

Valley Hospital Dons 'Little Hats' To Promote Infant Heart Health

by [John Haffey](#) 02/18/2016 [lifestyle](#) Content Partner: [The Valley Hospital](#)



RIDGEWOOD, N.J. -- The American Heart Association has partnered with The Valley Hospital and two other hospitals in New Jersey to provide new moms a hand-made red infant cap during the month of February.

Along with Community Medical Center in Toms River and Cape Regional Medical Center in Cape May Court House, Valley Hospital's "Little Hats, Big Hearts" program will provide 300 new moms a hand-made red infant cap

during February, which is American Heart Month.

The initiative celebrates heart health while raising awareness of congenital heart defects (CHD), the most common type of birth defect in the country. Additionally, the effort is aimed to empower new moms to take charge of their own wellbeing while starting a healthy lifestyle for the entire family.

Congenital heart defects are structural problems with the heart present at birth. They result when a mishap occurs during heart development soon after conception and often before the mother is aware that she is pregnant. Defects range in severity from simple problems, such as "holes" between chambers of the heart, to very severe malformations, such as complete absence of one or more chambers or valves.

"It was quite overwhelming to open the giant boxes of hand knitted red hats, and read some of the notes sent with the donations. Some people were donating hats in memory of a child lost to Congenital Heart Disease while some knitted red hats were donated to honor a child whose life was saved because of funded research or surgical advances," said Bill Thompsen, Senior Vice President of Health Strategies at the American Heart Association in New Jersey. "We are so grateful for everyone's generosity and support to help raise awareness for this important issue."

Thanks to efforts of the American Heart Association, New Jersey law requires hospitals and other birth facilities to administer a pulse-oximetry test to each baby 24 hours after birth, which can help identify heart defects. The American Heart Association also creates guidelines and trains parents, caregivers and medical professionals CPR specifically for infants and children.

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