



## HONORABLE MENTIONS

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### Footprints Fort Wayne Works to Reduce Infant Mortality

When: April 10, 2019

A new organization wants to make sure every baby gets to celebrate their first birthday. Footprints Fort Wayne, a joint effort of more than a dozen area entities, launched today with a goal of lowering Allen County's infant mortality rate, which consistently ranks higher than state and national rates.

The infant mortality rate, considered a key indicator of overall community health, is the number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births. Allen County's rate for 2017 was 7.3, well above

the national rate of 5.8.

"Pregnant women and their infants are among the most vulnerable populations locally, and their health impacts the future of our whole community. Footprints Fort Wayne provides important resources to some of the most at-risk pregnant women, and we are honored to work alongside other organizations in promoting these community health services," said Meg Distler, executive director of the St. Joseph Community Foundation.

According to Footprints Fort

Wayne's first annual report, the primary cause of infant death in Allen County is premature birth. Unsafe sleep is also a contributing factor. More troubling is the racial disparity; African American families are more than twice as likely to experience the loss of a baby.

With that knowledge in mind, Footprints Fort Wayne's three primary focus areas are encouraging safe sleep practices, promoting early and regular prenatal care, and eliminating the racial disparity associated with this issue.

"This is bigger than one person or organization. We all need to come together, be on the same page and deliver the same messages to the community. Because it doesn't have to be this way. Parents, or really anyone who cares for infants, need to know there are simple things they can do to prevent infant mortality," said Phyllis Bragg, president of the Fort Wayne chapter of Chi Eta Phi, a national organization of African American nurses. She stressed the importance of not smoking during pregnancy, providing

education and support for breastfeeding, and teaching the ABCs of safe sleep - infants should always sleep Alone, on their Back and in a Crib.

Footprints Fort Wayne's organizers started meeting in the fall of 2017, when they studied similar initiatives in other cities. Adopting the successful model of Cradle Cincinnati, a core team spent 2018 assessing data, collecting community input and deciding how they could make the biggest impact.

### Illumination Ceremony for Sarcoidosis Awareness Month

When: April 13, 2019

On Saturday evening, the lights at the MLK Bridge turned purple to signify Sarcoidosis Awareness Month; the lights at the Ashe Center and the Ashe Plaza were also lit purple for the worldwide event "Lighting Up the City." Regina Gordon, one of two Foundation for Sarcoidosis Research ambassadors in Indiana, read a statement, including a poem she wrote about her disease. (Gordon was profiled in Issue 7 of the FWIS.) Bea Williams-Tevis, Gordon's mother, read a proclamation from the mayor before the bridge's lights turned on purple. The assembled included members of Gordon's Fort Wayne Sarcoidosis support group.



Bea Williams-Tevis, reading proclamation  
Regina Gordon



### Black Business Showcase Convention

When: April 14, 2019



Elegant Arrangements By Sharon For All, Co-CEO Nina Caldwell (left) with CEO Sharon Hopkins (right)



At the Blackout Academy booth  
The nonprofit collective Bigger Than Us (BTU), Inc.

As reported in Issue 7 of the FWIS, the Black Business Showcase Convention was held at the Turnstone Center, a couple blocks from Glenbrook Mall. Presented by Tunnel Vision Entertainment, over 100 black-owned businesses

and nonprofit groups were on hand, given free vendor booths from an event sponsorship from Pizza Hut.

