health and social services, we're working to reduce disparities and build stronger, healthier communities."

"We are delighted to be part of such a critical community outreach event that benefits both local families and the state of New Jersey overall," **said NJCU President Sue Henderson.**

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