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### *A Letter from the President*

Dear TTMF Friends and Supporters,

It's been a busy two years at The Tiny Miracles Foundation since we published our last "Annual" Newsletter! We have been so focused on developing vital new programs and expanding our services to underserved new areas, that we could barely keep pace with ourselves.

Yes it's true, since 2010, TTMF has almost DOUBLED IN SIZE! We now reach 1,200 preemie families in Fairfield County each year with a full panoply of critical programming. Here's what's NEW:

- We expanded to Danbury Hospital, allowing us to help an additional 400 new preemies and their families in Fairfield County each year;
- We opened a new Family Resource Room at the Bridgeport Hospital NICU, assisting almost 500 preemie families per year;
- We redesigned our website [ttmf.org](http://ttmf.org) and added Preemie Parent Online Communities;
- We developed a comprehensive AFTER THE NICU Resource Directory to help preemie families raising their preterm babies and children in our local communities;
- We debuted our new TTMF HBO Video to educate the public about the experience of having a preterm baby, and how The Tiny Miracles Foundation can help (view it at [ttmf.org](http://ttmf.org)!);
- We added six new members to our Board of Directors and expanded our Board of Professional Advisors;
- We forged many new alliances and partnerships with local organizations; and
- We hosted our first NICU Graduate Reunion this Fall, a festive Halloween celebration with so many preemies we have helped over the past eight years!

*Please read about these new happenings and so much more in this Newsletter.* You will also see the stories of several families we have supported recently, who along with so many others, hold special places in our hearts. Their stories, and the TTMF video, will give you a better understand of the struggles and triumphs that preemie families endure, and the different ways TTMF helps them through their stages of coping, recovery and care.

This Newsletter also highlights four fabulous TTMF events we hosted over the past two years, gives you a glimpse of community support for TTMF and our local preemies, and shows you our honor roll of hundreds of loyal donors, grantors and corporate sponsors who have so generously supported us and the families we help.

Thank you all for your continued commitment to TTMF and the valuable work we do to help so many of the most vulnerable and fragile members of our community. We hope you enjoy reading about these very busy and exciting past two years, made possible with your generous support. Please consider helping us make the next few years equally as productive. In the meantime, our warmest wishes for a very joyous Holiday Season.

Gwen Noto  
Co-Founder & Executive Director

## Mark Your Calendars!

Come join us for our next big event!  
**2013 Annual Spring GALA**  
Saturday, April 27, 2013  
Wee Burn Country Club  
410 Hollow Tree Ridge Rd., Darien  
Visit [www.ttmf.org](http://www.ttmf.org) for more information.

## In Every Issue

- Miracle Stories
- Community Support
- Miracle Events
- Volunteer Profile
- Board of Directors News
- Miracle Donors Report



## 1 The Hypolite Family story of Jayden, Born at 25 Weeks

Stephanie Hypolite's first experience as a mother was not what she had dreamed. At the time of her son Jayden's birth, Stephanie had been living with her father in Stamford. Her husband and Jayden's dad, was in Haiti. Stephanie recalls "Jayden was born at 25 weeks of gestation weighing 1 lb 5oz at Stamford Hospital on September 27, 2010. I was at risk from eclampsia and he had to be delivered by caesarean section. After three days, Jayden was transferred to Yale New Haven Children's Hospital newborn special care unit because he needed a high quality ventilator. He was 15 weeks early, so tiny that I doubted his chance of survival. During the first few months of his life, he received 12 blood transfusions. In January of 2011, he had to get a tracheostomy tube ("trach"), and was ventilator dependent. After he got the trach, he was transferred to the respiratory unit. One month after his first birthday, October 22, 2011, the trach was removed. He came home November 4, 2011, still on oxygen. He is now 24 months old and weighs 25 lbs and is oxygen free. He can say a few words and imitates everything I say or he hears from his favorite cartoon ("Bubble Guppies"). He started walking at 16 months. He is tiny but perfect and a miracle to me."

The Tiny Miracles Foundation mentors at Stamford Hospital met Stephanie when Jayden was born, and she received our Welcome Bag. When TTMF first learned that Jayden was being transferred to Yale due to his complications, we knew Stephanie would need help. Her father worked full time and she had very little support. She was still recovering from Jayden's birth, and had no car. The TTMF mentors jumped into action and drove her to her first visit with Jayden at Yale, and stayed with her while she visited him and got to know Jayden's new home. We also helped fund Stephanie's initial transportation costs of train fare or gas money to help defray the costs of her travels back and forth to see Jayden. Stephanie was ultimately able to secure housing at the Ronald McDonald house near Yale, so she could be close to her son. We stayed in touch with her during these months, and learned about Jayden's progress. We sent her some clothes for Jayden as he grew. We also formed a relationship with the social workers at Yale to be sure we could combine our efforts to help Stephanie as needed. She was getting financial help

from her father and husband, but she was suffering financially because Jayden needed her care and she could not go back to work.

