Changing Culture: Showcasing Breastfeeding as the Norm at The Breastfeeding Café

Utah Breastfeeding Coalition

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Utah Breastfeeding Coalition

- Began in 1992 as the Utah Coalition to Promote Breastfeeding
- Early members included WIC staff, La Leche League Leaders, medical advisors, and hospital personnel
- Currently growing our active membership to include mothers, related health care professionals, community groups, educational institutions, early intervention programs, and corporate partnerships
- Changed our name in 2006 to Utah Breastfeeding Coalition to more accurately reflect our goals and activities
The Breastfeeding Café

- Susan Johnson—mother, IBCLC, and Area Professional Liaison for La Leche League of Utah—had the vision of “a world where unapologetic mothering could take place anytime, anywhere.”
- “We felt a sense of community within our mothers’ circles and in our extended family and friends. As our babies grew into toddlers and beyond, it became clear that there was a gap of acceptance between our small circle and the larger community.”
- The idea of a Breastfeeding Café, where “mothers could share soup and good company, children playing nearby, cuddling or nursing as needed” was born.
The Breastfeeding Café

- In early 2006 Susan presented the idea to the board of the Utah Breastfeeding Coalition (UBC), with whom she worked as a community liaison.
- UBC board members viewed the opportunity as a way to engage with the public and share breastfeeding information.
- Before this vision could become a reality, there was much to be done.
The Breastfeeding Café

- When?
- Where?
- Why?
- What?
- Who?
- How?
The Breastfeeding Café—When?

- **August 1-31**
  - World Breastfeeding Week
  - Breastfeeding Awareness Month in Utah—Utah Governor signs a declaration each year
The Breastfeeding Café—Where?

- **Salt Lake City Main Public Library Share Space**
  - Free to community groups
  - Available during August
  - Public area with existing foot traffic
The Breastfeeding Café—Why?

Why did we want to sponsor an event like this?

- Although Utah has high initiation rates, duration rates are not optimal and rates have declined slightly in recent years.
- Although the biologic norm for nourishing infants and children is breastfeeding, the social norm is bottle feeding and artificial baby milk.
- We wanted to showcase breastfeeding as a part of everyday life and inspire conversation in our community.
The Breastfeeding Café—What?

- What exactly did we want to accomplish?
  - Show that breastfeeding is normal.
  - Inspire thought and conversation about breastfeeding.
  - Encourage relationships among breastfeeding advocates.
  - Provide educational opportunities to professionals and to the public about breastfeeding.
The Breastfeeding Café—Who?

**Who would be our target audience?**
- Pregnant and lactating women
- Families (partners, parents, grandparents, children)
- Future families (teenagers, young adults)
- Community officials
- Anyone who would listen

**Who would staff the Café?**
- Utah Breastfeeding Coalition members
- La Leche League Leaders and members
- Lactation professionals
- Other breastfeeding advocates
The Breastfeeding Café—How?

- The first year was a huge success and a great learning experience
- By the second year, we had two Co-Chairs and a plan set in place:
  - Planning committee
    - Volunteer Coordinator
    - Library Liaison
    - Special Events Coordinator
    - Promotion and Marketing Coordinators
    - Donations Procurement Coordinator
The Breastfeeding Café—How?

- **Advertising**
  - Press release to local news agencies—tv, radio, newspapers
  - UBC Website and other web listings
  - Posters and flyers: all local libraries, health clinics, WIC clinics, health food stores, community centers, hospitals, houses of worship, healthcare providers
The Breastfeeding Café—How?

• Theme for 2006
  Breastfeeding Touches Us All
The Breastfeeding Café—How?

- Theme for 2007
  Breastfeeding Grows: Healthy Children, Healthy Families, Healthy Communities, A Healthy World.
The Breastfeeding Café—How?

- We wanted moms and families to be comfortable in our space
The Breastfeeding Café—How?

- **Raffle**
  - Medela breast pumps
  - Slings
  - Massages
  - Breastfeeding books
  - Quilts/blankets
  - Landscape design
The Breastfeeding Café—How?

- Interactive displays 2006
  - Hands—Because Breastfeeding Touches Us All
The Breastfeeding Café—How?

