

Better Worlds Start with Great Mothers

By pairing at-risk, first-time moms with a personal nurse, this Denver-based national nonprofit is changing the future for the country's most vulnerable babies.

Nurse-Family Partnership® (NFP) COO Benilda “Benny” Samuels recently spent time reflecting on what life was like 17 years ago when she was a new mother. “I was lost and so alone,” says the Panama native, who moved to Denver for college and 10 years later found herself divorced shortly after her son’s birth. “We were homeless for 30 days, my son was born on Medicaid, and we were both on WIC. Dreaming big wasn’t possible because of the immediate needs of our lives.”

With the support of a strong community and family, Samuels dug herself out of that hole long ago. As an administrator at the Denver Health Family Planning Project, she helped reduce unintended pregnancies in Colorado by 40 percent. At the Denver Department of Human Services, she helped increase the number of foster parents and improved access to childcare assistance for needy families. Today, she’s NFP’s new COO and has one ambitious goal: to serve 100,000 new mothers in the next four years, effectively doubling the number of first-time moms NFP reaches.

“The mothers we serve at NFP experience what I did tenfold, so for me this work is very personal,” says Samuels, who sent her son off to his second year of college in August. “With the right resources, people, and support, our clients can break the cycle.”

The Best Way to Reach High-Risk Moms

Headquartered in Denver, Nurse-Family Partnership works in partnership with community-based organizations in 42 states, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and many tribal communities. In Colorado alone, NFP serves families in every county through Invest in Kids, a Denver-based nonprofit. The founder of Nurse-Family Partnership, Dr. David Olds, continues his research at the University of Colorado.

Nationwide, Nurse-Family Partnership is free and voluntary. The program begins when a woman finds herself pregnant for the first time and ends when her child turns two. “We try to serve the highest-risk mothers, those experiencing homelessness or battling substance abuse or mental health issues,” Samuels notes. “What makes the program

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Benilda “Benny” Samuels, COO



Mahogany, shown with her son Josiah, enrolled in Nurse-Family Partnership to always have a nurse in her corner, helping her be the best mom she can be.

so successful is that NFP employs nurses with the skills needed by the high-risk clients we seek to serve.”

NFP nurses provide medical advice, answer questions, and serve as emotional support for young families—think everything from nutrition and pregnancy advice to breastfeeding support, smoking cessation, and the monitoring of both mother’s and baby’s overall health. Eventually, says Samuels, “mom and nurse build trust with each other and develop a strong bond; that is the basis for the magic that happens in those two years they are working together.”



Outcomes Prove Success

More than 40 years of research has shown that Nurse-Family Partnership improves maternal health and birth outcomes, increases school readiness, helps prevent child abuse, and reduces childhood injuries and juvenile crime. In other words, says Samuels, “our mothers and nurses completely disrupt what is supposed to happen based on the mother’s personal history.”

Be a Force for Good and donate—your gift helps us serve more families. Visit givetonfp.org to make a lasting impact.

Refer a woman in need, pregnant with her first child, to Nurse-Family Partnership. Visit nfpmoms.org to see if she qualifies for this free program.



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