After a year in the NICU, it was finally time for Jayden to come home. Stephanie needed to prepare for Jayden to come home on oxygen and she knew she would need to provide specialized care for Jayden for an undetermined amount of time. His medical care costs were rising and there was no end in sight for her to be able to return to work. At this point, she began to look for housing and TTMF stepped up to help her pay for her first month's rent and security deposit to get settled, and to bring Jayden home for the first time. We also provided his starting baby equipment and crib.

Stephanie wrote us "The support I received from TTMF helped me believe that my little baby was going to make it. They gave me emotional strength by telling me their stories, and I read more on their web site that gave me strength. My words are really not enough to say thank you from the bottom of my heart. TTMF is doing a wonderful job, and it is so wonderful to know there are people out there to help parents who have a preemie." ♥

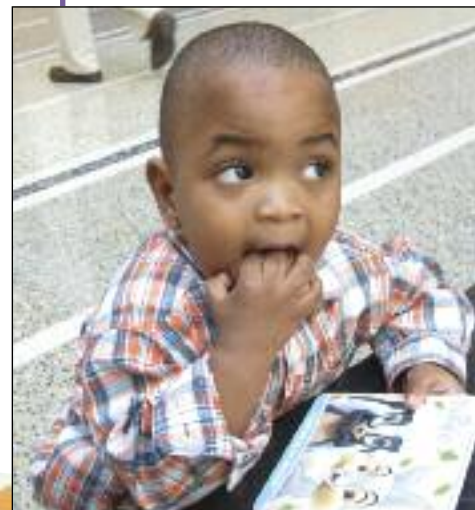


Jayden 6 months old.



Jayden at 18 months.

Jayden at 2 years old.



## 2 The Gerardi Family Story of James Eaton "Jamie", Born at 31 Weeks

In February 2011, we were 30 weeks pregnant with our third child. We decided to take one last trip to Florida to visit my husband's parents and were cleared to fly. We took all precautions and were more than ensured all was safe.

While in Florida, I learned my father had a tumor on his liver and then I contracted a stomach bug. The night before we were to return home, I mentioned to my husband that things did not feel quite right. I awoke in the middle of the night to find out I was bleeding. I could not feel the baby, I could not feel him moving and I could not get a heartbeat on the home fetal monitor. We proceeded to Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center, the closest medical center. The hospital did not have Gynecology and I was immediately transferred by ambulance to Saint Mary's Medical Center in West Palm Beach.

James Eaton ("Jamie") was born at 6:48 that evening at 3 pounds, 10 ounces. The hospital told us James was sick and that he would require six to eight weeks in the NICU in Florida.

It was hard for me in Florida. I was told often that I was handling the situation with grace, but inside I was crumbling. I did not have my doctors. I did not have my friends. My husband had to return to work in the city and did all in his power to visit on weekends. The location of the NICU was not in a particularly safe location and my visits without my husband's presence were limited to late mornings and early afternoons planned around my daughter's naps.

A friend from college told me about the Tiny Miracles Foundation. I called Tiny Miracles at 3 o'clock in the morning several days after Jamie's birth. My call was returned the following day directly by the President, Leelee Klein.

Meanwhile, my father was diagnosed with neuroendocrine, (lung cancer which had spread to his liver, stomach and spine), and his condition deteriorated. My husband flew down to stay with Jamie and I flew to Virginia to visit my father. Jamie was thankfully off a ventilator and I could only pray that God would take care of them both. By the time I reached my father in Virginia, we learned his cancer had spread to his stomach, had caused intensive internal bleeding and he was not conscious.

Three weeks after his birth, Jamie was



Jamie at birth.

Jamie at birth.

A recent photo of Jamie.



transferred to the Stamford NICU in Connecticut. Jamie had his first private chartered flight, NICU to NICU, in an isolette. Through the help of TTMF, he was welcomed with open arms under the care of Dr. Gerald Rakos. Jamie had a special bag waiting for him filled with necessities, such as his first shirt and first outfit. His isolette was no longer bare; it was covered with a plush fleece dinosaur blanket, courtesy of and made by volunteers of TTMF. I felt comfortable that Jamie was in the best hands possible.

However, the day my baby flew to Connecticut, my dad passed away.

In this time, I received unprecedented outreach from TTMF. Mentors visited or called me daily. My questions were answered and my fears were allayed. I learned of many of the "normal" challenges of premies and through education, we were able to accept our son for all that he was. We learned to measure weight gain through grams and each night without oxygen was a blessing. Friends referred me to parents of premies involved with TTMF that provided not only emotional support but also pure knowledge. It was amazing to see the infrastructure of this network and the number of families that we already knew involved with TTMF.