- Public lecture (2006) with Barbara L. Behrmann, PhD, author of *The Breastfeeding Café*
- Professional Continuing Education (2006)
  - Barbara L. Behrmann, PhD
  - Kelly Davis Garrett, PhD
  - Jay Moreland, MD
The Breastfeeding Café—How?

- Interactive Displays 2007
  - Coloring pages and activity sheets, “Where Have You Nursed?” poster, and flowers
The Breastfeeding Café—How?

- **Printed information on breastfeeding**
  - La Leche League International (LLLI) tear-off sheets
  - Bookmark-style reminders and calendars of upcoming Café events
  - Brochures/event notices for UBC
  - Utah statute (“Right to Breastfeed” cards)
  - “Work and Breastfeeding” handbooks
  - Professional articles (Diane Weissinger, Jack Newman)
  - Sample issues of “New Beginnings” (LLLI publication)
  - Materials from Reproductive Health (Utah Department of Health), Pregnancy Riskline, Baby Your Baby
  - WHO Ten Steps—Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative
  - Brochures/event flyers for local LLL Groups (the “10th Step”)
  - International symbol for breastfeeding
The Breastfeeding Café—How?

• **Classes and special events**
  - La Leche League meetings
  - Sling making and wearing
  - Parenting
  - Infant CPR
  - Music Together® class
  - Moms’ groups
  - Writers’ Workshop
  - Concert by local bluegrass band “The Wildflowers” (2007)
  - Prenatal massage demos
  - Infant massage class
The Breastfeeding Café—How?

- Breastfeeding advocates available to initiate conversations and answer questions
The Breastfeeding Café—How?

- **Expenses**
  - Advertising—printing of posters, flyers
  - Speaker fees and travel expenses (2006)
  - Materials for Café
    - Recognition of sponsors (signs, thank you cards)
    - Interactive displays
    - Parking validations for presenters
  - Printed materials
  - Cell phone
  - Volunteer recognition
The Breastfeeding Café

**Did we do what we set out to accomplish?**

- **Show that breastfeeding is normal.**
  - Hard to measure, but we know that we made it visible in the community.

- **Inspire thought and conversation about breastfeeding.**
  - In 2006 we documented 5 to 95 contacts (visits to the Café or conversations in the walkway) per hour--we had over 1500 visitors.
  - In 2006 and 2007 we had TV spots (Check Your Health segments) and several radio interviews.
  - In 2007 there were three articles in the local newspaper about the Breastfeeding Café including many reader comments online.

- **Encourage relationships among breastfeeding advocates.**
  - We had over 100 volunteers from the Utah Breastfeeding Coalition, La Leche League, and mothers who were able to network and build relationships.
The Breastfeeding Café—Lessons Learned

- Most valuable resource—people!
- Food was more hindrance than help.
- We didn’t have to spend a lot of money to have a big impact in our community.
- Money sure would have helped (grant opportunities, contributions) for giveaways and ambiance.
- Trying to pull off a continuing education for lactation professionals event in conjunction with the Café made for a lot of work and didn’t pay off financially.
The Breastfeeding Café—Future Plans

- **2008 “The Breastfeeding Place”**
  - “This Is The Place”
  - Place to get breastfeeding information
  - Place for mothers, children, and families to spend time, nurse, and be with other breastfeeding advocates
- **501(c)3 status for Utah Breastfeeding Coalition so we can successfully apply for grants and donations**
- **Build partnerships with local groups and businesses**
The Breastfeeding Café—Future Plans

- Limit special events to be more closely related to breastfeeding
- Develop handouts (bookmarks, etc.) to give away
- Use 2008 World Breastfeeding Week theme and materials
“Mothers don’t fail to breastfeed. Communities fail to support women. It takes a community to support a nursing mother.”—Susan Johnson

At the Breastfeeding Café we celebrate breastfeeding as an everyday act, an evolving relationship. The Café is a community resource in which we all have a part.

The Café is more than a month-long gathering in downtown Salt Lake. The Café is a concept of community of support touching Utahns everyday and everywhere.
What can you do in your Community?

- Identify a breastfeeding related problem or idea that you wish to change/influence.
- Brainstorm ways to initiate change.
- Review resources available in your community.
- Identify resources within your coalition.
  - Active members and partnerships with related organizations
  - Funding
  - Printed materials
Questions?

www.utahbreastfeeding.org

Utah Breastfeeding Coalition

because breastfeeding touches us all