

FORTUNE

NEWS/TRENDS

BEAUTIFUL BABIES

■ When Blue Cross & Blue Shield of the National Capital Area agreed to contribute \$271,000 to the Beautiful Babies media campaign promoting prenatal care for women in Washington, it was more than a good-will gesture. The insurance company had been paying the hospital bills for scores of low-birth-weight newborns, at a cost of up to \$200,000 per infant. Every healthy baby could help the company's bottom line.

Beautiful Babies is the brainchild of Jerry Wishnow, the president of **Wishnow Group**, a broadcasting consulting firm in Marblehead, Massachusetts. A Sixties activist turned Eighties entrepreneur, he brings together corporations, nonprofit groups, and television stations to produce and distribute public-service campaigns on topics ranging from race relations to auto theft.

Says Wishnow: "The station gets a vehicle to build viewer loyalty and keep the regulators happy. The corporate sponsor gets millions of dollars' worth of air time." Among the companies he has signed: **American Express, Atari, Digital Equipment, Enron, and Sears.**

Washington's NBC affiliate, WRC-TV, produced news spots, specials, and public-service announcements, each featuring the Blue Cross/Blue Shield name. Meanwhile the March of Dimes, the nonprofit sponsor, mailed pregnant women a coupon book worth \$700, covering everything from vitamins to child care classes. To validate the coupons, a mother-

to-be must see a doctor for regular checkups.

In the campaign's first full year, Blue Cross spent \$1 million less on neonatal care than before the project started, despite rising hospital costs. Infant mortality dropped 7%. Now Wishnow is taking his baby to Chicago, Philadelphia, Massachusetts, South Carolina, and Tennessee. — J.L.

Wishnow is in Boston, where his baby program soon will be.



BEAUTIFUL
Babies
RIGHT FROM THE START.



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