Importantly, we learned not to view Jamie as sick, but as a baby in a NICU that requires extra care. He simply came too early. He was not supposed to be in this world for nearly ten weeks, but God blessed us with the gift of extra time with him. When looking at Jamie's baby pictures, that is what we tell our children today.

For my father's memorial service, we had to leave Jamie in the NICU once again. At the time, he was still not eating orally, was still in an incubator, and very much isolated. There were concerns of a milk protein allergy and he continued to have blood in his GI tract. Concerns of both respiratory and gastrointestinal issues were prominent. While at the service, Board members and mentors from

TTMF's mentors visited our son and sent photos in our absence. They were not permitted to hold him, but their presence was invaluable. We returned two days later to find Jamie sleeping in a crib, with no assistance with respect to breathing or eating. Perhaps it was a bit of my father's spirit, but the dramatic progress was unprecedented. I truly believe my father could rest knowing Jamie was home and that his fifth grandchild was in the best hands.

Jamie was discharged from the Stamford NICU on March 19, 2011, only one month after his birth. Just as with our arrival at Stamford Hospital, TTMF was there for our departure. Jamie was 35 weeks of age and nearly four pounds. In hindsight, I cannot elicit my words and my family's appreciation for TTMF. Within weeks of my preemie's birth, I found a way to be involved with the organization. I continue to be involved with the organization today and plan to start mentoring at Stamford Hospital. I will never understand why things happened the way they did. Things have not always been easy or seamless by any means. However, it is our family's hope to return just a fraction of what we have been given. That in itself is a blessing. ♥

(Miracles stories continued on p. 4)



**3 The Wilkinson Family Story of Nia, Born at 23 Weeks**

Nia Wilkinson was born on May 1, 2012, at 23 weeks of gestation. She was born at Yale New Haven Hospital weighing only 1 lb., 6 oz. She was Nakiea Wilkinson of Stamford's first child and first pregnancy. Nakiea's doctor had told her that she had a "low placenta" but she didn't understand entirely what that meant. Throughout her pregnancy, she was in a lot of pain. In March, it became difficult to stand, walk or even sit up for a long period of time.

Nakiea recalls "Looking back, I wish I would have made a bigger fuss to my doctor about it. The Wednesday before Nia was born, I started leaking fluid. That Friday, I had a contraction but I thought it was Braxton Hicks. That Saturday, I had pain starting on the left side of my pelvis all the way down my leg. I called my doctor and he told me to go directly to labor and delivery at Stamford Hospital. Needless to say, I was dilated 2 cm. and was rushed to Yale. When I arrived, I was dilated 4 cm. I was put on a magnesium drip. Three days later, Ms. Nia decided she wanted to come. Once doctors realized that I had dilated 10 cm., I tried to deliver naturally but that failed and I had an emergency caesarean."

Nia would end up spending the first three months of her life in the NICU at Yale. During this time, mom Nakiea recalls "It was extremely hard leaving her all the way in New Haven and the commute was the absolute worst. It was an up and down process. Nia had an infection in her intestines which her doctor said that she had a 50/50 chance of surviving because of her size. Once that infection was cleared up, she had another infection. Her bilirubin levels kept skyrocketing. She had a small bleed in her brain, countless blood transfusions, and medications to keep fluid out of her lungs. At one point, her lungs were collapsing in some areas. There were so many attempts to get her off of the ventilator. Once she was able to transition from the ventilator to CPAP, she was transferred to Stamford Hospital at three months old. At this point, I was tired and emotionally and physically drained but so relieved she was much closer to home. On 9/11/12, after four months in the hospital, Nia



Dad & Nia a few days after birth.



Nia a few days after birth.



Recent image of Nia Wilkinson.

came home. Not only were we rejoicing to finally bring her home but she came home with no oxygen, no pumps, no bleeding in her brain, no monitors. Many mourn on 9/11 but for me and my family, God has made it a day to rejoice!! We are truly grateful that God strengthened us to make it through and to be able to witness to others of his goodness!! As of October 20, 2012, Nia is 10 lbs. 13 oz. and is doing exceptionally well. She's truly our Tiny Miracle!!!"

TTMF mentors met Naiea when she returned to Stamford Hospital. She immediately received our Welcome Bag of supplies and met with one of our TTMF parent mentors. She had access to TTMF educational books from the resource room and she found respite in the resource room while caring for Nia. When our parent mentor chatted with Nakiea, she discovered Nakiea had gone back to work because the financial stress for her family had become overwhelming. Her husband was working as well, but the many months Nakiea was traveling to Yale and not working caused them to get very behind on their rent. Expenses also increased with the

extensive travel and meals away. The reality that Nia was coming home soon was causing more financial stress. Nia would need costly individual specialized care for a few months because she was too fragile for day care. Our TTMF mentor encouraged Nakiea to speak with the hospital social worker and apply for emergency financial assistance from TTMF's Financial Assistance Program. When it was finally time for Nia to come home, TTMF's Financial Assistance Program had provided the Wilkinson family with a crib and mattress and other supplies, as well as two months of past due rent. This relief allowed them to get their feet on the ground, and provide the special care to Nia at home for those first few months. The Wilkinson family also came to our NICU reunion in October this year, and we were thrilled to see them. They received so much support by attending the NICU reunion by meeting many families with older children that had endured similar situations. The gathering gave them hope and a vision into their future and it will be exciting for all of us to watch Nia grow! ♥

