

PREEMIES TODAY

Families Helping Families

Preemies Today Receives a \$14,000 Grant to Assist in our Maryland Expansion

Preemies Today is thrilled to announce that we have just been awarded our first grant from the Maryland Chapter of the March of Dimes. This grant will enable us to continue to print and distribute our newsletter. It will also allow us to further expand our newsletter distribution into Maryland. Preemies Today will start this expansion by distributing this issue to Bethesda Naval Hospital, Shady Grove Hospital, and Franklin Square Hospital Center. The organization is excited to continue to expand our programs further into Maryland.

Once again, we would like to thank the March of Dimes for supporting Preemies Today in our efforts to provide programs that benefit all families affected by prematurity. We are thrilled that we have also reached the important milestone of five years of service in the preemie community, and we look forward to providing services to preemie families for years to come.

Preemie of the Month : Giovanni by Maria Zirpoli



When I found out I was pregnant, I had so many hopes and dreams for the future. I was elated. The idea of having a premature baby never even entered my mind. Like most pregnant women, I was consumed with happy thoughts about becoming a mom and getting ready for our little

bundle of joy to arrive.

Shortly after reaching 23 weeks gestation, I began to have some unexpected complications and had to visit the hospital several times due to contractions. On my last visit, at 25 weeks and 3 days, I was admitted and put on a magnesium drip to try to prevent pre-term labor. I was also given betamethazone to help my baby's lungs mature. As a result of the magnesium treatment, I was contraction free within two days. I assumed I would be going home on bed-rest since things seemed to be under control.

The following morning while still in the hospital, I started bleeding. The doctor examined me and told me that I was slightly dilated and to take it easy. She assured me that the

bleeding was due to the many exams I had undergone. Later in the afternoon, I started having contractions again. This time they were much stronger; the pain greatly intensified as the contractions were coming right on top of each other. These contractions were mountains of pain. The nurse quickly got the doctor. I was rushed into labor and delivery to be put back on the magnesium drip; I really believed they'd be able to stop the contractions again. It wasn't until I went from 4 cm to 6 cm dilated that I finally realized that the magnesium was not going to save me this time.

The doctor confirmed that pre-term delivery was inevitable at this point. Next, the anesthesiologist rushed in to give me an epidural. As he finished inserting the canula into my back, I felt the urge to push from the pressure of the contractions. I knew that the baby was coming. Despite my efforts not to push, my little Giovanni was born. He came into the world inside of his amniotic sac. It seemed as though he had his own

<i>Inside...</i>	
Preemie of the Month.....	1, 6
Calendar of Events.....	2
Program Updates.....	3
Anniversary Wishes.....	4
Preemie Milestones.....	5
March for Babies.....	6
Parent Lecture Series.....	7

See *Giovanni*, page 6...

Preemies Today Celebrates it's 5th Birthday!

Preemies Today
P.O. Box 523525
Springfield, VA 22152

Founded:
March 2003

web:
www.preemiestoday.org

email:
info@preemiestoday.org

Preemies Today is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization whose mission is to provide outreach and support programs to families of infants born prematurely beginning at birth and throughout childhood.

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Mary Beth Hazelgrove

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Calendar of Events

March

Parent Support Meeting
March 12, 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm
Barnes and Noble, Fair Lakes, VA


April

Parent Support Meeting
April 9, 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm
Barnes and Noble, Fair Lakes, VA

Premie Parent Lecture Series
Select Sundays in April, May, and June
Inova Fair Oaks Hospital
Physician Conference Center

Kelly Dorfman, Pediatric Nutritionist
“Nutrition for the Premature Infant/Child”
April 6th, 2:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Kim Perks, Pediatric Occupational Therapist
April 13th, 2:00 pm - 4:30 pm
“How the Sensory System Impacts Development and Functional Exercises for the Home”

 **Mailbox:**

Please send us your feedback, suggestions, or contributions for future articles by the 15th of each month to:

info@preemiestoday.org

Preemies Today
PO Box 523525
Springfield, VA 22152

Would you like to talk to another preemie parent who has had a similar experience?



Call 1-888-712-3208
or 703-552-0163

Program Updates

We are thrilled to announce the speakers for our first Premie Parent Lecture Series. Be sure to register today!

2008 Parent Speakers' Bios



Kelly Dorfman, LN, LD is a health program planner and nutritionist with twenty-five years of clinical experience. Her specialty is developing nutrition and lifestyle strategies to address complex health problems from autism to bone loss to rare genetic disorders. Physicians and other medical professionals refer cases to her for insight when traditional methods do not attain optimal results.



Kim Perks, MSOT has worked in private clinics in Maryland and Northern Virginia. Ms. Perks has designed, implemented, directed, and taught a pre-K program in Silver Spring, MD specifically for children with sensory differences that compromise their ability to succeed in typical preschool classrooms. She currently works in a preschool in NW Washington, D.C. where she treats children individually in a clinic setting. She also continues to be a consultant for the preschool teachers to create strategies to benefit both specific children and the class as a whole.



