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MAR 2010 | BY MEGHAN STREIT | COMMENTS (1)

The Junior League Throws a Baby Shower for Low-Income Moms-To-Be

TAGS: Junior League of Evanston North Shore, Evanston Hospital, perinatal family support, baby shower

Giving birth to your first baby is an exciting and joyous event, but as any mother knows, it can also be really stressful—even frightening—at first.

For many of us, the hectic experience of bringing home a baby is made easier by supportive family and friends: an aunt to throw us a baby shower, an understanding friend with children of her own on the other end of the phone, and our own mother by our side to walk us through the details of caring for an infant. But some less fortunate new mothers have to figure out how to care for their babies without the kinds of support systems many women take for granted.

That is why the Junior League of Evanston-North Shore is partnering with Evanston Hospital's Perinatal Family Support Center to throw a baby shower for a group of low-income expectant mothers.

"One of the things we talked about as group is the privilege of having great mothers to help us become great mothers," says Anna Pappas, a Junior League member and the event chair. "Some of these women may not have the same mothering experience or access to information to be great mothers, so our focus has been to help empower them."

The event, "Baby Steps," will take place on April 24 and will include an educational program on topics like breastfeeding and nutrition, post-partum depression and car seat safety. Speakers include Dr. Kim Johnson, OB/GYN at Evanston Hospital; Kathleen Widmer, traffic safety manager from the Illinois Secretary of State's Office; and Elizabeth Thomas, of the local nutrition nonprofit Nurture, who will conduct a session on preparing baby food.

"This event will provide a group of young women in need with community support and resources at a critical moment in their lives," writes Mayra Soto, coordinator of the Connections Program for Pregnant and Parenting Teens. "I hope it will help prepare them for the many challenges and joys of motherhood."

Like a traditional baby shower, the day will also include lunch and gifts for the moms-to-be. Pappas says the Junior League has created a gift registry to collect baby gear such as bottle warmers, onesies, newborn tubs, and Pack 'N Plays. Each expectant mother will receive a set of gifts.

"If we can take some of the stress of the basic stuff off, then the mom can meet the needs of her baby," Pappas says. "It's a whirlwind for those of us who are blessed, let alone for those who aren't."

If you'd like to help an underprivileged expectant mother, monetary donations can be given at www.jle-ns.org (click on Baby Steps), and registry items can be donated at <http://www.target.com/registry/baby/find> (enter First name: Junior, Last name: League).

Group photo: Bottom row: starting from purple shirt all the way to green shirt; Kim Treger-Glenview, Tricia Chookaszian-Wilmette, Anna Pappas-Northbrook, Michelle Brody-Glenview, Karen Fata-



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Lincoln Park, Tonya Douglas-Morton Grove. Top Row: Carrie Cobb-Evanston, Amy Bickers-Winnetka, Beverly Birch-Wilmette, Stacey Van Metre-Kenilworth.

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Kudos to the junior league for coming up with such a great idea.

Posted by Laura Hine at 06:00 pm on Mar 17, 2010

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