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SPRINGFIELD, VA, January 15, 2009. Giving back to the blood bank that helped so many of their children born prematurely, Preemies Today is preparing for an early Valentine's Day blood drive at Inova Blood Donor Services in Falls Church, VA on Saturday, 7 February 2009.

Each participating family of Preemies Today will donate whole blood or platelets in honor of his/her child born prior to 37 weeks gestation. Many of the families have babies that weighed less than 2 pounds at birth.

Preemies Today President Mary Beth Hazelgrove, the mother of a child born prematurely and is now six, is excited to be a part of this community event, "Preemies Today is thrilled to give back to Inova Blood Donor Services. So many of our babies received necessary blood transfusions soon after birth. We are very thankful for this and now we would like to return the favor to others in need. It seems only appropriate to hold this event right before Valentine's Day, a day that represents hearts and love."

With upwards of 50 families expected at the blood drive, it will be a chance to give back but to also come together with others who have been in the NICU recently or even several years ago. The group, which holds events year round to provide a warm and welcoming community for these special needs children and their families.

"Indeed, families need one another not only during the NICU days but also for many years afterward," notes Chairman Elaine Noto and mother of Rebecca who is five and Jennifer who died soon after birth. "Having a baby prematurely is stressful and that stress does not necessarily go away with bringing the baby home. Unlike a normal homecoming there are often numerous medical interventions, doctor's visits, therapy visits and more. So to have an event that not only brings us together but gives back is just icing on the cake."

Families are being asked to call into the Inova Blood Donor Services Call Center for appointments for that day which will start at 11 a.m. The number is 1-866-BLOODSAVES.

Preemies Today is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Its mission is to provide outreach and support programs to families of infants born prematurely beginning at birth and throughout childhood. They are located in the Washington DC metropolitan area and have local events in Northern Virginia, Maryland, and DC. For more information please visit the organization's website at www.PreemiesToday.org

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