



Beads of Courage

By Vicki Trotter

In October, my daughter gave birth to our precious granddaughter, who arrived ten weeks early. She was in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit for four weeks. After losing a child almost two years ago, this miracle baby was a true blessing. We learned to appreciate the pain of those going through similar situations and the necessity of clinging to Christ.

Over time, Hebron has contributed many handmade items to Gwinnett Medical's ICU to lend a sense of home for the families of infants in crisis, driven by the love of Christ and inspired by the dedicated and compassionate medical professionals who make such hard times easier to bear. Hebron's *Gift of Hope* efforts (2008) began our relationship with GMC's NICU, and we have continued with several projects.

Last fall, Hebron was contacted by *Beads of Courage*. This program provides strands of beads to parents whose children are enduring cancer treatments or who are in the NICU. Each bead represents a procedure their child has endured. Having something to hold while their baby is out of reach at the hospital tangibly represents the courage it takes to face painful days and can remind them, as they pray over each procedure and share their stories with others, that the Lord is with them, no matter the circumstances.

Beads of Courage informed us that the GMC's NICU was the first NICU to sponsor this program, and they asked us to help. In February, a team of Hebron women gathered to sew a total of 175 whimsical cloth bags which will be used to hold the beads. Our gift was delivered several days ago, but we'd love to make this an ongoing ministry. If you have sewing ability and want to join us in giving to our community, contact me at vtrotter@hebronchurch.org to learn more. You may also minister to other hospitals participating in Beads of Courage (see <http://www.beadsofcourage.org/>).

You can download the pattern here: <http://www.annapolisquiltguild.org/patterns.htm>

To read more, check out the following link to Gwinnett Daily Post's recent feature about *Beads of Courage*:

http://www.gwinnettdailypost.com/home/headlines/Beads_program_puts_childrens_fighting_spirit_in_parents_hands_114769314.html