

Bryan hospital conducts children's tours

by Janet G. Joyce
Battalion Reporter

Fifteen children, ages 2 through 10, have mothers who are expecting babies. To help prepare them for the arrival of their new brother or sister, they toured the labor, delivery and maternity sections of St. Joseph Hospital in Bryan.

The children's tour is the brainchild of registered nurse Judy Skove, the obstetrical and gynecological coordinator for the hospital, who introduced the program in May as part of family-oriented maternity care. Tours of this kind are conducted in other places, usually larger hospitals, but typically are not done in smaller hospitals because the demand is not as great, Skove said.

"We had some mothers ask us about it (and that) is the main reason I decided that it really

was worthwhile for us to go ahead with it," Skove said. "So far, response has been fantastic."

Originally, one tour a month was planned, with 12 to 15 children per tour, but additional tours have been conducted because of a large demand for the tour.

Dr. Candida Lutes, an associate professor of psychology at the University, who has a research interest in infant and child development, said tours like the one offered at St. Joseph are an excellent way to show children where their mothers will be and what will happen.

One way parents can prepare their children, Lutes said, is to talk to them about what is going to happen to mom.

"If you don't tell them what's going on, they see things going on and they make their own in-

terpretations," she said, "and young children can have some pretty bizarre interpretations."

Lutes also said young children often feel displaced by their new brother or sister.

"Because they're maturing very rapidly, they're picking up new skills and they seem to give an indication that 'Well mom, if you don't like somebody being mature and you really needed a new baby, why didn't you tell me? I can act babyish,'" Lutes said. "They're wondering if they fell down on the job of being the family baby."

But the birth of a child can be a positive experience for children.

"There's often quite a bit of affection that will come out and this can be an exciting time, especially if the parents have prepared their other children for the birth of the new baby," she said.

During the tour, the children are shown a labor or delivery room if one is available. There, Skove explains that the doctors listen to the baby's heart. She demonstrates the fetal monitor, a super-sensitive stethoscope with a speaker, over the heart of one of the children.

The children are then shown a transport incubator into which a doll has been placed. They roll the incubator to the nursery on the second floor, just as a baby would be taken from the delivery room to the nursery.

The tours are conducted on the first Wednesday of each month and are limited to children of women who will have babies at the hospital. Each child must be accompanied by at least one parent.



Two-year-old Megan Homer of Bryan holds a plastic "baby" as nurse Judy Skove looks on.

staff photo by Janet G. Joyce

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Despite protestors Helms rips liberals

United Press International
AUSTIN — Despite about 100 protestors carrying signs stating "Our Bodies, Our Choice" and "Helms' Bill Means

Women Die," Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., scarcely mentioned the abortion issue at a Republican fundraising appearance Monday.

Instead, he attacked the nation's press, criticized welfare cheaters, ridiculed homosexuals and called for a halt to communist intervention in Central America in a speech before about 500 people. The \$25-a-plate luncheon was in honor of Texas Senate President Pro Tem Walter Mengden during Mengden's Governor for a Day program.

Helms said "wrong-wingers" are leading a Senate filibuster against a proposed constitutional amendment to ban abortions. The amendment is aimed at "putting the brakes on the slaughter of innocent unborn children," he said.

Helms also blasted the nation's big newspapers and television networks.

"Much of the distress of this country can be laid at the steps of the major news media of this country," he added.

"I don't really worry about what they say. I know they regard the truth as precious. Otherwise, they wouldn't use it so sparingly."

To say that he is imposing his religious beliefs on others through the abortion issue is "hogwash," Helms said.

Outside the hotel, members of the National Organization for Women, Students for Choice, the Women's Political Caucus

and the Texas Abortion Action League peacefully protested.

TARAL director Jan Helms said the subject of Helms' speech did not matter because he was trying to "redefine the Constitution to suit his philosophy."

"Whether he speaks at an abortion or school prayer, talking about an erosion of the Constitution," she said, "I don't need to hear what Helms has to say."

Friese predicted the abortion amendment will not pass.

"I'm pretty confident the going to lose that vote," she said.

Helms said "I'm proud to be a right-winger. I know the wrong-wingers are the ones who are editor of the Austin paper (the Austin American-Statesman) if I read this morning."

Sharing the podium with Helms were Texas evangelists James Roloff and Lester Roloff.

Helms said Central America could become another Vietnam for the United States, "I don't let them (communists) preserve and store freedom."

He predicted some 10 million Central Americans could be grateful to the U.S. if they are placed by communist forces.

"If we abandon them we'll pay for it," he added.

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