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Moms Celebrate at the Plaza

WIC marks World Breastfeeding Awareness week in Watsonville.

By [Sarah Zell](#) [Email the author](#) 9:29am [Print](#)

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Community Bridges WIC will host a breastfeeding awareness walk around Watsonville Plaza during the downtown [farmer's market](#) Friday.

This year marks WIC's fifth annual breastfeeding walk as part of [world breastfeeding awareness week](#), and its first year in the City Plaza. In the past, the march took place outside of WIC's own classrooms, but this year they are bringing their message out to the public.

[WIC](#) stands for Women, Infants, and Children, and it is a federally funded program in Watsonville affiliated with [Community Bridges](#). They provide healthy food vouchers and nutrition classes for pregnant woman and families with young children, as well as referrals to healthcare resources in the community.

Perla Pineda, 22, utilized the WIC program and successfully breastfed her own children when she was a teen mother. Now she is a full-time Peer Counselor at WIC Watsonville, educating other mothers about the health benefits of breastfeeding, and ways to integrate it in to their families' lives.

"I've learned so much more about (nutrition and breastfeeding) that I wish I had known then," said Pineda. "At least I can pass on the information."

On Friday, Perla will be running the "Breastfeeding Wheel of Fortune," a game show-style game where participants can answer questions about breastfeeding to win prizes and test their knowledge on a subject that many people still know very little about.

"Sometimes people think they know, and we can give them the correct information," said Pineda of people's misconceptions about breastfeeding.

One of Perla's peer counseling clients will be there to share her own special story about pregnancy, nutrition and breastfeeding, and Perla will translate into English.

According to Community Bridges WIC, Watsonville is well below the Santa Cruz County average rate of exclusive breastfeeding: 57 percent compared to 72 percent in the county. WIC maintains that breastfeeding can reduce the incidence of allergies, diarrhea, ear infections and urinary tract infections in infants and decrease their likelihood of being overweight.

"Our motto this year is 'affordable healthcare begins with breastfeeding'," says Amy Moran, supervising nutritionist at WIC and the coordinator of Friday's event.

In the plaza will be a [bike-powered smoothie maker](#) and a pizza making demonstration using ingredients folks can buy with their WIC checks. "[Mom's Breastaurant](#)" will provide an enclosed tent for breastfeeding and diaper changing, with a play area for older kids.

Other booths will host representatives from [Second Harvest Food Bank](#), [Early Headstart](#), [Sutter Maternity](#), [Salud Para la Gente](#), and [PAPAS](#), an

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