

WINTER 2020 EDITION

# NEWSLINK

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**BLACK NURSES  
MAKING HISTORY:  
THEN AND NOW**

 Nurse-Family  
Partnership  
*Helping First-Time Parents Succeed*®

# BLACK NURSES MAKING HISTORY: THEN AND NOW



Poor conditions have always called for change-makers rich in tenacity. The mid-to-late 1970s brought us both the official recognition of Black History Month and the birth of Nurse-Family Partnership. This time called for collective transformation through action.

Black Americans accomplished incredible feats despite 400 years of hate and discrimination. Extraordinary and everyday people transformed our world for the better. February became the month to honor, recognize and learn more about these change-makers.

They were and are—

Inventors. Educators. Legislators. Advocates. Entrepreneurs. Creatives. Nurses—all who tenaciously challenged racism, discrimination and hate.

We especially recognize and celebrate the invaluable contributions black nurses have made in the medical field.

We honor nurses like Hazel Johnson Brown, Jessie Sleet Scales, Mabel Keaton Staupers, Lilian Holland Harvey and Sojourner Truth. These brave nurses fought for racial equity in the military, academia, hospitals, Congress and society.

In their legacy of action, we commit to continue our mission and advocate for improved maternal health outcomes.

Just like NFP nurse Sherly from Multnomah County in Oregon, we are very concerned by the high rate of maternal mortality and morbidity affecting black mothers in the U.S.

Like her—and many other nurses in our network—we commit to mitigate the injustices of health inequity one first-time mother at a time.

“I want change,” Nurse Sherly said. “I want my daughter to not become a statistic like so many other black women in this country.”

We acknowledge that implicit bias and racism exists in accessing health care. These are significant contributors to the disparities that black women face in health care outcomes.

The brave fore-nurses mentioned taught us the power in naming the issues head on and facing the poor conditions impacting our communities.

We are proud to join the individuals and organizations who have worked to end these health inequities.

And we will continue to urgently take action to help reduce pregnancy-related deaths. Not just during Black History Month but for years to come.

Together, with tenacity, we can transform the lives of first-time parents and their children while living the legacy of these change-makers that came before us.

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH ORIGINS

Black History Month started as a History Week on Feb. 7, 1926 by Carter G. Woodson, a historian, author and journalist. February was the month chosen in honor of Fredrick Douglass’ birthday. He believed younger generations needed to know the past to mold the future.

***“Those who have no record of what their forebears have accomplished lose the inspiration which comes from the teaching of biography and history.”***



# WHY AN NFP NURSE?

**WATCH ONLINE TODAY**

A **Yahoo News Documentary** on **Motherhood & Poverty in the U.S.**

## BABY BRAIN

Featuring nurses & moms from Nurse-Family Partnership at Gift Of Life in Montgomery, Alabama.



At Nurse-Family Partnership we are often asked, 'why an NFP nurse?' We know NFP nurses are crucial to the success of first-time moms living in poverty. Our highly trained and specially educated nurses form trusting relationships with moms to help ease them through the emotional, social and physical challenges of becoming parents.

Our nurses are our secret sauce. They are part of a larger field of nurses who have been rated as the most honest and ethical professionals in the U.S. for the 18th year in a row. This is why NFP nurses are the best professionals equipped to support first-time moms, helping them break cycles of poverty and transform their children's lives.

The Yahoo News Documentary "Baby Brain" helps explain **this is why an NFP nurse**. The documentary captures the crucial combination of brain development, support of a trusted individual and the value of LOVE.

***"In a sense, it comes down to love," Stephanie Sy, documentary correspondent, said.***

***"Providing love may counter the toxic effects of poverty-related stress, a surprisingly low-tech way to address what advanced brain science has revealed."***

In "Baby Brain," Stephanie introduces us to Lori Rogers, an NFP nurse at Gift of Life in Montgomery, AL and two of the moms she works with.

"The film shows how toxic stress is a problem that is affecting moms and babies throughout the nation," Lori shares. "I hope it sparks meaningful conversations in our community on how we can improve prenatal care for moms living in poverty and the need to support home visiting programs like NFP."

Right now in Alabama, one in four children live in poverty. One idea is becoming more apparent as researchers continue their work to understand how stress affects children—everything begins in the womb. Data shows that toxic stress has long-term effects on children and may begin during pregnancy. NFP nurses are there through crucial moments

during and after pregnancy to support moms who are dealing with those toxic stressors.

