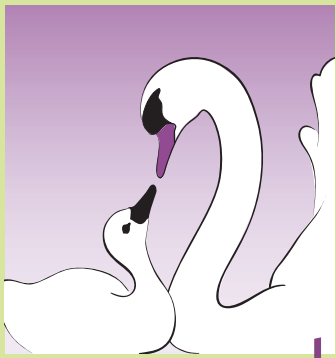


# CYGNET Taking Flight

Cohort Study of Young Girls' Nutrition, Environment, and Transitions

SPRING 2007



cygnet

## The Cygnet Community

By Lawrence H. Kushi, Sc.D.

Two hundred and ten “Cygnet” have come for their second visit. Seeing such familiar faces walking through the door (although usually so much taller!) is always such a wonderful experience.

Now that the “Cygnet community” or “cohort” is complete, with the final participant count standing at 444 girls, we are able to identify similarities and differences within the CYGNET community.

An important way science looks for differences between people is through blood and urine analysis. As I have mentioned in past newsletters, we sent about 30 blood and urine samples to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for analysis of various chemical compounds. The data from the urine analyses have been published, along with those from a similar number of girls from Cincinnati and New York. This paper was published in the journal, *Environmental Health Perspectives*. If you would like a hard copy sent to you, please contact us at 510-501-0410, or if you have Internet access, you can download the article at <http://www.ehponline.org/members/2006/9488/9488.pdf>.

The primary purpose of these analyses and this paper was to determine whether levels of various chemical compounds that may influence hormone metabolism and puberty are detectable in the urine of girls. The results published in this paper basically show that three classes of compounds examined (phenols, phthalates, and phytoestrogens) were detectable, and the levels varied substantially.

Phenols and phthalates are added to many products, while phytoestrogens occur naturally in certain plant foods. Please feel free in contacting us if you have any questions about these findings.

At the next Tea Talk on Friday, March 9th, Dr. Gayle Windham will be talking about these findings and other aspects of why we are interested in studying environmental chemical exposures and puberty. Dr. Windham is one of our key researchers. She is from the Environmental Health Investigations Branch of the California Department of Health Services.

This information on chemical compounds is some of the first information we have about the Cygnet community as a whole and on an individual basis. In the future, we will even be able to identify trends throughout neighborhoods and school districts.

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# Mother's Corner

## The COTC – A Bridge Between Researchers and the Community

by COTC Members\*

An important and unique aspect of CYGNET is the participation of community members in the research study. The Community Outreach and Translation Core – commonly called the COTC – facilitates an ongoing flow of information among researchers, study participants and the communities in which the research is being conducted. The COTC is the “bridge” that both informs the community about the research being done and informs researchers about the community’s interests and concerns about the topics being studied. Most research studies do not have this unique integration.

The COTC includes members from Bay Area breast cancer and environmental advocacy groups, county public health departments, scientists, and community members from Alameda, Marin, and San Francisco counties. A member of the COTC participates in CYGNET’s regular research meetings to ensure that the perspectives of the community and environmental and breast cancer advocates are included throughout the research process – from the development of questionnaires to decisions about what should be analyzed in the blood and urine samples to how the findings are communicated back to study participants and community members.

The COTC engages in activities that inform communities about the research as it is occurring. These activities include producing educational materials such as environmental exposures fact sheets about the chemicals or agents researchers are analyzing, hosting scientific and community education workshops and town hall meetings, and translating research findings in ways that are relevant and useful for those most likely to benefit from the findings.



The COTC is hosting a 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Town Hall Meeting March 10th titled “Environmental Influences on Girls’ Development During Puberty”. The Town Hall Meeting is designed to bring together community members, parents or guardians, educators, public health professionals, community-based organizations, breast cancer and environmental advocates, pediatricians and CYGNET researchers from the Bay Area Breast Cancer and Environment Research Center to participate in discussions and activities focused on girls entering puberty.

Please contact Jo Ann Johnson, 415-507-1949, if you would like more information about the COTC or the March 10th event.

\*COTC members from Alameda, San Francisco and Marin counties include: Janice Barlow, MSN, Jo Ann Johnson, MPH, Kathy Koblick, MPH, Carolene Marks, Neena Murgai, PhD, MPH, Fern Orenstein, M.Ed, Karen Pierce, JD and Brynn Taylor, MPH.

## Residential & School History: Why is this information important to CYGNET?

by Jo Ann Johnson, MPH

At your yearly clinic visit, you are asked to update your daughter’s residential and school addresses. CYGNET asks for this information because there is growing evidence that where a woman lived at birth and during early childhood and adolescence may influence her risk of developing breast cancer later in life.

The residential and school history questionnaire will allow researchers to map across time and geography where families lived during different developmental stages of the Cygnet girls.

This type of residential mapping will allow researchers to build an exposure profile that will advance our understanding of how environmental exposures may influence onset of puberty.

