

## Governor Phil Murphy

# First Lady Tammy Murphy's Nurture NJ Family Festival Serves Over 1,500 People in Passaic

01/29/2024

*Passaic Family Festival Was the 19th in a Series of Nurture NJ Family Festivals that have Been Held Across the State*

**PASSAIC** – First Lady Tammy Murphy marked her 19th successful Nurture NJ Family Festival at the Dayton Ave Educational Campus in Passaic on Saturday, January 27. Like others before it, the Passaic Family Festival served as a one-stop-shop for state, county, and local care, support, and resources. Over 1,500 people in the area were able to connect with more than 45 organizations that provide a wide variety of services for expectant and new moms and families, including health care, housing support, food assistance, child care, COVID vaccines, New Jersey Motor Vehicles Commission services, and more.

"I am thrilled with the momentum we are building to support New Jersey's mothers and babies, as evidenced by the incredible turnout in Passaic, and I am grateful to our many partners who made this event a huge success," **said First Lady Tammy Murphy**. "These festivals enable our Nurture NJ community of partners to reach mothers, babies, and families directly and connect them with essential services. I look forward to continuing to host these festivals across our state and ensuring every New Jersey family has the support they need to thrive."

Passaic is home to an estimated 37,000 undocumented immigrants and has a 74 percent 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, and according to data from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, the mortality rate for Hispanic babies is nearly one and a half times that of white babies.

Launched by First Lady Tammy Murphy in 2019, Nurture NJ is a statewide program committed to reducing the maternal and infant mortality epidemic in New Jersey and ensuring equitable care among women and children 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, including the doula access bill signed earlier this month. The initiative has also developed and implemented groundbreaking programs and policies, such as New Jersey's universal home visitation program, Family Connects NJ, which launched this month in five NJ counties. 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 Passaic Family Festival was hosted by the First Lady's Nurture NJ initiative in partnership with The Burke Foundation, Assemblyman Gary Schaer, Mayor Hector Lora, Passaic Public Schools, United Passaic Organization, and Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of NJ.

"The Burke Foundation is proud to support the First Lady's Family Festivals – an important part of the Nurture NJ initiative. We've heard from many young and expecting families how hard it can be to find and connect with the resources they need. The festivals are a great solution, bringing all of these resources together for families in the communities where they live," **says 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. It truly does take a village to raise a child, and we're honored to be

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part of that village by supporting the community celebration in Passaic."

"The Assembly has passed numerous bills to elevate the standard of care for pregnant women, new moms, and their babies, while reducing racial disparities in maternal and infant mortality," **said Assemblyman Gary S. Schaer.** "Saturday's Nurture NJ Family Festival provided parents and parents-to-be with essential resources for starting and growing their families, and I'm proud to have been a partner in this important event."

"Our First Lady of the State of NJ has dedicated her time and State resources here at the Passaic Family Festival to connecting families and children with essential programs offered around New Jersey," **said City of Passaic Mayor Hector C. Lora.** "In communities like ours, one of the biggest challenges is not only the availability of resources, but also effectively connecting them to those in need. We want to thank our First Lady for this remarkable initiative in bringing our community together here at the Dayton Avenue School Complex in Passaic, NJ."

"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.**

"Passaic Public Schools celebrates the resounding success of the First Lady's Family Festival, a transformative event that provided our community with access to over 60 empowering resources. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the First Lady's office for the invaluable partnership that made this event possible," **said Dr. Sandra Montanez-Diodonet, Superintendent, Passaic Public Schools.**

"The Passaic Family Festival was an extraordinary event! Community partners far and near came together to promote and provide accessible support services to a great number of families in our community! Families left the Passaic Family Festival well informed about the sustainable resources available to them for a better quality of life," **said Dr. Janelle Hall, Chief Executive Officer, United Passaic Organization.**

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