Lawrence Palevsky, MD is a New York based, board certified pediatrician. He is one of the city's leading speakers on children's family health. He passionately brings a holistic approach to the practice of pediatric medicine, combining western and eastern theories so parents and health practitioners can broaden their approach to health and wellness. This style has made him a sought after consultant, educator, and speaker around the world.



Bobbi Wade, MAT, CCC-SLP has over 28 years experience in treating young children in her private practice in Alexandria, Virginia. She combines theories from a wide range of post-graduate training, including certification in pediatric NeuroDevelopmental Treatment (NDT), advanced Cranial-Sacral therapy, Visceral Manipulation, Lymphatic Drainage, PROMPT, Beckman and Therapeutic Listening. Ms. Wade is uniquely gifted in her ability to implement the deeper body work to facilitate the development of communication and speech skills.



Patricia Lemer, M.Ed., NCC is a National Certified Counselor and the Executive Director of Developmental Delay Resources (DDR), a nonprofit organization dedicated to meeting the needs of children who have developmental delays in sensory motor, language, social, and emotional areas. DDR publicizes research into determining identifiable factors that would put a child at risk and maintains a registry to track possible trends. DDR also provides a network for parents and professionals and current information after the diagnosis to support children with special needs. Ms. Lemer practiced as an Educational Diagnostician and counselor for over 30 years.



Fairfax Neonatal Associates has been committed to providing the best possible care to critically ill and premature newborn infants. Their success with even the smallest infants is well recognized throughout the community. Fairfax Neonatal Associates serves Inova Fair Oaks, Inova Fairfax, and Potomac Hospitals.

Happy 5th Birthday Preemies Today...

Preemies Today is like my GPS. It guides me through unknown territory, builds my confidence, is reliable, and is always there for me!

Charlene Fronczek

In March of 2002, I asked so many times, "Why me? Why did this happen to us?" I was a healthy, young woman with no risk for premature birth. "Why me?" Looking back, I've come to the realization that my pre-term labor was part of a much larger, divine plan--Preemies Today. We are not alone.

Kathy Paz Mingledorff
Founder of Preemies Today and
President from 2003-2006

Preemies Today has helped me in two capacities; first by offering its non-wavering support and guidance and secondly by providing me the opportunity to help others faced with similar circumstances.

Danette Cruthirds

Historical Highlights

Preemies Today Through the Years 2003-2008

March 2003

The first 15 copies of the newsletter were printed and distributed by Kathy Paz, our founder. Coincidentally, it was also her son Alex's, a 25 weeker, first birthday.

December 2003

The first meeting of the Board of Directors of Preemies Today.

Spring 2004

Preemies Today received a \$500 community award from the March of Dimes. This money was used to apply for official non-profit status.

March of 2004

The first Anniversary Celebration took place at the home of Jack and Kelley Gillespie.

February 2005

Preemies Today received official non-profit status.

December 2006

The first Premie Care Kits were distributed to Reston Hospital Center.

January 2007

The website was relaunched with the tremendous help of Julie Kipers and the great work of NolaFlash.

August 2007

Preemies Today began to focus on Maryland expansion with the addition of three board members from Maryland.

Spring 2008

Preemies Today announced the launch of its first Lecture Series.

*Preemies Today would not be nearly as successful without the help of many special people and organizations. We would especially like to thank the **March of Dimes**, **Dona Dei**, **SIDS Mid-Atlantic**, **Betty Connal**, **Lynn Kuba**, **Brenda Mohile**, all local hospitals, **NICU Social Workers and Nurses**, past and current board members, all volunteers, our founder **Kathy Paz Mingledorff**, our Chairman **Elaine Noto**, and all the families who contribute to Preemies Today.*

You've come a long way, baby! Congratulations to all the families who have been a part of the Preemies Today family.

Mary Lundregan, past board member and the Lundregan Family

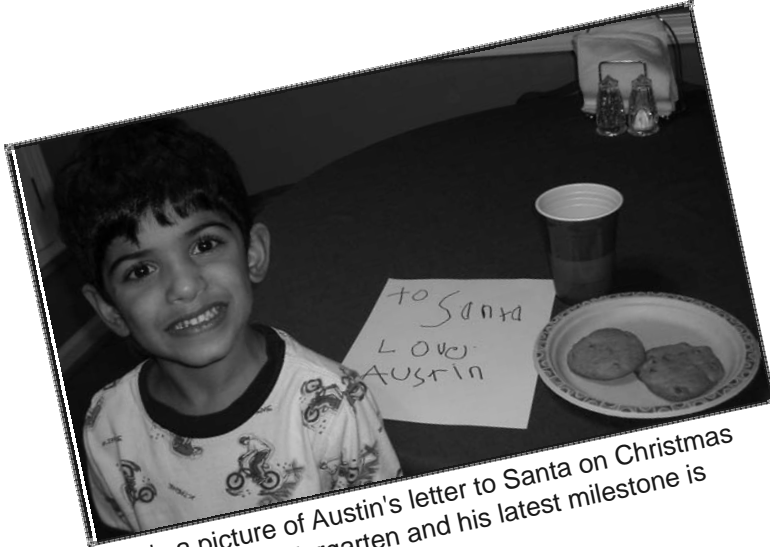
My dreams of ideal motherhood were redirected. Thanks Preemies Today for being a way to find other parents with whom I could share my concerns and my joys.