The film also spotlights NFP moms Latreta and Breanna who share the realities of their health, financial and parenting struggles. They share what it's meant to have a supportive relationship with their NFP nurse Lori.

Latreta's first two pregnancies ended because of preeclampsia. Today, she's raising a healthy toddler. When Lori first met Latreta all she had in her apartment was a mattress. So, when Latreta got a second job she couldn't wait to tell Lori. Latreta plans to go to school to become a nursing assistant.

In a similar way, Lori brought Breanna and her daughter support, love and consistency to their lives.

***"It wasn't even just she was here as a nurse, she was here like a mom, like a second mom. So everything she ever told me, everything she ever gave ... even a little care, made me feel like I was loved by many," Breanna said.***

"Baby Brain," highlights research from Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child

that shows the effects of poverty and toxic stress on pregnant women and fetal brain development. Stephanie discusses the findings from studying resilience in the face of poverty with Jack Shonkoff, a professor of pediatrics at Harvard University and director of Harvard's Center on the Developing Child.

Dr. Shonkoff said research shows that the most important predictor of good outcomes in the face of adversity, ***"is the presence of at least one reliable, responsive, protective relationship with an important person."***

This new science shows that with the right support at the right time first-time moms can change the trajectory of their babies' brains for the better. This is the fundamental answer to 'why an NFP nurse.' For many first-time moms, their NFP nurse is that one protective and supportive relationship in their lives.

Watch the film and start a conversation about "why an NFP nurse." Help end maternal poverty and change children's brain trajectory for the better.

**WATCH BABY BRAIN**

From Baby Brain - A [Yahoo News Documentary](#) on Motherhood & Poverty in the U.S.



Honestly,  
I wouldn't have...  
made it if it wasn't  
for nurse Lori.

-Latreta, NFP Mom

# 2020 PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

**Expand Public Funding  
Improve Medicaid Coverage  
Address Maternal Mortality  
Promote Policies that Work**

Nurse-Family Partnership is not just a community health program, we advocate on behalf of NFP families as well as the nurses, local agencies and communities that rally to their cause. Nurse-Family Partnership catalyzes support at the federal, state and local levels for funding and policies that sustain and enhance this important work. We are proud to advocate for public policies at all levels of government that support healthy moms and babies.

You can help shape NFP's advocacy!

As we work to educate elected officials and the general public about the amazing work being accomplished on the ground, we want to learn more about our greatest asset in this process - YOU. We will soon be conducting an online survey of our advocates to properly gauge our strengths and enable us to effectively plan for future public policy discussions. Some questions in this survey will ask if you know certain elected officials while other questions ask about your views and ideas related to the public policy and budget processes.

As a valued member of our community, your participation in this survey and the honest feedback you provide will be important to this work.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Policy & Government Affairs team at [pga@nursefamilypartnership.org](mailto:pga@nursefamilypartnership.org). Thank you in advance for your participation and support!

**YOU CAN HELP  
SHAPE OUR ADVOCACY**

**Tell Us What is Important to You**

Check out our full 2020 National Public Policy Priorities and 2020 Federal Legislative Agenda.

# DECADE IN REVIEW



**A DECADE IN  
THE HEADLINES**

**2010-2019**

# THE IMPACT OF SUPPORT



**From the very beginning, Yodelis had high expectations for Nathan – and herself.**

She was 16 when she got pregnant and she admits she was embarrassed and confused. “I wasn’t sure what I was going to do and whether to go through with it,” Yodelis said. “It’s a big decision that you have to make at a fast pace.”

She was living with her mom at the time and was the youngest in the family. “I was feeling scared,” she said. “I had no idea how to be a mom.”

A provider at the Exodus Women’s Center near her home suggested she contact Nurse-Family Partnership through REACHUP, Inc and the Healthy Start Coalition of Hillsborough County, FL. She hit it off immediately with her nurse, Andrea.

“She was the one person in my life I could express everything to with no judgment,” Yodelis said.

Yodelis took on what she had to do with grit and determination, realizing from the start that although their parents were supportive, she and her boyfriend would be responsible for their child.

She relied on nurse Andrea for information on how to handle her pregnancy, what to expect in childbirth and how to care for little Nathan when he arrived.

“She said, ‘Just keep calm. Everything is going to be ok,’ ” Yodelis recalled. “I felt so tired sometimes and she told me to just sit in the shower when I was feeling overwhelmed. She told me exactly what to do. It was great.”

