



# From Response to Resilience:

The North Carolina  
Breastfeeding Coalition's  
Journey in SAFE Infant and  
Young Child Feeding  
Post-Hurricane Helene

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# Disclosures:



Rachel Fann, MS, CCC-SLP, CLC

- Previously employed by Breastfeeding Family Friendly Communities
- May receive honoraria for presenting
- Currently on the board of NCBfC SAFE Team



Ashley Mickelson, MS, NLP, CCC-SLP, IBCLC

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# Background



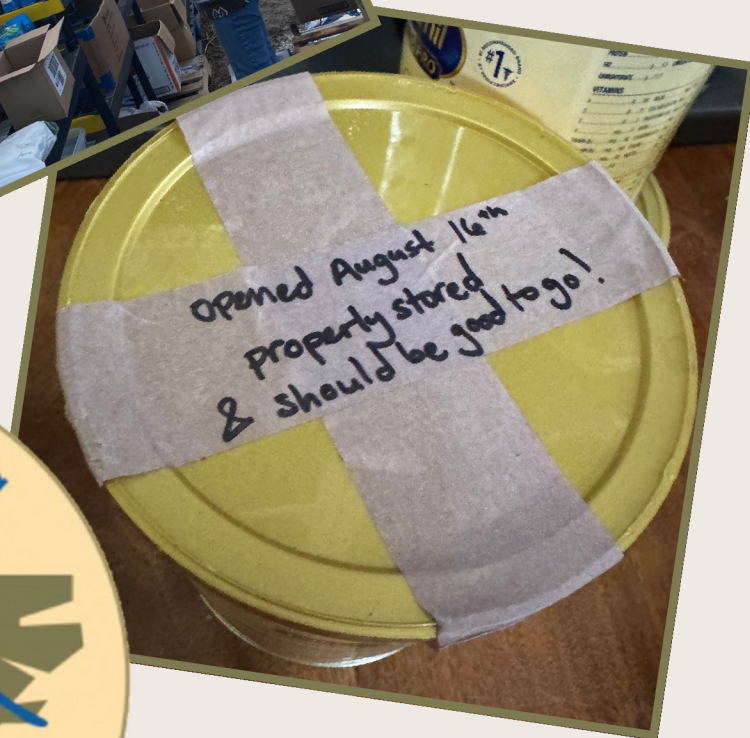
Jayne Carpenter and Brandi Harrison, the two WNC IBCLCs that put out the call for help in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Helene.



- Formed in the wake of Hurricane Helene 09/27/24
- Infants and children most vulnerable population
- Families with infants face significant and disproportionate challenges in accessing safe nutrition during disasters, heightened by infrastructure instability.
- “Nearly 95% of infant and child deaths in emergencies result from diarrhea due to contaminated water and an unsanitary environment” (USBC)

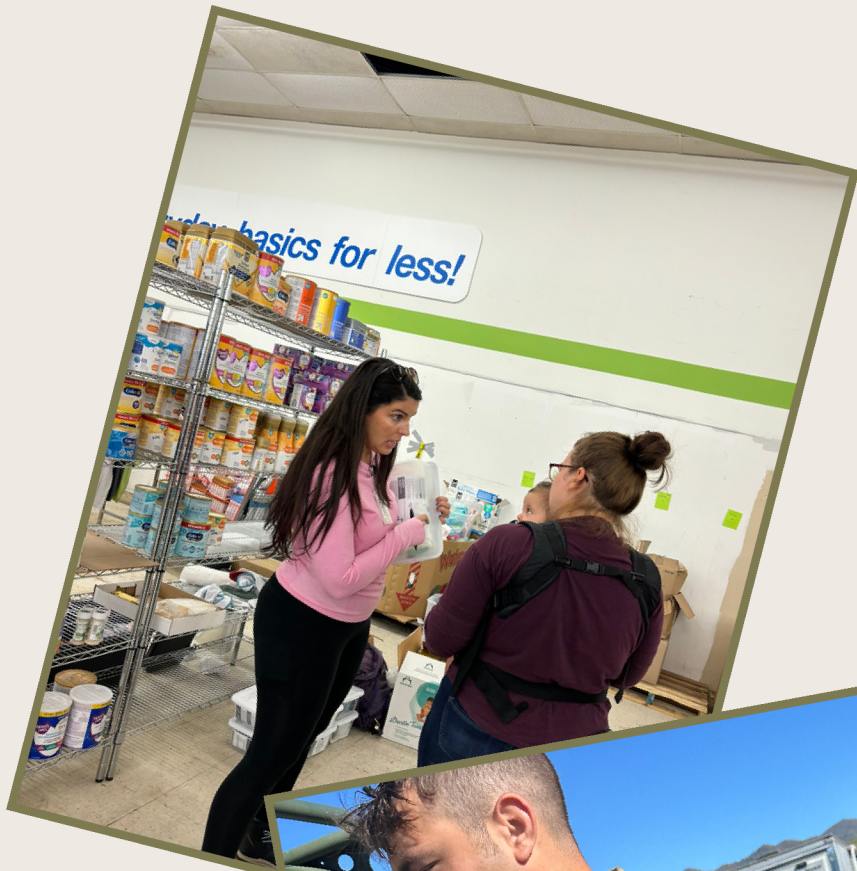
# Objectives

- Support and Advocacy for Feeding in Emergencies (SAFE)
- address critical gaps in disaster management
- evidence based assessment
- trauma-informed care
- mitigate risks
- boots on ground direct services
- building disaster-networks centered around infant feeding education and care