The Blankets For Premies program began at the Middlesex Middle School five years ago, and was the vision of preemie parent and middle school science teacher Kelley Depiano. Mrs. Depiano founded the Blankets For Premies Project at MMS in honor of her friend's son, Sean James Maloney, who passed away in 2007 due to complications from prematurity. Since the initial program began, it has tripled in size and need, and now has become a community project with many hands helping! To meet the demand, TTMF partnered with Darien's Middlesex Middle School, Darien High School, local Girl Scouts and parents in and around our community to successfully roll out two more years of our annual Blankets for Premies Project.

In 2011, we made over 400 blankets, starting out with TTMF volunteers cutting the fleece at space donated by David Genovese of Baywater Properties in Darien. When the fleece was cut, the red team at Middlesex Middle School took over and finished making the blankets!

In 2012, our need for blankets increased with the addition of the families at Danbury Hospital. We launched the cutting effort at the Wee Burn Country Club in Darien, which donated space for 3 days for over 100 volunteers from various towns in Fairfield County to cut thousands of yards of fleece. This pre-cutting was Phase One of a multi-step process that ultimately yielded 800 blankets, twice as many as TTMF made in 2011. Pre-cutters included local Girl Scout troops, students, parents of premies, and other kind-hearted folks who just wanted to help.

Phase Two was started off by the Darien High School Community Council, led by McKinley Stauffer, a DHS senior. In an inspiring, feel-good, one-day effort, all DHS students were invited to pop into the "Chill" room at the high school during their free periods to transform some of the pre-cut fleece into 80 completed blankets. DHS students weren't the only ones helping with Phase Two; it was also powered by several different Darien Girl Scout and Brownie troops (including troops 50017, 50019, 50071, 50027 and 50605); the Newtown/Southbury branch of Roots and Shoots, which is a Jane Goodall Institute program; and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints of New Canaan (as



2012 Local Girl Scout troop from Darien help cut fleece.



2012 Darien High School Students Finish Blankets.



Above: 2012 Middlesex Middle School Orange Team finishes blankets. Left and below: 2011 Middlesex Middle School Red team finishes blankets.



DHS volunteer McKinley Stauffer organized blankets making for the school.



an activity day for the children).

The energetic students at Middlesex Middle School then completed the whopping majority of the blankets. The 6th grade Orange and Red teams at MMS, under the leadership of Kelly Depiano, can be credited with finishing over 600 blankets.

The blankets are often the first positive gesture families receive after the shock of their baby being born prematurely, and they tend to carry a tremendous significance to these families. In addition, the blankets also improve infant development, promote bonding, and serve several other important functions, including:

- Helping regulate babies' sleep patterns by providing a dark, quiet environment
- Enhancing fragile premies' neurological development by shielding them from excess light and noise in the NICU

- Providing protection, warmth and privacy during vital Kangaroo skin-to-skin contact therapy
- Brightening the NICU by adding color and cheer to the clinical decor
- Helping parents identify their baby's isolette in a crowded NICU by their own unique blanket
- Giving families a cherished functional keepsake gift to use in the NICU and at home for years to come.

The blankets will be distributed throughout the year to premature babies and their families in the Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICUs) at Bridgeport, Norwalk, Stamford and Danbury Hospitals as part of the Tiny Treasures Welcome Package that The Tiny Miracles Foundation gives to new parents with preterm babies born in our local NICUs. The Tiny Treasures Supply Program is one of the many services that TTMF provides to support and assist families with premature babies in Fairfield County. ♥



## Bridgeport Resource Room

Just in time for National Prematurity Awareness Month in November, 2011, TTMF celebrated the opening of our new Family Resource Room at the Bridgeport Hospital Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU). In order to bring this project into being, TTMF partnered with Milt Jacoby of The Jacoby Memorial Fund, which had previously donated the space as a pediatric waiting room. As partners, we agreed that the underutilized waiting room would better serve both NICU and pediatrics families as a fully-equipped resource lounge, which was desperately needed by NICU families. So with the blessing of Mr. Jacoby, TTMF donated \$50,000 to renovate and furnish the room so that it would be a beautiful, convenient and comfortable place for parents to relax, convene, and learn during lengthy NICU visits. This resource room will benefit the families of the over 450 babies who pass through the Bridgeport NICU each year.

