Let’s Dialogue About Difficult Family Conversations

The decisions your children make now can impact their trajectory for years to come...

Wow, what a stressor for parents! With all that’s going on in today’s society, it seems like it gets more difficult to keep our children safe. How do we as parents and other role models effectively help our children make good choices and avoid the dangers that may affect their future?

The Wisconsin Women’s Health Foundation hopes to answer that question at its Annual Dialogue event, a moderated panel which discusses complex health topics. This year, we talk to two family experts about having difficult conversations with our kids – broaching subjects like the current opioid epidemic, preventing opioid misuse, relationship violence, and more.

Get a sneak peek as we sit down with one of our speakers, Dr. Margie Skeer, Associate Professor and the Interim Director of the Masters of Science in Health Communication Program at Tufts University School of Medicine.

WWHF: Thanks for taking the time to talk with us, Dr. Skeer. We are so excited to have you at our Dialogue event this October! The theme for the 2018 Dialogue is “How to Talk to Our Kids: Using Tools to Navigate Difficult Family Conversation.” Why is this important?

Dr. Skeer: Prevention is absolutely key – having conversations early is really important for the well-being of our children. I think about it like a subject in school. We wouldn’t sit down with our kids and teach them algebra once and then expect them to know what to do. In the same way, we need to work with our kids regularly when it comes to risk prevention, since it is about helping them develop the right tools and skills.

Knowing how to talk with our kids about alcohol and drugs is so important. For communication to be effective, it has to be so much more than telling them to “just say no”. We need to know when to have conversations and how. Most people know they should talk to their kids, but it can be hard to do.
It's hard to believe we're in the month of October already! Maybe that's because we've been so busy at the Foundation. You know what they say – time flies when you're having fun!

As always, 2018 has been memorable with opportunities to embark on new projects and program expansions and also to celebrate inspiring women (like at the 2018 Champions in Women's Health Awards in Spring – a personal highlight for me). But there's still a lot of year ahead, and we have a lot to look forward to!

In this edition of the newsletter, you’ll see our work in action – how we’re addressing difficult conversations about substance abuse and relationship violence at our Annual Dialogue event on October 11th, breast cancer disparities in Milwaukee through the Markos Family Breast Cancer Research Grant, and smoking addiction with yet more exciting developments in our First Breath program. I also invite you to take a look at our 2017 Annual Report to see all the other ways in which your support has recently helped us innovate, impact, and improve women’s health (wwhf.org/about/annual-reports/) throughout the state.

All that we do would not be possible without your generosity and support. Thank you!

Yours for a healthy Wisconsin,

Tommi Thompson
Executive Director
Wisconsin Women’s Health Foundation

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Newsletter Notes from Our Executive Director

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Our Programs

GrapeVine trains nurses to lead health education sessions in their communities.

“Wonderfully done program – good [health] info that needs to be spread.”

– GrapeVine participant

EveryWoman’s Journal teaches women to use journaling as a tool for stress reduction and self-care at workshops statewide.

“I can write whatever I feel like – and this reduces tension, anger, and whatever creeps into life. Journaling is a personal outlet. I enjoy this writing every day.” – Jo

My Baby & Me helps pregnant women quit smoking by training healthcare providers to deliver tobacco counseling.

“I’ve been enrolled in the program and they become part of your family—a part of your life.”

– My Baby & Me participant

First Breath helps pregnant women quit smoking by training healthcare providers to deliver tobacco counseling.

“It encourages you to make better decisions while pregnant and even after.”

– My Baby & Me participant

Innovate, Impact, Improve Women’s Health
Interview with Dr. Skeer Continued–

WWHF: And your expertise is helping families learn these skills, correct?

Dr. Skeer: Parent-child communication is what I do! I have a doctorate in public health and have worked in the field of substance use and addiction for over 20 years. I’m a health communicator as well. I help families translate hard topics into real life conversations that are appropriate for the child’s age and development.

WWHF: You mention substance use and addiction. Clearly, there is a lot of discussion these days in the media surrounding opioids. What are some of the biggest threats you see to the well-being of kids?

Dr. Skeer: Opioids and other prescription drugs, definitely, but also marijuana as we’re seeing it become legalized in more states and perceived as “less risky” by kids. It’s also scary, because marijuana can now be consumed via edibles and vaping, which are more discreet. Parents and guardians need to have a particular level of vigilance – they’re up against problems that they might not even recognize!

WWHF: You have two kids of your own, ages 10 and 7. Do you have conversations with them about substance use?

Dr. Skeer: Absolutely! What I talk about with parents, I talk about with my own kids, and because this is my work, they probably know more about substances than most teenagers! (laugh) As a parent, you still worry about their safety, but I’ve been speaking to them for many years and take advantage of every opportunity or curiosity to have an open conversation.

WWHF: So it sounds like this isn’t just a “teen” issue, but something that can be addressed with kids at any age?

Dr. Skeer: Right. Again, early prevention is key, and it can be as simple as having family meals together. More on that at the Dialogue...

WWHF: Speaking of the Dialogue, what do you hope attendees will take away from your presentation?

Dr. Skeer: I hope they take away a greater understanding of not only the importance of talking with their children, but a feeling of confidence in doing it, using the strategies I’ll share.