# Methods

- SAFE formed through NCBfC; address unmet, critical infant and young child feeding needs
  - SAFE responded by mobilizing trained infant feeding specialists
  - Mitigated risks by incorporating real-time, evidence-based training and feeding protocols:
    - CDC Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies (IYCF-E) Toolkit
    - CDC Rapid Needs Assessments (RNA)
  - Created and distributed infant feeding sanitation kit
  - Mitigated risks by facilitating informed milk sharing
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# Results

**Results were very two-fold: There was the immediate impact in the WNC area as well as the ongoing ripple effects across the nation.**



# Results

## In WNC over 6 months of operation:

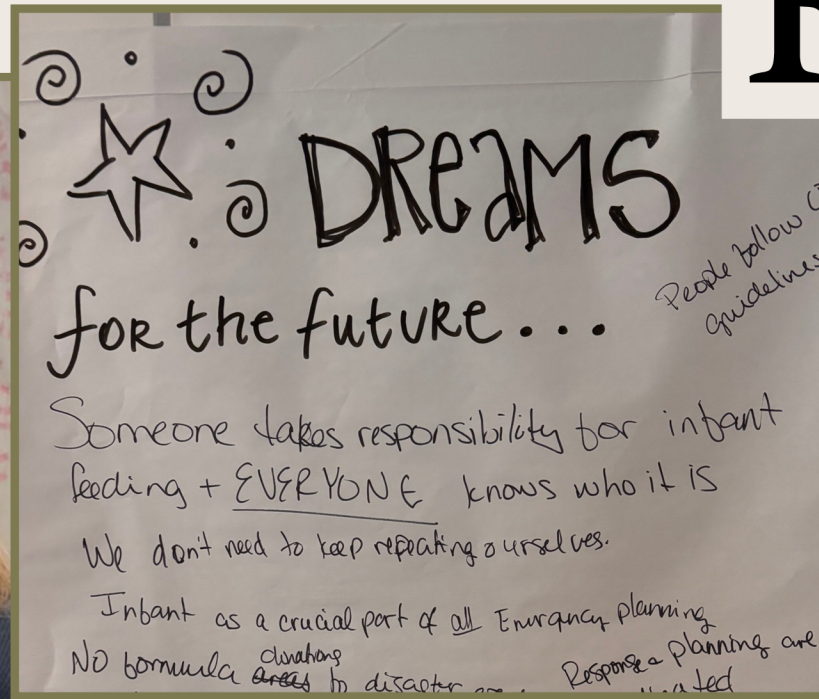
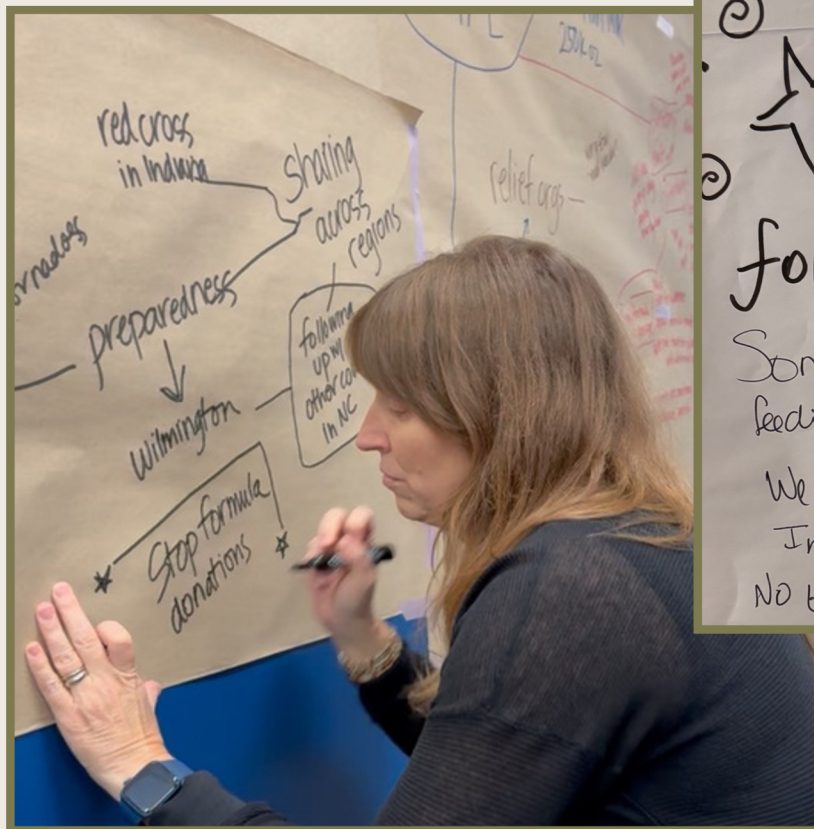
- Provided services to over 300 organizations across seven NC counties and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
- Distributed 7000+ sanitation kits for feeding supplies
- Conducted 5000+ rapid needs assessments
- Trained 500+ emergency and perinatal personnel
- Directly supported approximately 260 individual feeding visits
- Shared countless infant carriers, ensuring that families remain close and warm



# Results

## Ongoing across the US:

- Countless Presentations to Professional organizations
- 11-month, 16.5 hour IYCF-E training
- Meetings to support disaster response planning or preparedness with specific organizations in:
  - Florida
  - California
  - Texas
  - Virginia
  - Central NC
- SAFE Support and Strategic Core (S3C)



# Conclusions

- IYCF-E remains a vital, yet often overlooked segment of emergency preparedness and response.
- When no one is in charge, EVERYONE is.
- Infant feeding specialists and perinatal health professionals are optimally suited to ensure implementation of IYCF-E best practices.
- The SAFE Team continues actively working to elevate IYCF-E through local, state, and national policy





# Questions?

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