Since parental involvement in the care of premature newborns is critical to their improved health and development, one of the many goals of all of TTMF's Family Resource Rooms is to encourage parents to visit more often and for longer periods of time so they can participate more readily in their infant's care. As such, the Bridgeport Resource Room offers a comfortable setting and convenient amenities and educational resources to encourage such visitation and use. Features

include a cozy seating area with TV, DVD, computer, internet, sibling toys and a play corner, plus a kitchenette, private bathroom, and parent lockers. In addition, the lounge is stocked with a library of educational, informational and inspirational books, materials and other resources for the families of premature babies in the NICU. TTMF volunteer mentors who visit the Bridgeport NICU weekly can now meet with parents in the resource room and will restock the library and children's corner as needed.

The Family Resource Room Dedication and Grand Opening Ceremony was hosted by the Bridgeport Hospital Foundation on November 16, 2011. The celebration was attended by hospital leaders, neonatal and pediatric physicians, NICU staff and NICU graduates, as well as our partner Milt Jacoby and members of the Jacoby family, and TTMF directors, volunteers and donors. Commemorative speeches were given by Bridgeport Hospital CEO Bill Jennings, Bridgeport Hospital Foundation President Steve Jakab and Development Director Susan Chudwick, and TTMF President Elizabeth Klein and Executive Director Gwen Noto. The speakers emphasized the essential needs the new Family Resource Room would satisfy and the exemplary spirit of collaboration exhibited by the people and organizations involved in the project. ♥

New resource room in Bridgeport hospital.



Bridgeport resource room opening. Left to right: Director of Pediatrics, Harris Jacobs, Dr. Michael Freeman, Dr. Robert Herzlinger, Gwen Noto and hospital President Bill Jennings.



Leelee Klein, Foundation President Steve Jakab, Milt Jacoby and son, hospital Development Director Susan Chudwick, Gwen Noto and hospital President Bill Jennings.

Visit us at [www.ttmf.org](http://www.ttmf.org)

## TTMF Expands Services to Danbury Hospital

We are proud to announce the expansion of our services to Danbury Hospital, a member of the Western Connecticut Health Network, as of June of 2012. Our programs will now meet an additional 450 families each year, bringing the total number of families we help to 1200.

"We are thrilled to be working with Danbury Hospital in their new Level IIIB NICU," announced Gwen Noto, TTMF's Executive Director. "Their facility is truly state-of-the-art, equipped with private rooms for each baby and family, common resource and meeting areas, and a gorgeous roof-top garden where parents can seek solace, beauty, and fresh air. Their visionary team has really thought of everything, and we are honored that they selected Tiny Miracles to help with the last piece of the puzzle: providing much-needed emotional, informational and practical assistance to NICU families," said Ms. Noto.

TTMF's programs at Danbury Hospital include twice-weekly one-on-one parent mentoring; a parent support network, emergency financial assistance and essential infant care equipment for needy families; Tiny Treasures supplies and resources to ease families' transitions into and out of the NICU; an extensive website ([www.ttmf.org](http://www.ttmf.org)) with an online support community, educational resources in English and Spanish; bereavement support; and "After The NICU" professional referral services. All of their services are offered free-of-charge to the preemie families with babies hospitalized in the Danbury NICU, with

many services also available for free to preemie families in the local community. ♥

TTMF supply-bags and blankets are just some of the parent support programs now offered at Danbury Hospital's new Spratt Family Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Pictured left to right: Dana Marker, RN; Maryalice Cullen, RN – Director, Patient Care Services; Edward James, MD – Medical Director, Neonatology; Catherine Hansen, MD; Cynthia Hoefler; Leelee Klein, TTMF Board President; and Alyssa Selinka-Ness, RN.



## Volunteer Profile: Ariane deBraux Triay

Each year we profile a volunteer who shows an outstanding commitment to TTMF. Our Board Member Ariane deBraux Triay is our choice for this newsletter.

In her 17th week of pregnancy, Ariane Triay was put on hospital bed rest. Eleven weeks later, her daughter Lola was born via emergency C-section at Stamford Hospital, just 2 hours into her 28th week. Ariane and her husband Miguel have been involved in TTMF ever since.

Ariane joined the volunteers in 2004 and was on the gala committee for our first annual gala. She continued on to chair the gala for the next two years, and helped raise over \$300,000 for TTMF from those two events. Ariane also worked for five years at Stamford Hospital as a parent mentor and was a passionate and caring listener and help to many families who needed her in their time of crisis. She joined our Board of Directors in 2008, and then taught herself desk top graphic design because she realized we had a need. She has since created the design and collected the content for every event

program, invitation, flyer, postcard and other marketing paperwork needed for TTMF from her desk!!

Ariane and Miguel have together conducted several fundraising campaigns through their family and friends that have brought significant contributions to TTMF over the years, are personally lead donors and also attended and volunteered at every fundraising event.