Jenna Kassis

I couldn't get out in the community, but Preemies Today brought the community to me! I no longer felt alone!

Sarah Kim

Preemie Milestones



Here's a picture of Austin's letter to Santa on Christmas Eve. He is in kindergarten and his latest milestone is learning to write!
Austin, 25 weeker now 5 years old



First haircut!!
Bradley, 33 weeker now 19 months



This is our son, using his hands to push up for the first time.
Lucas, 25 weeker now 11 months



Rachel learning to ride a tricycle.
Rachel, 33 weeker now 3 years old



First swimming class!
Nate, 25 weeker now 3 years old

We received so many photos, milestones, and birthday wishes we couldn't print them all. We would like to thank everyone who contributed and we will try to continue and share more next month.



Interested in Walking to Help Save Babies?

Preemies Today is organizing a team for March for Babies. March for Babies is a community walk that supports the March of Dimes mission to improve the health of babies from birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. We encourage you to register and walk with Preemies Today or to start your own family team, which can include colleagues, family members, friends and children! Register to walk with Preemies Today at www.marchforbabies.org/441131. Click on the "Join this Team" button and you can register and raise funds online, or create your own family team at www.marchforbabies.org. If you choose to create your own family team, please let us know, so that we can link your family team to the Preemies Today team, which will allow us to have an accurate record of how many of our members are supporting the March of

Dimes. Your family team and Preemies Today will get recognition from the March of Dimes!

There are ten locations in the Washington DC Metropolitan area, so you can choose a date and location that's convenient for you. The walks range from 3-5 miles and afterwards enjoy lunch from Subway or Dominos, a live band, and children's activities, including a clown and face painting! For more dates and locations, please visit the March of Dimes local website at www.marchofdimes.com/metrodc.

If you have additional questions, please contact our team captain, Elaine Noto at ejcbrit@aol.com. If you have specific questions about the event or starting your own team, please contact Tina Solomita at the March of Dimes at csolomita@marchofdimes.com

**April 20th, Reston, VA
April 27th, Washington, DC
May 4th, Rockville, MD**

Giovanni, continued from page 1

birth plan. The doctor opened up the sac, took Giovanni out, and handed him to the nurse. I heard a very faint cry and I knew right then and there that he was a fighter. He was intubated, brought to me for one quick glance, and whisked away to the NICU where he would spend the first two months of his life.

I remember the first real glance at my little one was overwhelming. I felt an enormous sense of guilt. Grief-stricken, I felt like getting down on my knees and begging for Giovanni's forgiveness for not keeping him safe inside my womb for a couple of more months.

Giovanni was given surfactant therapy and extubated after only two days; he graduated to C-PAP. I distinctly remember celebrating every hurdle Giovanni overcame during his NICU stay. The nurses kept warning me that the NICU would be an emotional roller-coaster ride. It wasn't until two weeks into our NICU stay that I experienced my first downhill feeling on this ride. Giovanni had developed sepsis and had to be re-intubated. Thankfully, he responded well to the treatment, was taken off of the ventilator, and was put back on C-PAP within a couple of weeks.

I finally got to hold Giovanni about a month after he was born. He was gaining weight steadily and was taken off TPN. He was tolerating the breast milk that was given to him via gavage. His progress after that was amazing! He graduated from C-PAP to a nasal canula, started regulating his temperature, and was taking all of his feedings by mouth. I was so glad but then the phrase "too good to be true" kept ringing in my ear. Not long after that, I received the phone call, stating that Gio-

vanni was going to be discharged in a couple of days and that they needed me to arrange to get O2 because he was going to need O2 therapy. My husband and I were overjoyed! We just couldn't believe that we were going to be taking our baby home the next day.

The next day I woke up feeling on top of the world. Much to my dismay, I received a horrible phone call from Giovanni's neonatologist telling me that Giovanni had a very severe apnea episode. He had coded that night and he had to be resuscitated. He would not be coming home. I rushed to the NICU to find Giovanni inside the isolette, hooked up to IV's, and with a NG tube through his nose once again. After so much progress, he was almost right back where he started.