Yodelis was working two part-time jobs and going to school. Sometimes, when Andrea would arrive for a home visit, she would hand Nathan to her just so she could eat.

“Andrea became such a good friend,” she said. “She was someone I could call about anything.”

Yodelis left Puerto Rico when she was 9 and her family is bilingual, so it was important for her to teach Nathan both Spanish and English as he learned to talk. Andrea brought activities for Yodelis to use to teach Nathan and now he chatters confidently in both languages.

"We used to live in an apartment on the third floor," Yodelis said, "so every day we would count the 10 stairs of the first floor in English, the second floor in Spanish, so he learned to count in both languages right away. He learned his colors in both languages. Andrea told me this is the perfect age to learn both languages, and she was right."

Yodelis worked hard to complete high school while working and caring for Nathan and managed to earn her diploma a year ahead of her class. Now, she is attending Hillsborough Community College. She is preparing to be a paralegal and ultimately would like to become a criminal lawyer.

She works nights and Nathan stays with his father. Then, she studies during the day while Nathan is in day care and catches sleep when she can.

"At the beginning, it was very hard," Yodelis said, "but at some point, I realized that two years had gone by and I had learned to live with it. I also realized that the happiest moments of my life are with him."

A favorite part of the day for both of them is when Yodelis reads to Nathan each evening and, instead of hanging with her teenaged friends on weekends, she and Nathan spend their time at the zoo or Busch Gardens, two of their favorite places.

"Nathan is growing up," she said. "He's very happy and energetic. He runs around and plays a lot and keeps learning new things."

Without nurse Andrea, Yodelis said she would be "a total mess. I don't want to imagine what life would have been like without her. She was very important to me."

One anecdote reveals just how strong their bond was.

On Thanksgiving in 2018, Yodelis shaved her head. She was undergoing treatment for a thyroid condition and it caused her to lose a lot of her hair, gain weight and struggle with fatigue.

"I remember when I showed nurse Andrea she said, 'I looked amazing and I was rocking it.'"

"Nathan just rubbed my head, said, 'Mommy bold' and started to laugh, and the laughter made it all OK."

Yodelis and Nathan graduated from Nurse-Family Partnership in October when Nathan turned 2 and they still miss Andrea's visits. "We became so close. She supported us in all our decisions."

Yodelis is working hard to complete her degree and has high aspirations. "I love school," she said. "It's very important to me."

Most important, though, is that they continue to become a strong, resilient, happy family.

"I'm hoping for him to just grow up to be a good man," Yodelis said. "That's what's really important."

SHE WAS 16 WHEN SHE GOT PREGNANT AND SHE WAS EMBARRASSED AND CONFUSED. SHE WAS LIVING WITH HER MOM AND WAS THE YOUNGEST IN THE FAMILY. SHE HAD NO IDEA HOW SHE WAS GOING TO BE A MOM.

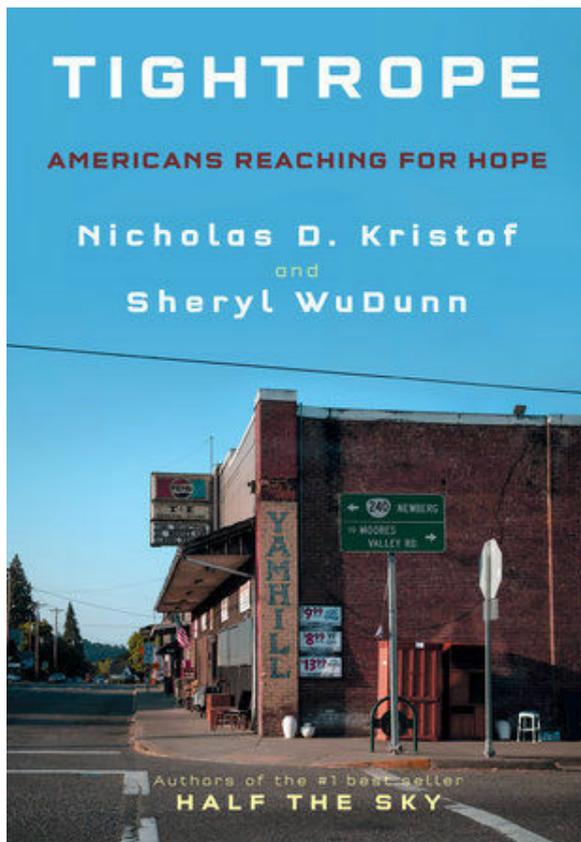
## HBO DOCUMENTARY "FOSTER" NOMINATED FOR BEST DOCUMENTARY SCREENPLAY

FOSTER director Mark Jonathan Harris was nominated for Best Documentary Screenplay by the Writers Guild. FOSTER goes beyond sensational headlines and stereotypes to provide a compelling look into the child protection system by immersing us in the lives of the children, youth, parents and foster parents who experience it, and the professionals who work tirelessly every day in the field.