We cannot express deeper gratitude for the many hours of volunteer work, dedication and commitment of Ariane Triay and her family. ♥



Ariane Triay with her family.

Visit us at [www.ttmf.org](http://www.ttmf.org)



*Tiny Miracles Celebrates Four Miraculously Successful Fundraising Events!*

The Tiny Miracles Foundation hosted four wonderful fundraisers over the past two years to support our ongoing programs and operations. On November 7, 2010, the nationally acclaimed family band "Laughing Pizza" performed at The Quick Center for Performing Arts in Fairfield, CT. Laughing Pizza's Billy Schlosser and his wife Lisa Michaelis were especially proud to come to our community and perform with their daughter Emily who was herself born 8 weeks premature. Children of all ages filled the theater and danced to the youthful, catchy tunes written by the band. The event raised over \$10,000.



Gala Chairs 2011 Kesti Aysseh, Ashley Dineen and Katie Adams.

On May 20, 2011 we held our 5th annual spring gala, "Where the Miracles Are", at the Wee Burn Beach Club in Rowayton, Connecticut, hosting over 300 guests and raising more than \$150,000. Guests wore island chic attire and enjoyed steel drum and marimba music while they browsed the silent auction. Guests were later treated to a video about TTMF donated by Darien resident David Roofthoof of HBO Productions. The highlight of the event was the action-packed live auction followed by dancing to the wonderful sounds of the John Brazile Trio, provided by Groove Events, LLC. The live auction included items such as a trip to Florence, Italy; a vacation home in Sun Valley; a catered dinner party by Susan Caissy Caruso Special Events; New York Yankees Legacy Seats, and a stay at the Ocean House in Watch Hill, Rhode Island.

Gerald Rakos Stamford Hospital Director of Pediatrics and Dr. Robert Herzlinger, Director of Neonatology at Bridgeport Hospital.



Billy and Emily Schlosser entertain the crowd.

On September 25, 2011, we joyously welcomed "Laughing Pizza" back to perform for 370 guests at our kids' carnival at the Wee Burn Beach Club. As the crowd gathered, families enjoyed pre-event festivities and playtime on the beach with face painting, cotton candy, balloon art and pony rides. Later the band played to the delight of multiple generations. The event raised over \$25,000.

Jason Geis and his daughter Caroline of Darien.



Peter Olsen of Darien kisses his miracle, Lilly



Annsley LeClerc of Darien dances to the music.



Rounding out the event roster, May 5, 2012 was the date of our 6th annual Spring Gala at the Wee Burn Beach Club. The 2012 theme, "A Night of Sparkling Miracles", called for a dress code of white attire to complement the chic décor that was punctuated with white draping and bursts of bold accent lighting in fuchsia and purple. The emotional



Laughing Pizza in concert.



The Band signs posters for fans.



Tiny Miracle Leighton Milazzo dances with his brother Brooks.

highlight of evening was listening to tiny miracles Thomas and Nicholas Noto of Fairfield, Grace and Larsen Klein of Darien, Dante Esposito of Weston and Dayna Green of Bridgeport take a few minutes to tell their birth stories and thank their doctors and nurses for helping them recover from their very early beginnings. Later, an electrifying live

Tiny Miracle Thomas Noto of Fairfield speaks to the crowd.



Tiny Miracle Dante Esposito of Weston speaks to the crowd.



Gala 2012 ladies in white.

On site Neonatologists Dr. Meltem Seli and Dr. Fitzwell.



Gala Committee Member Elle D'Andrea and her husband Daren.

highlight of evening was listening to tiny miracles Thomas and Nicholas Noto of Fairfield, Grace and Larsen Klein of Darien, Dante Esposito of Weston and Dayna Green of Bridgeport take a few minutes to tell their birth stories and thank their doctors and nurses for helping them recover from their very early beginnings. Later, an electrifying live auction included trips to Africa and Martha's Vineyard, Ben Larrabee portrait sessions, exclusive Red Sock versus Yankees tickets, Genevieve Lau Jewelry and more. Many local families and private foundations also supported the event. All had fun and the evening raised more than \$200,000. ♥

Gala Co-Chairs 2012 PJ Marcelle and Linda Queenan.



Duke Dineen, Brooke and Jason Gies of Darien



Chris and Glauca Jones of Stamford.



Mike and Linda Queenan of Ridgfield with Trudie and Ben Larabee of Darien.





## NICU Graduate reunion Party at The Stepping Stones Museum in Norwalk

On Sunday, October 21, 2012, TTMF hosted a celebration and reunion of families and friends of premature babies in Fairfield County at the Stepping Stones Museum in Norwalk. The Halloween themed party featured music from Dre Towey with Sugar on Top, private access to the museum, food vendors, costume contests, crafts, face painting, and more. The event was attended by over 70 families, and the gathering of tiny miracles proved to be a special moment for everyone.