**Jo Ann Johnson, MPH** is the Community Outreach and Education Coordinator for the NIEHS Bay Area Breast Cancer and Environment Research Center, Community Outreach and Translation Core (COTC) at the Zero Breast Cancer ([www.zerobreastcancer.org](http://www.zerobreastcancer.org)) and values engaging the community in the research process.

## Tea Talks: Bringing CYGNET's Together

By Marissa Brownell

Throughout history, tea has been a symbol of a person's physical and mental thirst, and many tea ceremonies promoted the concept of simple beauty, rather than elaborate designs. That is true of the CYGNET Study's Tea Talks, the aim of which is to create a safe, open environment for mothers and daughters to interact with study staff members in a non-clinic setting.

Tea Talks are unique opportunities for CYGNET Study participants and staff to interact and "talk" in informal environments. As CYGNET is a family-oriented study, Tea Talks also provide a forum for other adults, siblings, and friends to join in the fun.

During a two-hour tea talk, attendees are provided with food and beverages (namely tea!), are welcomed to the event and introductions are made. The youth are escorted to their own "kid-friendly" area, where the girls complete a youth activity (previous examples being hip-hop dance instruction, holiday table centerpieces, and girl-power collages), while the adults are presented with data relevant to the scope of the study (the first series focused on the history of CYGNET and its impact on health), presented by study investigators or experts in the chosen topic. Every talk includes a Question & Answer session, where parents are encouraged to ask questions about



Participants from the San Francisco Tea Talk in October 2006

the study, their daughter, and other relevant topics. Every talk finishes with an awards ceremony for the children, and a presentation of their new "activity."

Tea Talks are held three times per year, varying sites between the East Bay, San Rafael, and San Francisco, and are always free. Participation in a Tea Talk is voluntary, and provides a unique opportunity for participants to interact with others in the Cygnet community!

**Marissa Brownell** is a Research Assistant with the CYGNET Study whose favorite tea is Chamomile.

## The Cygnet Community

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We are also starting to analyze the data that were collected from your first visit. We presented some preliminary descriptive analyses at a conference in Berkeley in November 2006, some of which we already described to you in the previous newsletter. As these analyses are finalized, we will describe them in future newsletters, and provide you with opportunities to obtain copies of these papers.

In addition to these preliminary scientific findings, there has been local interest in the study. There have been brief articles about the CYGNET Study in the Contra Costa Times, the Oakland Tribune, Marin Scope, and the Marin Independent Journal. So, your participation is already making some impact on the awareness of the community about the importance of the study.

Thank you for your continuing participation in the CYGNET Study.

**Lawrence H. Kushi, Sc.D.**, Associate Director, Division of Research, Kaiser Permanente, is the Principal Investigator of the CYGNET Study.



## Two Day Cygnet Experience for the Whole Family: March 9th & 10th

CYGNET and the COTC have joined together to offer a two-day CYGNET experience for the whole family, starting with a Friday evening Tea Talk at Children's Hospital and Research Center Oakland's Hall of Health, a hands-on museum and science center. The Tea Talk is followed on Saturday by a Town Hall Meeting—designed to present and discuss current research on girls' development during puberty.

These two events are wonderful opportunities for Cygnet girls and their parents to meet other cygnets, staff members and investigators in an informal setting.

Come Join Us!

## East Bay Tea Talk at the Children's Hospital Oakland Hall Of Health: March 9th, 2007

### Measuring Environmental Exposures and Research on their Health Effects, with a focus on the CYGNET Study

*Speaker:* **Gayle Windham**, PhD, co-investigator, CA  
Department of Health Services

*Youth Activity:* Hands-On Healthy Museum and Science Center. Cygnets will explore science with all their senses interacting with displays and models, games and puzzles, electronic quizzes, medical equipment and computers!

2230 Shattuck Avenue (Lower Level), Berkeley, CA  
One block from Downtown Berkeley BART Station,  
or validated parking at:  
Allston WY Standard Parking, 2061 Allston Way.  
Metered parking ending at 6 pm on surrounding streets.

*Time:* **6:00 pm - 8:00 pm**

For more information or to register,  
contact Marissa Brownell at 510- 891-3879.

**Event is free**, but space is limited –  
so RSVP today at 510-891-3884



## 2nd Annual Town Hall Meeting March 10th, 2007

### Environmental Influences on Girls' Development During Puberty

*Zero Breast Cancer, University of California, San Francisco, and Kaiser Permanente Division of Research invite the community to participate in a Town Hall Meeting to understand the different stages of girls' pubertal maturation and the rationale for the Bay Area Breast Cancer and Environment Research Center's (BABCERC) CYGNET Study.*

**Janice Barlow**, BABCERC Community Outreach and Translation Core Chair and Executive Director of Zero Breast Cancer, will host the forum.

**Dr. Robert Hiatt**, BABCERC Center Director and UCSF Director of Population Sciences, will present the Center history and historical trends on the changing age of puberty.