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WWHF: Well, I personally can’t wait to learn more! Thanks again for sharing some of your insight, and we look forward to hearing you speak at the Dialogue Event on October 11th in Madison!

120+ Learn About Healthier, Happier Caregiving at the Gathering

On September 20th, we were joined by over 120 women at the 17th Annual Gathering Event at Marshfield Clinic Health System in Marshfield to discuss “Healthier, Happier Caregiving.” There are over 40 million caregivers in the United States, and that number will continue to grow as our population ages. The Gathering helped create a discussion about the health risks of caregiving and the importance of self-care. Attendees learned strategies for self-care and connected with community resources to help them create a toolkit for healthier, happier caregiving with their loved ones.

For full details and highlights, please visit our blog: wwhf.org/blog/

Register for the 2018 Dialogue

Thursday, October 11, 2018
The Edgewater Hotel | 1000 Wisconsin Place | Madison, WI

The Wisconsin Women’s Health Foundation’s Annual Dialogue is a moderated discussion with national experts discussing complex issues related to the health of Wisconsin families. This year, let’s discuss a major cause of stress for parents: how to help our kids avoid dangers that can impact their future. We will discuss the current opioid epidemic, how to prevent opioid misuse, relationship violence, and real life solutions for moms and families. Special Agent Heather Ryan and Dr. Margie Skeer will give us tangible tips on how to discuss uncomfortable issues with our kids, no matter what age.

8:00-8:30am: Registration & Networking
8:30-9:30am: Dr. Margie Skeer
9:30-10:30am: Special Agent Heather Ryan

https://www.wwhf.org/dialogue/
The Dialogue is FREE and open to the public, advanced registration required.

Need a Place to Keep Track of All These Great Events?

2019 CALENDAR REQUESTS

The WWHF’s 2019 month-view bound calendars are being printed soon.

RESERVE YOUR COPY TODAY!

wwhf.org/calendar/

Order Deadline: Saturday, October 13th

*2019 calendars will only be mailed to those who complete the online form.
Congratulations, Sofia S. Origanti, Ph.D.!
Award: $20,000 (one year) to support Dr. Origanti in her development as a leader in breast cancer research.

Dr. Origanti is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at Marquette University. Her research aims to explore the role of eIF6 (a human gene) as a driver in the formation and progression of human breast cancers.

What others are saying about Dr. Origanti -
“...She brings much needed cancer biology expertise, in terms of both teaching and research, to Marquette, and [her program] will contribute to cancer research needs in the Milwaukee region. She is an excellent role model to the women students at Marquette, and will be a proactive ambassador for [the WWHF] and an advocate for breast cancer research.”

– Brian Volkman, Ph.D. Professor of Biochemistry, Medical College of Wisconsin

Markos Family Breast Cancer Research Grant Recipient

Funding from this grant will extend our work to explore the role of eIF6 [...] I expect that in the long-term, these exciting projects will lead to significant discoveries.”

Dr. Origanti is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at Marquette University. Her research aims to explore the role of eIF6 (a human gene) as a driver in the formation and progression of human breast cancers.

Nominate a Champion in Women’s Health
The Wisconsin Women’s Health Foundation is seeking nominations for individuals who have devoted their talents and careers to improving the health of Wisconsin women. Past recipients have worked in the areas of Obstetrics & Gynecology, Public Health, Nursing, Mammography, Addiction and more.

Do you know a Champion in Women’s Health? Nominate them today!
https://www.wwhf.org/champions/

Nominations Due by Midnight, Friday October 26th.
Selected Champions will be awarded at a luncheon in their honor on April 27, 2019 at the Park Hotel in Madison, WI.

Remembering Teresa (Teri) E. Woods, Ph.D.
On August 22, 2018, women’s health lost one of its greats when Teresa (Teri) Woods passed away after a brief battle with Head and Neck Cancer. A friend and supporter of the WWHF, she helped us create the 2008 Report on Women’s Health, a first-of-its kind report that targeted health concerns for women in Wisconsin, and also led the B-SMART program, a 10-week, skills-based program that offered women with breast cancer the tools they needed to manage their stress. She was also a 2005 recipient of the WWHF Champions in Women’s Health Awards.

Through her practice as a clinical psychologist, she helped many people, but her work reached far beyond the office walls. Teri loved what she did, and the women she worked with were just as important to her as she was to them. Back when Teri was helping us create the Report on Women’s Health, she said this, “Saving the lives of women is how we'll know [we're] making a difference. The message of hope, in addition to the accessibility of science, are the two things I am most excited about.”

We remember Teri for her passion, dedication, and warmth, and we cherish the opportunities we had to work with her.
Driving Towards a Healthier Wisconsin

It’s as easy as 1-2-3 with an official Wisconsin Women’s Health Foundation License Plate!

1. Request your official WWHF plate from the DMV.
2. Pay a $15 issuance fee (or annual personalized plate fee) and a $25 tax-deductible donation to the WWHF.
   *A regular registration fee may also be requested if your current plates expire within 3 months.
3. Enjoy your new plates as you proudly support women’s health!

https://www.wwhf.org/license-plates/