

## **Announcement: St. Joseph Becomes Northwest Mothers Milk Bank Drop Off**

January 12, 2015

St. Joseph Medical Center is proud and excited to join Northwest Mothers Milk Bank (NWMMB), Portland, Oregon in becoming a milk drop off site for donated breastmilk. NWMMB is the only non-profit human milk bank in the Pacific Northwest and a member of the Human Milk Banking of North America. This partnership expands NWMMB Milk Drop sites to a total of seven in Washington State and the only one in Pierce County.

The NWMMB promotes similar principles as CHI Franciscan to work in local communities, valuing health, compassion, integrity and generosity. This beautifully reflects our own CHI FHS values of Reverence, Integrity, Compassion and Excellence.

The Northwest Mothers Milk Bank has provided St. Joseph Neonatal Intensive Care Unit 973 ounces of breast milk to the NICU in 2015.

Becoming a Milk Drop site can make the positive difference of saving the lives of some of our most vulnerable patients, premature babies. "Each drop of donated milk is a miracle. Research shows when the most fragile and premature infants receive breastmilk, they have a lower risk of infection and life threatening intestinal complications. They leave the intensive care unit earlier, and later in life have higher IQs and fewer developmental problems" said Dr. Isabella Knox, Neonatologist and NWMMB Medical Co-Director. NWMMB has distributed over 260,000 ounces of pasteurized milk to infants in need.

The need for donor breastmilk has increased, and the Employee Giving Fund donated 2 freezers to hold donor breastmilk for the NICU and another one for the drop off depot. We want to thank the CHI Foundation for their contributions that made it possible for us to become a Milk Drop site. This is a very significant contribution to our local community.

Much thanks goes to Katie Meers RN, IBCLC, St. Joseph Medical Center Lactation Consultant. Katie spearheaded, researched and led the project for us to successfully become a breastmilk Milk Drop off site.

Our milk donors are the real heroes! Generous breast milk donations have been made by some of our St. Joseph employees, including Lactation Consultant, Christine McClendon. Together we can make a life changing difference for families.

All donors provide a complete medical history and lifestyle screening and undergo blood tests- similar to the screening used at blood banks. Once the mother is screened by the NWMMB, St. Joseph Medical Center can be a convenient place for moms to learn about milk donation and donate frozen milk, which is then shipped and processed at the NWMMB. If you have any further questions, please call the Lactation Consultants at 253-382-8580.

For more information about donating, please see the following link to Northwest Mothers Milk Bank <http://www.nwmb.org/>.