TTMF was thrilled to provide this opportunity for the families of premature babies to connect and share their stories with each other. Research proves that the experience of a premature birth, even in cases where the baby survives and there are few lifelong health consequences, takes an enormous and potentially long-term emotional toll on parents and families, including post-traumatic stress disorder, extreme stress and anxiety, depression, uncertainty, guilt, fear, isolation, grief, financial hardship, job and work loss, and strain on marriages and family relationships. Joining together with other parents of premature babies, and sharing stories, can alleviate and help heal many parents who may be struggling with some of these emotions.

Several generous local vendors sponsored the event. They included Izzi B's Cupcakes, Baskin and Robbins, Dre Towey with Sugar on Top, Costco, MeltMobile, Subway of Glenbrook, and M and M Deli and Grill.

Darien High School Volunteers Molly Klein and Natalie Grune are candy clowns.



NICU reunion Tiny Miracle Jack Johnson and his brother Oliver of New Canaan



Dre Towey With Sugar On Top Entertains the Crowd



Top Left: NICU reunion Tiny Miracle Margot Adams of Darien. Above: The Donaldsons of Norwalk with their Tiny Miracles.



Tiny Miracle families enjoying the day together.

Volunteer Older NICU graduates Larsen and Grace Klein and Alexandra Ceisler all born under 2 pounds at the NICU reunion.



Christina Yang and her Tiny Miracle daughter Sofia of New Canaan.



President Leelee Klein chats with Stepping Stones Special Events coordinator at NICU reunion

Visit us at [www.ttmf.org](http://www.ttmf.org)

## TTMF Board of Directors News



### The Tiny Miracles Foundation 2012-2013 Board of Directors

Top Row, Left to right: Lisa Tantillo, Cheryl Egan, President Leelee Klein, Richard Goldman, Ariane Triay, PJ Marcella, and Lori Church.

Bottom row, left to right: Christa Struk, Co-Founder and Executive Director Gwendolyn Noto, Vice President Patricia Cunningham, Kerry Hanson, Linda Queenan and Corporate Secretary Shelli Milazzo. Not pictured: Eric Broder, Robert Duffy, Teresa Dusch, Treasurer Ashley Dineen, Sela Esposito and Peggy Sawala

Over the past eight years, many wonderful members of our Board of Directors have helped us become the organization we are today. Sadly, in the past two years, four of our founding board members, Eila Johnson, Becky Esposito, Cheryl Egan and Tara LeClerc have decided to move on to new endeavors. Eila, Becky, Cheryl and Tara each contributed their special talents to the growth and success of our organization from the very beginning of

our programs. We have honored them at the last two galas and the list of what they have done for TTMF is extensive. We also say good bye to Sarah Payne who served on our board for two years and helped us handle all of our human resources needs, and to Jill Hooper who served on our board for three years in the area of strategic planning and as our leader in the expansion to Bridgeport Hospital. Jill continues to be a mentor at Bridgeport Hospital.

On a happier note, during the past two years, we have welcomed to our Board of Directors the many talents of Lori Church, PJ Marcella, Linda Queenan, Eric Broder, Peggy Sawala, Sela Esposito and Terrie Dusch. We expect that their combined passion and vision will lead TTMF successfully into the future. Please read about their professional backgrounds and community service at [www.ttmf.org](http://www.ttmf.org) ♥



Gala 2011 Board Member Jill Hooper



2011 Board Member Christa Struk, with Leige and Sarah Payne



Gala 2011 tribute to Honorary Board Member Eila Johnson and her husband Jeff.



GALA 2011 Board Member Cheryl Egan and her husband Tim.



Gala 2011 Board Member Tara LeClerc of Darien, Kara Gerardi of Greenwich, friend and Brooke Gies of Darien.

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*One Special Donor... from far away!*

**Lindsey DeMattio** raised \$900 for Tiny Miracles in the Spring of 2012. In her own words, this is how she got it done. She lives in Rhode Island!

"For my senior project I had to write a research paper and produce a product. As you already know, I was born 5 weeks premature with my twin sister therefore I wrote my research paper on the causes, effects, and prevention on premature birth. I fell upon the Tiny Miracles Foundation during my research for my paper. I finished my research paper after first semester and once second semester came I began working on my product; The Prisonball Tournament. I had to do everything for this tournament. I organized it, bought the materials, and executed it. From the beginning I was overwhelmed with the amount of work I had to do. For the Tournament itself, I had to advertise it a lot. I made flyers, a Facebook event, and I wrote many morning announcements. Prisonball is basically like dodge ball except once hit, that person must go onto the other teams mat and catch a ball by their teammate to return to the game. My school gets extremely into it. Normally there are 10 teams of 10 people but for my tournament I only got 9 teams to sign up (no big deal). Also, its \$10 per player and each player must have my school's insurance to play. The \$10 provides for the t-shirt they receive, which you will see in the pictures and the insurance is just for liability



