

# Interfaith award honors nurse with a knack for helping new parents

Faith Community Nurse of the Year Award bestowed by Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Palm Beach



**Jackie Adames, named Interfaith Community Nurse of the Year by the Interfaith Health and Wellness Association, holds 7-week-old Chase Bougie as she conducts a class titled "Nurturing Your Newborn" at Spanish River Church in Boca Raton. (Scott Fisher)**

By Lois Solomon | South Florida Sun Sentinel

BOCA RATON - When Jackie Adames talks, the babies are silent.

They must sense her calm demeanor and soothing voice, not to mention the gentle encouragement she offers their mothers, most of whom are new to the business of caring for an infant.

Adames, a registered nurse working at Spanish River Church, admits she performed a feat on Wednesday when 13 babies did not cry during her hourlong session with their moms, who pepper her with questions about sleep and feeding habits. The women say they relish Adames' ability to connect not only with the newborns, but their parents.

"I call her. I e-mail her," said Liza Pettingill, 32, who brought her 9-week-old son, Quin, to Adames' Nurturing Your Newborn class. "We go out to lunch with the group; we go to her house for dinner. She gives up her life to do this for us."

Adames, 49, won the Faith Community Nurse of the Year Award today from the Interfaith Health and Wellness Association, a program of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Palm Beach.

The association supports nurses connected with religious congregations, a growing national movement that is gaining supporters as the American health care system becomes increasingly expensive and complicated.

Five years ago, there were no religious congregations in Palm Beach County with their own nurses; now there are 39 congregations with a combination of paid staff and volunteers, said Bernadette Macy, the association's program administrator.

"Jackie integrates her education with her spirituality," Macy said. "Her program is a model for educating moms and the whole family unit."

Adames, who is also a Spanish River Church member, has organized activities for an assortment of mothers and fathers at the church over the past seven years, including parents-to-be, breast-feeding mothers and new fathers. She believes the programs, which are packed and constantly expanding, satisfy a community need for outreach to a group that needs information.

"I'm sharing my love of God in a natural way at a vulnerable time for these moms," said Adames, a mother of four children in their 20s. "We love them unconditionally and non-judgmentally."

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