

**Birth Defect Research for Children**

**Annual Report**

**September 1, 2010 to August 31, 2011**



**“because every birth defect has a cause”**

## You Are Not Alone

BDRC launched the “You’re Not Alone” program at the Walt Disney Pavilion of Florida Hospital. This program helps new moms who have just had a baby with a birth defect by providing a gift bag with Baby’s First Disney Bear; a \$20 Walmart gift card; organic baby wipes and juice from Whole Foods Markets and organic baby wear from companies in our Green Family Market. The gift bag also contains a letter, BDRC program card and refrigerator magnet so that when the family needs support, they will know how to contact us. This is a pilot project that, if successful, could be implemented in hospitals with Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICUs) all over the state/country.



## Participation in NIEHS' Public Interest Partners

BDRC's director, Betty Mekdeci, serves as co-chair of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) Public Interest Partners. Each month the Partners have a conference call with a member of the NIEHS staff who presents on a current scientific topic related to health and the environment. In December, there is a meeting with the NIEHS director, Dr. Linda Birnbaum. This year, Betty was asked to chair the December meeting with the director, staff and Public Interest Partners in Washington.

The screenshot shows a Mozilla Firefox browser window displaying the NIEHS Public Interest Partners webpage. The browser's address bar shows the URL <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/about/community/publicinterest.cfm>. The page features the NIEHS logo and navigation menu at the top. The main content area is titled "Public Interest Partners" and includes a sub-header: "Building a Coalition of Grassroots Advocacy Organizations that Support Environmental Health Research". Below this, there are three small photographs showing people in various settings. A sidebar on the left lists navigation options: "About NIEHS", "Community Involvement", "Donations to NIEHS", "En Español", "Public Interest Partners" (highlighted), and "Community Forums". A "Contact" section is visible, with links for "NIEHS Public Interest Partners" and "Related Resources". A paragraph of text explains that NIEHS staff meet with the Public Interest Partners for input and communication. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the Start button, several open applications (Inbox, Firefox, BDRC Annual R..., Mothers Day), a search bar, and the system clock showing 3:53 PM.

**Public Interest Partners**

Building a Coalition of Grassroots Advocacy Organizations that Support Environmental Health Research

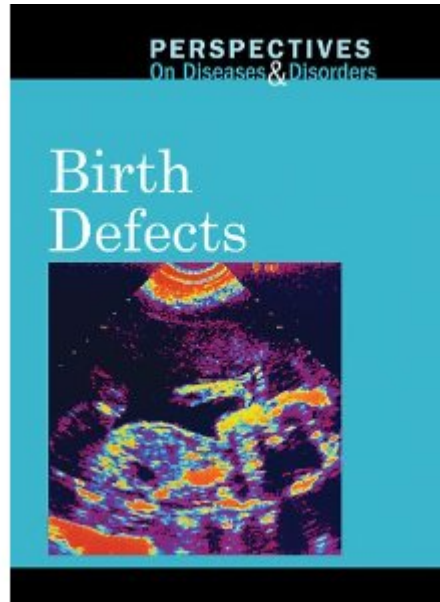
[Contact](#)  
[NIEHS Public Interest Partners](#)  
[Related Resources](#)

The NIEHS director and staff meet periodically with the Public Interest Partners to seek input and improve communications with communities and organizations directly affected by the mission and the research of the NIEHS.

Public Interest Partner members represent:

## **Birth Defects: Perspectives on Diseases & Disorders**

"The Environmental Causes of Structural Birth Defects", an article co-authored by Betty Mekdeci and Ted Schettler, M.D., M.P.H. was included in a text book Birth Defects: Perspectives on Diseases & Disorders published by Greenhaven Press.



