

The Virgin Islands Consortium

JFL's Premie Parade Kicks Off Prematurity Awareness Week

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ST. CROIX -- Despite heavy showers Sunday, former graduates of the Governor Juan F. Luis Hospital & Medical Center's (JFL) Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and their families, showed up to parade from Sunny Isle Shopping Center to the hospital.

According to a press release the medical facility issued on Monday, the second annual JFL "Premie Parade" featured former premature graduates of the NICU, as well as other former premies. The procession was led by the Adventist Youth VI Pulse drum corps, and JFL physicians, nurses and staff members were also present.

“It’s a small unit, but it’s a powerful unit,” said JFL NICU Nurse Manager Faye John-Baptise. “I see a lot of our little babies, no longer babies, walking around and they’re doing well...they’re thriving. For me, that is the greatest gift” concluded John-Baptiste. Afterwards, there was a Family Fun Day that included face painting, music and food for all.

The Preemie Parade kicked off a week-long schedule of events. This year, JFL has a number of activities to mark the observation of World Prematurity Day on Tuesday, November 17, 2015. On Tuesday, there will be tours of the NICU, and a number of exciting activities to help support the NICU. JFL will also join many prominent buildings and landmarks that will be lit in purple on World Prematurity Day to symbolize hope for a healthy start for more babies worldwide. The JFL Purple Lighting for Prematurity Awareness will take place at 6:00 p.m.

The month of November is nationally recognized as Prematurity Awareness Month, and JFL is committed to increasing awareness by engaging the community through education and activism, according to the release.

The March of Dimes uses the month of November to draw attention to the plight of babies born too soon. Roughly, 15 million babies are born premature around the world each year, and more than one million of them don’t survive their early birth. Prematurity Awareness Month events are scheduled nationwide throughout November to help shine the light on the serious problem of premature births.