



**Cornell University**  
Cooperative Extension  
Schoharie County

173 South Grand Street  
Cobleskill, New York 12043  
t. 518.234.4303  
t. 518.296.8310  
f. 518.234.4305

**PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

Contact:

Regina Tillman

Cornell Cooperative Extension

Cobleskill, NY 12043

Office: 518-234-4303

Mobile: 518-229-1548

Email: [rmt37@cornell.edu](mailto:rmt37@cornell.edu)

**Schoharie County Participates in Healthy Start Partnership Meeting in Oneonta, NY**

Cobleskill, NY - April 11, 2008 - Forty-two members of the regional Healthy Start Partnership (HSP) gathered on April 4<sup>th</sup> in Oneonta to discuss changes in the environment that could promote healthy behaviors in childbearing women and their infants. The Schoharie county agencies represented were the Public Health Department, Planned Parenthood Mohawk Hudson, Inc., Bassett Healthcare, and Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Presentations at the meeting explored workplace policies in support of breastfeeding. In August 2007, the New York State Assembly passed and the Governor signed, a bill that amended the labor law to require employers to permit nursing mothers to express breast milk while at work. Alan Mittman from Human Resources at Cornell University described the University's policy and how it is being implemented. Meredith Graham from Nutritional Sciences at Cornell shared the wealth of information and resources available to help employers implement the law. Diana Haldenwang, Executive Director of the Mohawk Valley Perinatal Network, described her organization's policy that allows workers to bring young babies to work.

A second panel of presenters focused on retail food stores and what they are doing to help families eat more nutritiously. Bill Drake, Senior Extension Associate in the Food Industry Management Program at Cornell gave an overview of the convenience store and supermarket industries. He noted several trends in the supermarket industry of interest to HSP members, particularly the emphasis on fresh food, community involvement, and concern for health. Jack Cushman, Vice President of Food Service for Nice N Easy Grocery Shoppes, Inc. described what his organization is doing to make nutritious food choices available to consumers in his organization's stores. Marianne Romano, Nutrition

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*Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities*

Coordinator for the Capital Region for Hannaford Bros. Co., showed the group how the Guiding Stars Program is shifting consumers' food purchases in a more healthful direction at Hannafords.

### **About the Health Start Partnership:**

The Healthy Start Partnership's mission is to promote healthy weights in childbearing women and their infants in the eight counties served by Bassett Healthcare: Chenango, Delaware, Fulton, Herkimer, Madison, Montgomery, Otsego, and Schoharie.

"The Healthy Start Partnership envisions communities that promote and support healthy lifestyles for women, their children and all young families," according to Christine Olson, professor in the Division of Nutritional Sciences at Cornell University. The Healthy Start Partnership is a \$1 million, four-year project, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It is led by Olson and her colleague Nancy Wells, associate professor of Design and Environmental Analysis at Cornell University. For more information on the regional Healthy Start Partnership and its projects in other counties, see

<http://www.human.cornell.edu/che/DNS/hsp/current.cfm>. For details about the local Schoharie County Healthy Start Partnership, contact Regina Tillman, Nutrition Resource Educator and Partnership Chairperson, at the offices of the Cornell Cooperative Extension Schoharie County, Cobleskill, NY.

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