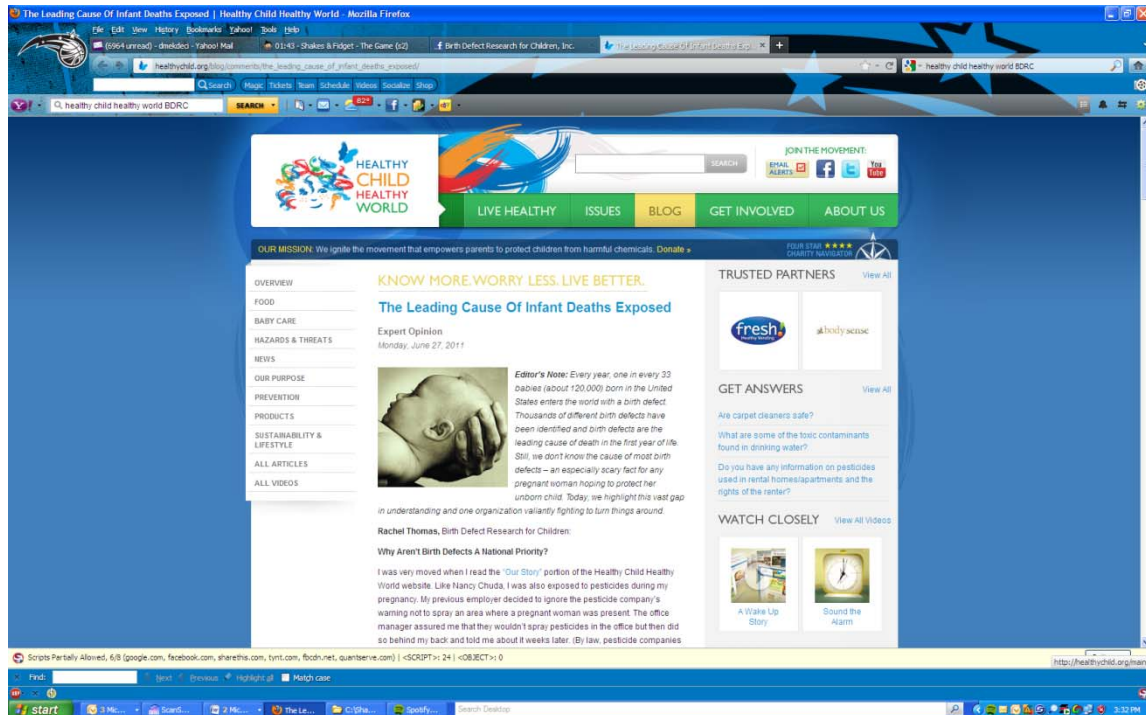
## **Veterans Children's Centers**

The NIEHS is implementing their 5-year strategic plan and invited the public to submit Visionary Ideas. BDRRC submitted a Visionary Idea for a children's center to study the prenatal effects of dioxin exposure. BDRRC's director suggested that a special center could be set up and staffed with medical specialists who have experience in birth defects and developmental disabilities associated with prenatal exposures to toxins. This idea received the most votes and comments of all the Visionary Ideas submitted.



## The Leading Cause of Infant Death Article

Rachel Thomas, a member of BDRC staff wrote a column about the National Birth Defect Registry that was published on the “Healthy Child Healthy World” website that has a national outreach to parents and support groups including Circle of Moms. The blog generated many positive comments from readers.



## Great Health Non-Profit

BDRC was selected as a “Great Health Non-Profit” through Guidestar’s Great Nonprofits program. Organizations are selected by the number of positive reviews received from the public they have served. Guidestar is the premium organization that evaluates nonprofits online. <http://www.guidestar.org>



## **Parent Services**

During the year, BDRC staff provided 800 parents with specific information about their child's birth defects along with referrals to support groups and other resources. These families come from every state and several foreign countries.

## **National Birth Defect Registry and Parent Matching Program**

BDRC's online research project, the National Birth Defect Registry now has 2867 children registered. The majority of families who enter cases in the National Birth Defect Registry also select the Parent Matching option that allows them to connect with other families who have children with similar birth defects and disabilities.

## **Outreach and Education**

BDRC sends out a monthly newsletter to nearly 3,000 subscribers on our Constant Contact newsletter list every month. David Mekdeci puts together the monthly newsletter with feature articles on the most recent research connecting birth defects to the environment.

Additionally, since Facebook has become a major form of social communication especially in the age group most likely to have children in the next few years, BDRC is using our Facebook page as a tool to educate potential parents by featuring a birth defect news item each day. We are also working to increase our fan base so we reach more families with these messages.



## **Town Hall on Attention Disorders**

Florida Hospital asked BDRC to participate in a Town Hall meeting on Attention Disorders. BDRC staffed a table with information about ADDs and the National Birth Defect Registry.

## **The Great Green Auction**

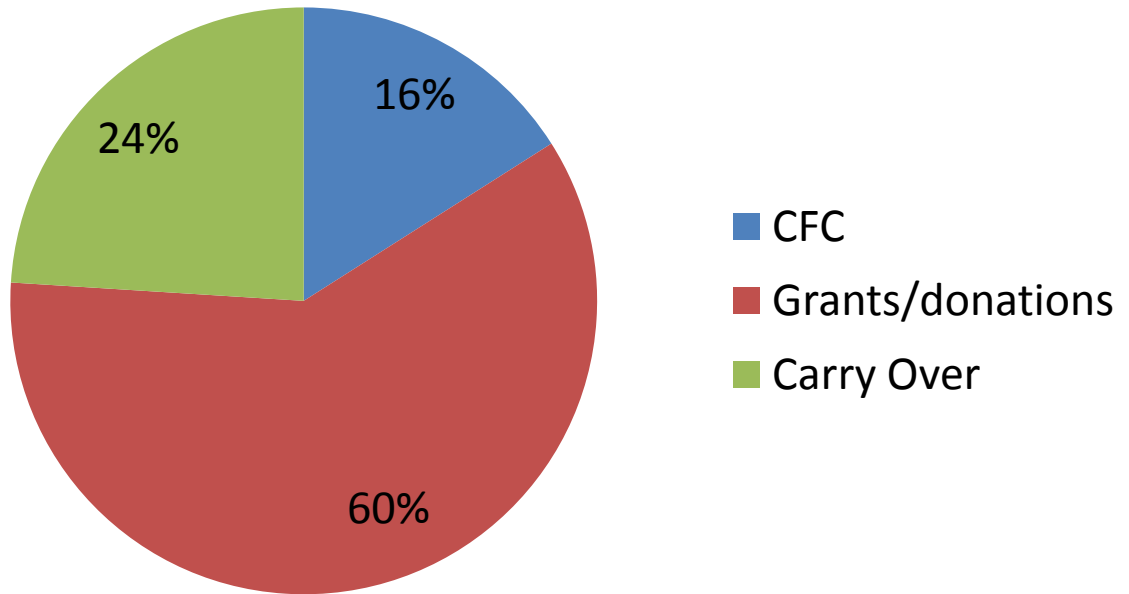
In November, BDRC held a "Great Green Auction" online through Bidding for Good to raise funds to support BDRC's projects and services and to introduce families to a wide range of "safer, organic & more natural products".



## **Birth Defect Research for Children's Board of Directors**

Betty Mekdeci	President, Co-founder FL
Mike Mekdeci	Co-founder FL
Alice Shabecoff	Vice-President MA
Ed Kerben, Esq.	Treasurer FL
Sandra Glaize	Secretary FL
Marianne Genetti	Director FL
Gary Moore	Director MI

## Income



## Expenses

