

Warren group donates safe cribs to Somerset Hills Y

By JEFF WEBER • STAFF WRITER • December 28, 2010

When Joyce Davis lost her son, Garret, because of an unsafe crib-related condition, she vowed to learn as much as she could about how to make cribs less hazardous and educate parents about safe sleeping practices.

Her years of research and advocacy helped lead to the birth of Keeping Babies Safe in 2005, and now the Warren-based company is aiding families, hospitals and health-related organizations across the nation by providing safer cribs and other child products.

"Cribs continue to be the leading cause of death and injury among all nursery products," said Davis, whose son was only 4 1/2 when he died after a supplemental mattress that was advertised as suitable was added to their popular brand of portable crib. "There is a critical need for education and awareness of the hazards that are in many homes and day-care centers."

Davis' current project is hitting home close to home: Keeping Babies Safe has donated 12 new cribs to the Millicent Fenwick Day Care Center at the Somerset Hills YMCA, 140 Mount Airy Road in the Basking Ridge section of Bernards.

The money for the cribs was generated from an Oct. 3 Somerset Hills YMCA and Keeping Babies Safe joint 5K that raised approximately \$48,000. In addition to the money, Davis has provided employees of the YMCA, as well as local parents, with crib and sleep safety information, product recall information and safety tips.

"The parents are thrilled, but the thing is that most parents are not informed. They don't know, and that's why we exist," said Davis, who organizes the 5K every year in Basking Ridge's Harry Dunham Park. "The Y was proactive, which really made a difference."

Davis' goal is to eventually work with all 42 New Jersey YMCAs to replace their dangerous — and soon to be banned by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in June 2011 — drop-side cribs with the newer, safer models now in use at the

Somerset Hills location.

She also wants to gain more state and national funding to further implement Project Safe Crib, a training seminar for nurses and health-care staff, as well as call attention to "Safe Sleep for Babies" — a video on her website, www.keepingbabiesafe.org, that is being rolled out nationally to hospitals, day-care centers and health education centers.

"We've got to get the word out there. There have been 11 million recalls on cribs (as of 2008), 9 million of which were drop-side cribs," said Davis, who has raised money to donate more than 2,000 cribs since her organization's inception. "If I had known all this information 10 years ago, I never would have put my son in that crib. If I had this information 10 years ago, my son would be here today."

Donations to Keeping Babies Safe can be made by sending a check to Keeping Babies Safe, 4 Ashwood Court, Warren, NJ 07059.

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Pictured in the Waddler Room at the Somerset Hills YMCA's Day Care Center in the Basking Ridge section of Bernards are staff members Jhovanna Ibanez of Bridgewater, left, and Priscilla Cirillo of Peapack, with four children in the new cribs donated by Warren-based Keeping Babies Safe. (SUBMITTED PHOTO)

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