

Martin County midwife program awarded for community work

June 25, 2003

By Dwayne Robinson staff writer

STUART — From facing extinction less than three years ago to being honored for its work ethic, the Nurse Midwife Maternity Program of Martin County has survived and triumphed.

The program was awarded a 2003 Davis Productivity Award on Tuesday. The award, given by the state and Florida TaxWatch, recognizes state employees who improve and innovate community services while reducing costs.

"We were really excited because we really went through some hard times, some uncertain times," midwife Cassandra Garcia said. "It was really nice for the state to turn around and say, 'You're doing a good job.' "

In 2000, Martin Memorial Medical Center dissolved the program, which provides prenatal care and delivery services for expectant mothers, because of financial reasons. However, the Martin County Health Department continued it, Garcia said.

She said the program — which now delivers almost one-third of all babies in the county — has saved about \$350,000 a year since its relocation. She cites more efficient collection methods, pay cuts and staff reductions as cost-saving tools. Garcia said they are "working just as hard with less people.

