

# SCSU to open breast-feeding center for 7/27/ school year

By Kate Kompas

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Jenni Larson didn't think much about breast-feeding until she learned about its health benefits to moms and babies.

Larson, a St. Cloud resident, was encouraged by her husband to breast-feed, and she attended La Leche League meetings to learn more. Now the mother of two is a league leader for the international breast-feeding advocacy group.

She breast-fed her son until he was 3, and she still breast-feeds her 20-month-old daughter. Larson knows she is at an advantage because she is able to stay home with them during the day.

Breast-feeding advocates want it to get easier for women who have to balance motherhood with their work to be able to breast-feed for as long as they want to.

They hope it will get easier at St. Cloud State University, which has about 15,000 students and is one of the largest employers in the area. The university will open its first breast-feeding center for students and employees sometime next month, in time for

## From Page 1C

# SCSU

Dubbed the "Baby Cafe," the lactation room will be inside the St. Cloud State Women's Center's new facility at Fifth Avenue and Sixth Street South.

The room has a sink, is wheelchair-accessible, is decorated in soothing colors and will have a hospital-grade breast pump, said Jane Olsen, Women's Center director. It also will have a lock on the door, which is important for women who want privacy.

"The reality is that women continue to add new complexities to their lives in terms of careers and educational goals and families, sometimes all at the same time," Olsen said. "We need to support women in their professional and personal lives."

Besides being a safe place, the Baby Cafe also will be an opportunity to educate women about the benefits of breast-feeding, Olsen said.

The majority of the costs of \$2,600 room is being paid for through a CentraCare Health Foundation grant.

Mary T. Ballengee, a nontradi-

## Walks

At least two walks are planned for the St. Cloud area to support and educate people about breast-feeding. Here is the information:

**What:** A Walk Around Lake George in St. Cloud

**When:** 9 a.m. registration; walk begins at 9:30 a.m. Aug. 7.

**Details:** There is no cost, and it's just a lap around Lake George.

**What:** A walk at Veterans Park in Paynesville.

**When:** Aug. 6. Registration is at 6:30 p.m., with the walk starting at 7:15 p.m.

**Details:** After the walk, Paynesville Area La Leche League leaders will sell ice cream sun-daes.

tional St. Cloud State student, is one of the women who consulted on how the room should look. Ballengee, 52, breast-fed her three children, who are now all adults.

It was important that the room have a calming atmosphere, with soft lighting and colors, Ballengee said.

Most of the time, workplace areas where women can breast-feed are "either a huge conference room or just a janitor's closet," Ballengee said.