
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 10, 2015

For additional information contact:

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**Community Screening Scheduled for Documentary
*The Raising of America***

GRAND RAPIDS – When our children fall behind, we all pay the costs. Once the envy of the world, the United States is now ranked 26th in overall child well-being, 21st in high school graduation rates, and 31st in child care availability. Why this is and what can be done about it matters to the future of our society. Now, a ground breaking documentary “**The Raising of America**” goes beyond exposing the issues. It seeks to change the conversation. The Kent County Health Department would like to invite you to be part of that dialog.

The Raising of America is an hour-long episode that explores how a strong start for all children leads not only to better individual learning, earning, and mental and physical health, but also to a healthier, safer, better educated, more prosperous, and more equitable America. “We all hope for happiness and good health. We know that one of the most effective ways to realize this hope is for young children to grow up in an environment that lays the foundation for long, healthy and happy lives,” said Candace Cowling, Executive Director of Family Futures. “I urge everyone to view The Raising of America series and get involved in discussions and actions to make our community a place in which we create an environment for successful childhood. Children deserve it and our community deserves it.”

The documentary is part of a series examining how social conditions affect childhood development. “In order to improve communities, we need to understand root causes, look at our segregated communities – economically, socially, and racially - and work to improve the conditions in which we expect our children and families to thrive,” said Denise Evans, Project Coordinator for Strong Beginnings (Federal Healthy Start Project). “We must simultaneously work to lessen the pressures that the added burden of socio-economic status and race contribute to the pressures placed on young families.”

The Kent County Health Department is teaming with Strong Beginnings, First Steps, Great Start Collaborative, Family Futures, Healthy Kent, K-Connect, Early Learning Neighborhood Collaborative, MomsBloom, and I Believe, I Become/Baby Scholars to present the screenings; part of an initiative that could have an impact on our children for decades to come. “We are fortunate in Kent County to have so many wonderful resources and organizations to help our families, and bringing them to one table like this is vital,” said Barb Hawkins Palmer, Executive Director of Healthy Kent. “When organizations work together – from human service agencies to health care providers to educators – so much more can be accomplished. We are seeing that more and more, right here in our communities.”

(more)

KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and three satellite clinics located in Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.

700 FULLER AVE. NE, GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49503

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Register for the free screening and conversation by [clicking here](#). Learn more about the documentary series or to watch the trailer, go to www.raisingofamerica.org.

Raising of America Screening and Community Conversation

Thursday, April 16, 2015

11:30 AM-1:30 PM - **SOLD OUT**

and

6:30 PM-8:30 PM

Celebration! Cinema South

1506 Eastport Dr. SE

Grand Rapids, MI 49508

Media please note: You are invited to attend both the screening, scheduled for 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., and the panel discussion tentatively scheduled from 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. One-on-one interviews are available immediately following the conclusion of that discussion. Please RSVP Steve.Kelso@kentcountymi.gov or call 616.632.7274.

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