



east bay **community action program**  
THE BRIDGE TO SELF-RELIANCE

## Esther Trneny- She's Changing Careers but Committed to EBCAP

By Maggie Laurianno, Communications Specialist



Esther Trneny, a nurse at East Bay Family Health Care in East Providence, a division of East Bay Community Action Program (EBCAP), is new to the job but not to the agency. After receiving her Associates Degree in Nursing earlier this year, Trneny made the transition from being a Breastfeeding Peer Counselor in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) nutrition program to working at the health center. *(Photo at left was taken of*

*Trneny on her first day on the job as a Registered Nurse)*

Trneny, who grew up in Western Australia and moved to Rhode Island in 1992, enjoys learning, and is planning to pursue further education to become a Family Nurse Practitioner. She is a role model for her two sons who are both currently enrolled in college – one studying History and Education, and the other Environmental Studies– and for her two daughters, who are currently in middle school and high school.

Trneny might be described as a lifelong learner. Her first college degree was a B.A. in Communications, and before coming to EBCAP she worked in advertising and as a journalist. That background in writing helped her add “published author” to her list of accomplishments. Her first book,

Brigitte Weiss, was published this year. It is a work of fiction which is loosely based on the life of her grandmother. It took about 12 months to write the book and some more time to edit it. She shared that she is “working on a few more (novels).” She writes in her spare time while working full-time at EBCAP.

Trneny worked in the WIC program for a total of about 12 years. Among the highlights of her work with WIC is a prestigious honor for the program that came from the United States Department of Agriculture (U.S.D.A.). On August 2, 2018, she was at the RI State House, along with Beth Nitkin, EBCAP’s WIC Director, to accept the U.S.D.A.’s Award of Excellence. It was the first time that a Rhode Island agency had ever been recognized with this award. And Nitkin credits Trneny for her work to increase breastfeeding initiation and duration rates among participants in the WIC program. “Esther has been an amazing champion for all of our pregnant and nursing moms. Her level of passion and commitment to assisting moms with breastfeeding issues has been truly exceptional. She genuinely cares and understands the many challenges that a new mom can face, especially when having to return to work,” said Nitkin. Out of 117 applications from across the United States, only 12 programs received the honor.

It was in May 2018 that Trneny completed work on her second college degree-- an Associates Degree in Nursing from Community College of Rhode Island. She graduated with high honors. Initially she had intended only to complete the required science courses to get her international certification as a lactation consultant, but continued because she realized she “loved nursing.” During the course of her studies, working in a hospital was a consideration, but she decided against it when she observed that in the hospital setting there isn’t an opportunity to know the patient and help them over the long-term. She said, “I love getting to know patients, and appreciate continuity of care. So, I set my sights on a nursing position with EBCAP, which I was thrilled to be hired for.”

Trneny said she truly appreciates the support her WIC mentor, friend, and (now former) boss, Nitkin, provided for her during her nursing studies. “Beth’s flexibility, support, and encouragement, were crucial to my success,” she said. “Her enthusiasm, kindness, and willingness to work around the sometimes challenging schedule required by CCRI were unhesitating. I’m so grateful for everything she’s done for me over the years.”

Now as a nurse Trneny works on the “Blue Pod” (a model of integrated care employed by EBCAP that is comprised of an interdisciplinary team of healthcare professionals) along with Dr. Sarah Fessler, EBCAP’s Chief Medical Officer, and Dr. Diane Minasian. She describes the two doctors as “compassionate, kind, smart, and endearing.” She is grateful for the opportunity to learn from them and others at the health center. “Everyone is supportive of each other and me. They’re kind and willing to share their knowledge. I feel incredibly lucky to work here,” she said.

“It is a true gift to have such a committed employee stay within the agency and grow and share her knowledge as she is promoted from one department to another. Retaining outstanding employees, like Esther, is important to the growth and strength of the agency,” said Norma Conley, Vice President of Human Resources. Trneny expressed why she is committed to her work with the organization. She said, “The things I love most about working for EBCAP, both in my prior lactation job, and in my new nursing position: ensuring health equity for our patients; treating people with compassion and dignity; stretching my mind and learning new things; (and working with) amazing, kind, and dedicated colleagues.”

EBCAP’s East Bay Family Health Care staff members help every patient get the care he/she needs, at the right time, and in the right place. In addition to primary healthcare, patients also have access to dental care, behavioral healthcare, and social support services. Care teams coordinate services through an integrated care model. East Bay Community Action Program is a private, non-profit

501 (c) (3) corporation that provides a wide array of health and human services to the residents of Rhode Island's east bay including the municipalities of: East Providence, Barrington, Warren, Bristol, Little Compton, Tiverton, Portsmouth, Middletown, Newport and Jamestown. For more information regarding services and to learn how you too can **Support the CAP** which supports the East Bay community, please visit [ebcap.org](http://ebcap.org).

-End-