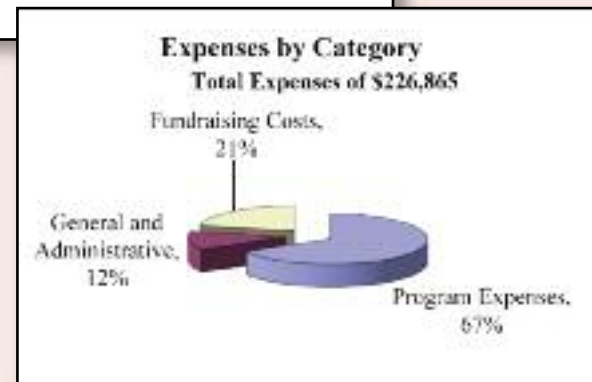
Lindsey DeMattio and her team for TTMF.

reasons. I had to make sure every person gave me \$10 so I would be able to pay for ordering the t-shirts and getting them printed. Besides making sure all the players had school insurance, which involved calling my school's insurance company, that was probably the hardest part because without the money I wouldn't have been able to purchase the t-shirts, get them printed, or purchase the prison balls. I also, went to many stores and was able to receive gift cards as donations to purchase the concessions

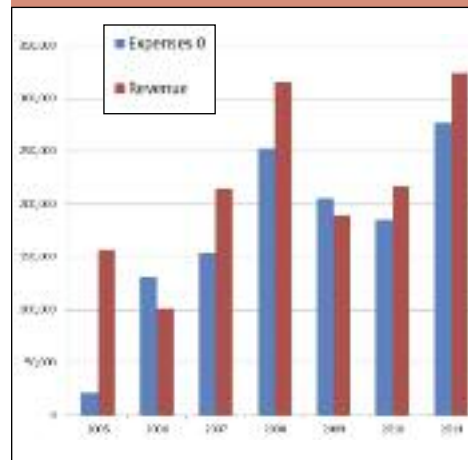
that I needed to provide at the tournament. After all the many hours (approximately 25 hours) I believe the tournament itself went smoothly. All the teachers and parents who went told me it was a great success and to be proud of what I accomplished. Overall, there were 93 students involved but probably around 120 people helped me out in total. I know the money that I will send you guys will be put to good use!"

Sincerely, Lindsey DeMattio ❤️

*2011 Breakdown of Expenditures*



**HOW WE HAVE GROWN!**



Visit us at [www.ttmf.org](http://www.ttmf.org)

*Community Support For TTMF*

*We are blessed by special people all year long, who care about our mission and these fragile families. Many hands have helped us in the past two years and this is just a snapshot of some of those helpers.*



Kristin Delaurentiis, who is the chair of the team Fairfield Charitable Running Club, gathered runners and sponsors for a the Fairfield Road Race in June 2011. The Tiny Miracles Foundation was the beneficiary of the team race, and they raised over \$12,000!



David Roofthoof, a local premie parent and Creative Director at HBO donated our new video depicting the stories of local premie parents and how our programs work in the community. This was a large effort and donation valued at over \$50,000 by David Roofthoof and his team. The video was first seen at our gala event 2011. We are so grateful for the talents of David and his HBO team! The video can be seen at [www.ttmf.org](http://www.ttmf.org). Pictured are David Roofthoof and HBO Editor Kathy Sontag at the gala event.



First County Bank has been our lead corporate donor for the past 5 years. We were blessed by their grant donation of \$10,000 in 2010 and \$10,000 in 2011. Pictured donating in 2011 is Kathy Harris, President and COO of First County Bank with TTMF Executive Director and Co-Founder, Gwen Noto.



Thanks go to photographer Alix Martinez of Darien who graciously donated her time and talent to provide portrait sessions for NICU graduates at Bridgeport Hospital. Each portrait was used to decorate our new Bridgeport Resource Room and the portraits serve to inspire parents who currently have babies in the NICU.



Melt Mobile served delicious sandwiches at our NICU reunion at Stepping Stones this past October 2012. They were so touched and inspired by the families and tiny miracles that they donated a check for \$500 to TTMF at the end of the event! Thank you Melt Mobile... lovely people who make awesome, yummy sandwiches!

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We redesigned our website and added new features and easier navigation!

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## Our Mission

The Tiny Miracles Foundation, Inc. is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping families with premature babies in the greater Fairfield County, Connecticut area. We know from personal experience that the premature birth of a child can be an isolating, confusing and frightening ordeal. Our goal is to support and assist families during this fragile time. Through our programs, TTMF strives to enhance hospital services and improve the lives of babies born too early and those who love and care for them.

Visit us at [www.ttmf.org](http://www.ttmf.org)

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