

NorthShore in the Community

Study Aims to Keep Lake County Families Healthy

By Martha Floberg

NorthShore researchers are participating in a study—called the Community Action for Child Health Equity (CACHE)—that seeks to build healthier communities by examining lifestyle choices family by family. The NorthShore team is gathering data by enrolling and studying the lifestyles of people in the community like the Garcia/Flores family of Highwood.

“Being in this study has made our family more aware of eating healthy foods and staying physically active,” said Laura Garcia, who recently took a nutrition class in the community.

“We hope our participation will help other families find ways to manage stress and live healthier lives,” added Antonio Flores.

NorthShore Pediatrician Madeleine Shalowitz, MD, MBA, is the Principal Investigator of the study and a Director of Biomedical Research Informatics. “The CACHE study is unique in that we’re compiling an enormous amount of data about the social, physiological and environmental factors that put children and parents at risk for chronic health conditions, such as diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular disease.”

CACHE looks at how Lake County parents’ experiences with stress, their sources of strength and their access to healthcare before, during and after pregnancy influence their health and the health and development of their children. Through these findings, healthcare providers hope to design more effective interventions to “short-circuit” disease progression.

“With support from NorthShore and federal and philanthropic funding, CACHE’s first phase involved interviewing mothers and fathers about their stress levels and life events immediately after a child’s birth to 24 months,” said Project Director Chelsea McKinney, MPH, PhD. “We also measured blood sugar, cholesterol levels, blood pressure and other biomarkers to determine how stress was affecting their health.”

In CACHE II, the study looks at how a family’s circumstances are reflected in how the children manage stress and in their development and physiology up to age 4½.

“In the upcoming CACHE III,” added Dr. Shalowitz, “we will assess these children’s risk of developing chronic health conditions, such as hypertension and diabetes, which are now seen in kids as young as age 6.”

Dr. Madeleine Shalowitz is NorthShore’s Principal Investigator of the CACHE study.



Antonio Flores and Laura Garcia agreed to participate in the CACHE study along with their three daughters (from left) **Katy**, **Kenia** and **Karla**. The study seeks to build healthier communities by examining the lifestyles of families.

Focus on Community

NorthShore offers a wide range of resources to further its mission to “preserve and improve human life.” Total community benefits grew to more than \$283 million in 2013.

Total Community Benefits	\$283,433,376
Government-Sponsored Indigent Healthcare	\$148,869,900
Education	\$44,717,640
Subsidized Health Services	\$33,903,458
Total Charity Care	\$24,314,577
Uncompensated Services	\$13,581,695
Research	\$8,933,480
Donations, Volunteer Services, Other Community Benefits	\$6,171,554
Language Assistance	\$1,663,133
Government-Sponsored Program Services	\$1,277,939

Learn about specific NorthShore programs and services available to improve the health of our communities at northshore.org/C8.