**CYGNET** researchers from the California Department of Environmental Health Services, UCSF, and Kaiser Division of Research will discuss the role environmental exposures, stress, diet and fitness may play in the onset of puberty.

At noon, **Joanie Greggains**, host of TV Exercise Show, *Morning Stretch*, and KGO radio, *The Joanie Greggains Show*, will engage participants in twenty minutes of lively stretching activities and give helpful tips on how to stretch and exercise while sitting in a chair.

Following lunch, an interactive panel will discuss practical suggestions and anticipatory guidance for parents, health professionals, educators, and breast cancer and environmental health advocates. The panelists will include **Dr. Nadine Burke**, Pediatrician and Medical Director of the newly opened Bayview Child Health Center; **Cindy Zedeck**, MA, Program Director of Packard Pediatric Weight Control Program at Stanford; **Susan Schwartz**, MPA, Education Coordinator for Zero Breast Cancer; and San Francisco Supervisor **Michela Alioto-Pier**.

835 Market Street, 5th Floor  
San Francisco, CA  
Directly above Powell Street BART Station

*Time:* **9:30 am - 2:00 pm**  
*Registration begins at:* **8:30 am**

For more information or to register, contact Jo Ann Johnson  
at 415-507-1949 or joannj@zerobreastcancer.org

## Getting Involved In Your Community

by Nicole Hermanson

When you came to your first clinic visit, you joined the “CYGNET community,” full of girls nearly the same age as you, who would all be wearing pedometers, finding out about how their bodies are growing, and more.



But you are a member of lots of different communities - the town that you live in is a great example of another community you're a member of. It probably has many volunteer activities that help make your town and the people who live in it (like you!) safer, healthier and happier.

By joining in those activities, you could be helping lots of other people, just like you are helping lots of other people by being in CYGNET.

### MARIN

#### Marin Human Race: May 12th, the Marin Fairgrounds

Thousands of your neighbors and friends will be getting together to go on a 4-mile walk run to benefit local nonprofits and schools... maybe even yours! Just imagine how many steps you could get on your pedometer! There will be a fun fair during and after the race at the fairgrounds and lagoon. There will be yummy snacks and fun activities. [www.marinhumanrace.org](http://www.marinhumanrace.org)

### SAN FRANCISCO

#### Restore Native Plants in Golden Gate National Park

Bring your friends and be ready to get dirty as you help to keep Golden Gate National Park looking good. They will provide snacks, tools and training so that you will know how to plant just like your mom and dad. [www.parksconservancy.org](http://www.parksconservancy.org)

### ALAMEDA

#### Help Restore Oakland Wetlands with your friends!

Dress warm and be ready to get dirty as you become a part of many people who are helping to keep the San Francisco Bay looking great. Gloves and tools are provided, so with the help of the other volunteers you can learn how to plant and make your community look nice. Please RSVP at 510-452-9261 x109 [www.saveSFbay.org](http://www.saveSFbay.org)

**Nicole Hermanson, MPA** is a Research Assistant with the CYGNET Study and loves volunteering in her community to keep it clean.

# Girl's Group

## Yoga Pose of the Month!

By Angela Beeck

The diggety dog pose builds strong arms and legs and increases hip flexibility. It also fosters trust and leadership. It is silly and fun and can be done with pairs in larger groups.

### Three Easy Steps:

1. Decide which partner will be letter A and which partner will be letter B.

Letter A partner is the **dog walker**

Letter B partner is the **dog**.



### 2.

Letter B starts in downward facing dog with flat hands and stretched legs and Letter A is standing by her side.

Letter A partner starts to lead her dog around by gently grabbing Letter B partner's shirt and guiding Letter B to different areas of the room.

Letter B walks with straight legs and arms. Switch partners!



### 3.

Don't forget to pee dogs!

As soon as Letter A stops, it is time for Letter B to bend her knee and stretch her leg up and pretend to pee!

Switch legs.

- Letter A's don't forget to be gentle with your partner.
- Don't forget to switch letters and be both a dog and a dog walker.
- Play some music and be silly!

**Angela Beeck** is a CYGNET Research Assistant and Yoga Instructor who is now pursuing her Masters in Child Life at Mills College.

## CYGNET Trivia

**Q:** In which states are daylight savings not observed?

**A:** *Hawaii and Arizona*

### *Fun Facts:*

- An easy way to remember when to change your clock is the expression, "Spring forward ... Fall back."
- Daylight saving time (DST), also known as summer time, starts when communities all over the world adjust the time forward by one hour for spring, summer, and early autumn.
- One of the biggest reasons we change our clocks to DST is that it saves energy. When we use energy and electricity for lighting out homes, it is directly connected to when we go to bed and when we get up.
- This year DST will start 2 weeks earlier than usual, on March 11th, and end one week later, on November 4th. DST was extended to try and save more energy.

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