Right now, there are over 400,000 children and youth in the foster care system in the U.S. It's an issue that affects every community, but remains hidden in plain sight.

**Nurse-Family Partnership was hugely impactful in the life of one of the participants in the film, Jessica Chandler, who shared how vital her NFP nurse Doljai Chaikumnerd was in her life. Doljai is an NFP nurse in Los Angeles, CA.**

## "TIGHTROPE: AMERICANS REACHING FOR HOPE" MAKES NEW YORK BESTSELLER LIST



Pulitzer Prize-winning authors Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn latest book, "Tightrope: Americans Reaching for Hope," recognizes the need for early interventions, like Nurse-Family Partnership, to help at-risk children and prevent criminal behavior later in life.

Within weeks it hit #2 on the NYT bestseller list.

Nurse-Family Partnership was also recognized in the TIME story on Tightrope:

***"The highest-return investment available in America today isn't in hedge funds or private equity, but in at-risk children. It's much easier to help a 3-month-old or a 3-year-old than a 13-year-old or a 30-year-old. Programs like Nurse-Family Partnership or Reach Out and Read help young children as their brains are developing. The results are outstanding."***

Want to see the authors? Check out their book tour, they will be visiting CA, WA, OR, NJ & more.



**GRADUATION CELEBRATIONS**

# JOIN THE CONVERSATION WITH US ON SOCIAL



**NFP** @NFP\_nursefamily · Feb 3

On [#BlackHistoryMonth](#) 🍌 we celebrate black nurses. 🍌🍌🍌  
They changed nursing & history at the same time.

Help us [#honor](#) Brown, Scales, Staupers, Truth and Harvey among so many others who gave and served through the nursing profession.

[#YearOfTheNurse](#) [#BHM](#) 🍌 [#Nurses2020](#)





FROM FRANK DAIDONE

## WE STAND WITH FAMILIES

Last month, the Supreme Court cleared the way for a new, broader “public charge” rule to go into effect nationwide – expanding the government’s ability to block legal immigration status for families who use critical public benefit programs. Nurse-Family Partnership continues to strongly oppose this rule. As I shared in my latest blog post, **this latest action is disappointing, shortsighted and will be detrimental to underserved communities and families** – including many in our program nationwide.

This rule targets families who have come to the United States to break free of the cycle of poverty and create a better life for themselves and their children. These are families who are doing the right thing and are pursuing the American Dream through the appropriate legal channels. They deserve support and opportunity, not threats and uncertainty.

The reality is that public charge will have unintended consequences down the road. Families who don’t get the preventative medical care they need now may land in emergency room months later. Minor, treatable health conditions may spiral into chronic, long-term illnesses. **And families who are not even directly affected by the rule will be deterred from seeking the care and assistance they need out of fear and confusion.**

At Nurse-Family Partnership, we recognize the innate strength and potential of every family. We believe that with the right support, families who

want to do better can transform their lives and make significant contributions to society. We will continue to do everything we can to protect children, families and underserved communities.

We continue to actively monitor implementation of the rule, currently set to go into effect on February 24, and the ongoing litigation.



THE RULE EFFECTIVELY FORCES AN IMPOSSIBLE CHOICE FOR MOTHERS AND FAMILIES – BETWEEN PUTTING FOOD ON THE TABLE AND STAYING IN THE COUNTRY LEGALLY, BETWEEN ACCESSING CRITICAL PREVENTATIVE HEALTH CARE TODAY AND PROTECTING THEIR FAMILY’S LONG-TERM SAFETY AND STABILITY. NO MOTHER AND NO FAMILY SHOULD HAVE TO MAKE THIS CHOICE.

FRANK DAIDONE

For more information on public charge and how the rule could affect families in your community and in NFP programs nationwide, we encourage you to read our Frequently Asked Questions and these Community Resources. If you have questions or need state-specific assistance related to this issue, please contact us at [pga@nursefamilypartnership.org](mailto:pga@nursefamilypartnership.org).

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