

## Cord blood bank celebrates 100,000th donation, 15 years



### **Free, quick, and painless.**

New mom and recent cord blood donor Jacquelyn Weidinger used these words to describe the public cord blood donation process before remembering her favorite part: “potentially life-saving.”

Looking at the numbers, it would seem as if many mothers agree. With the birth of daughter Delilah on Jan. 18, Weidinger became the 100,000th donor to the St. Louis Cord Blood Bank at SSM Cardinal Glennon.

Jacquelyn Weidinger and Dennis McCullough spend time with new baby Delilah.

“I knew Delilah’s cord blood would go to a good cause. If I can help anyone, I am happy to do it,” Weidinger said.

The milestone donation came at a great time: The St. Louis Cord Blood Bank is celebrating its 15th year at an open house on March 3.

Every year, thousands of patients are diagnosed with diseases that might be treated with a stem cell transplant. Each donation to the St. Louis Cord Blood Bank increases the chances that patients needing a transplant can quickly find a match. Cord blood can be used to treat more than 70 different diseases.

Kathy Mueckl, nurse coordinator at the St. Louis Cord Blood Bank, called the program the “ultimate recycling project.”

“The whole process is really incredible,” Mueckl said. “By donating, you are taking what would normally be thrown into the trash and potentially using it to save someone’s life.”

For Weidinger, the decision to donate was easy.

“I am excited that I could help,” Weidinger said as she and McCullough finished packing to leave their hospital room at SSM St. Joseph Health Center. “It was either the trash can or the possibility of saving a life. Who wouldn’t choose life?”