I remember the first glance at my little one was overwhelming. I felt an enormous sense of guilt.

Fortunately, the two weeks that followed didn't present us with any other hurdles. Giovanni came home two months and ten days after he was born. Giovanni was a very lucky baby. He escaped many of the problems that preemies face such as intracranial bleeding, ROP, PDA ligation, etc. Now he is a happy one-year-old. He is receiving physical therapy twice a week for some very slight physical delays, but he no longer requires oxygen. He is such a pleasant child.

My preemie experience has taught me to look at life much differently. I never thought it would be possible to see things such as dirty diapers as a blessing. However, for us they are a sign that Giovanni's digestive system is working well. To this day, every time I reach out to touch him, I remember that not too long ago all I was allowed to do was hold his tiny hand. Most of all, I thank God for the sleepless nights after Giovanni came home because for me it meant that he was finally where he belonged, at home with us.

PREEMIES TODAY

In Collaboration with Developmental Delay Resources
Presents a Premie Parent Lecture Series
Inova Fair Oaks Hospital
3600 Joseph Siewick Dr., Fairfax, VA 22033
Sunday afternoons, 2:00- 4:30 p.m.

**A Series that Parents Affected by Premature Birth Do Not
Want to Miss! How as Parents Can We Influence the Develop-
ment and Well-Being of our Children?**

April 6, 2008

Nutrition: How does nutrition impact development?
How can we make better informed decisions on vaccines,
supplements, and nutritional choices for premature infants
and children?
Speaker: Kelly Dorfman, LN, LD

April 13, 2008

The Sensory System: Why do so many premature infants
and children have sensory processing issues? An
overview of the sensory system and functional activities
you can do at home with your child.
Speaker: Kim Perks, MSOT

May 4, 2008

Building a Healthy Immune System:
What are some holistic approaches to treat chronic condi-
tions such as allergies, asthma, constipation, reflux?
Speaker: Lawrence Palevsky, MD

May 18, 2008

Oral Motor/Language Development: Using movement and
language with young children to enhance development.
What oral motor activities can you do to improve feeding?
Speaker: Bobbi Wade, MAT, CCC-SLP

June 8, 2008

Looking Toward the Future:
How as parents can we influence the development of our
children?
Speaker: Patricia S. Lemer, M.Ed., NCC
DDR Executive Director

June 22, 2008

Current Outcomes for Premature Infants
What are the current statistics on outcomes for premature
infants?
Speaker: Fairfax Neonatal Associates

COST: Premies Today members FREE

**LOCATION: Inova Fair Oaks Hospital Physician Confer-
ence Center, 3600 Joseph Siewick Dr.,
Fairfax, VA 22033**

Pre-registration is encouraged and would be appreciated.
Questions? Call Premies Today at 703-552-0163

Please complete form and send to:
Premies Today
P.O. Box 523525
Springfield, VA 22152

FAX form to Premies Today at: 703-552-0163 or email
events@premiestoday.org

Directions:

Going East or West on I-66: Exit onto Fairfax County
Parkway, 7100 north (towards Reston). Cross over Rt. 50
(Lee-Jackson Memorial Highway). After crossing over Rt.
50, turn right at light onto Rugby Road. Follow Rugby Road
to the second right on Joseph Siewick Drive.

Going East or West on Route 50: Take the Fairfax County
Parkway exit north. Turn right at the light onto Rugby Road.
Follow Rugby Road to the second right on Joseph Siewick
Drive.

I am enrolling for: Whole Series April 6 April 13
 May 4 May 18 June 8 June 22

**Space is limited. Be sure to register today to reserve
your spot!**

Name: _____

Email: _____

Child's Age: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Membership/Subscription Information:

We offer the Preemies Today newsletter, family outings, parent support groups, preemie play-groups, and "A Friend to Talk To," our call-in line, for parents and families of preemies. Membership in our organization is free.

For a free subscription to our newsletter and to join Preemies Today please email us at info@preemiestoday.org or you may go to our website at **www.PreemiesToday.org** and click on "Join Us."

This newsletter was funded by a Community Grant from the March of Dimes. This material is for informational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice. The opinions expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the March of Dimes.

Don't Miss These Events!

Parent Support Meeting

March 12th/April 9th, 7:30 pm, Barnes and Nobles
Fairfax, VA

Preemie Parent Lecture Series

Inova Fair Oaks Hospital Conference Center

April 6th, Kelly Dorfman*

April 13th, Kim Perks*

*Spaces are limited and this series is expected to fill up fast. Be sure to register today!

Please RSVP to events@preemiestoday.org

**PREEMIES
TODAY**

P. O. Box 523525
Springfield, VA 22152

Do you need to talk to someone who understands the preemie experience? If so, call the "Friend to Talk to" line at
1-888-712-3208
or
703-552-0163