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Books for Babies Program Marks 150th

RANSON, W.Va. – The First Books for Babies Program, which was established at Jefferson Memorial Hospital in December 2007, recently celebrated a book presentation to baby number 150.

Since last December, parents of all babies born at Jefferson Memorial Hospital have received a children’s book along with information on the benefits of reading to babies. According to Charlotte Porter, project leader, this has been a collaborative effort between the Shepherdstown Public Library, the Jefferson County Reading Council, and WVU Hospitals-East’s Jefferson Memorial Hospital.

“Reading to babies has many benefits including developing language skills, enhancing listening skills, building awareness, reinforcing basic concepts, stimulating the imagination and providing the physical closeness so critical to the social and emotional development of a child,” Porter said.

Thanks to donations from organizations such as the hospital auxiliary and the Jefferson County Commission, First Books for Babies has been fulfilling its mission to promote literacy and give every baby born at Jefferson Memorial Hospital a new book.

. “New parents head home from the hospital with lots of information and important equipment they will need to care for their newborns. We think this should also include a quality, age-appropriate book,” she added.

Anyone interested in supporting the program can send donations to First Books for Babies, Shepherdstown Public Library, c/o Libby Sturm, 457 Berridge Drive, Shepherdstown, WV 25443.

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Photo Cutline: Representatives of First Books for Babies recently presented their 150th book to the parents of a newborn at Jefferson Memorial Hospital. Pictured from left to right: (standing) Mary Sue Eldridge and Charlotte Porter from First Books for Babies, JMH OB Nurse Jane Wayne, and Kathy Blue, First Books for Babies; (seated) Allison Bell and Brian Bell, holding infant Grace Marie.