

# **Nurses' Notes**

## **St. John's Parish Health Ministries' Newsletter**

### **January 2016 Health News**

**January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month** – Not all birth defects can be prevented. Many occur before a woman knows she is pregnant. There are some known steps women of childbearing age can take to reduce their future babies' risks.

- Take a vitamin with 400 micrograms of Folic Acid every day. – Reduces the risk of spina bifida
- Avoid alcohol, tobacco and street drugs.
- Avoid infections by washing hands frequently and being up-to-date on vaccinations including flu shots.
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet
- Avoid raw or undercooked meat and raw milk
- Discuss with your healthcare provider any medical conditions you have or medications you take that could affect a possible pregnancy
- Ask him/her about avoiding any work or home chemicals that may affect an unborn child

**Be good to your baby before he or she is born!**

**Giving is Good for Your Health** – Charity includes love of God and love of man. Charity also means being generous in action or donation to the needy as a way of expressing our love. *"Each one should give as much as he has decided on his own initiative, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."* 1 Co 9:7 In addition to spiritual benefits, giving has many positive physical and emotional effects. Studies\* have shown health benefits of giving:

- Lower blood pressure
- "Helpers' High" due to release of endorphins – Makes one feel happier and is addictive!
- Improved self esteem
- Less depression
- Lower stress levels
- Giving has even shown to improve recovery from coronary events

\*References: "Why Giving Is Good for Your Health? [clevelandclinic.org/2014/12](http://clevelandclinic.org/2014/12)

"Human Fronto-Mesolimbic Networks Guide Decisions About Charitable Donation." *Nat'l Acad. of Sciences* 10/17/06

Many individuals and groups at St. John's must have lower depression and blood pressure this New Year. In addition to all who participated in the atrium giving board, others gave anonymously to additional needy families who came for help. In all, children from 15 families who may have had no visit from Santa had a wonderful Christmas! Thank you and God bless all St. John's anonymous Santas and the people they helped!

### **Health Ministry Happenings**

**No health ministries' meeting in January. Stay warm! Next meeting is Feb. 21<sup>st</sup>.**  
**GriefShare – Next series begin March 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. Call for information.**

**Jan. 23-24 after all masses – Blood pressure screening in library. Open to all!**

*For information on above or other health-related issues or disability advocacy, call:*

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