

Newsletter
Spring, 2007

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# Mark Your Calendars!

This year's "Carnival of Life"
will be held at
Wee Burn's Beach Club on
Sunday, September 23, 2007.
Sponsors include
Callari Auto Group and
the Darien Sport Shop.
Look for your invitation
in the mail!

## A Letter from the President

Dear Volunteers, Friends & Supporters:

The Tiny Miracles Foundation is honored that you have chosen to support our mission. Thanks to you, we have had a wildly successful year, raising over \$145,000 in 2006 to help over 400 regional families traverse the challenges of having and raising their premature babies.

Now, even more must be done. Each year in Fairfield County over 1,200 babies are born prematurely. One out of every nine babies born locally is less than 33 weeks gestation, and most of those face tremendous hurdles. Although medical breakthroughs give these babies a greater than ever chance at survival, many of them—and their families—face daunting emotional, physical and medical challenges ahead.

TTMF's programs support area families as they cope with the initial shock and trauma of the premature birth of their babies, throughout their NICU stay, and after they transition home with their tiny miracles. Our on-site services at the NICUs at Stamford and Norwalk Hospitals include parent mentoring, psychologist-led support groups, parent resource centers, TTMF website & CarePages access, "Tiny Treasures" welcome and homecoming kits, and financial assistance for needy families. We also offer ongoing off-site support to all families of premature babies in the Fairfield County area, including our parent support network, support groups, www.ttmf.org, CarePages, and general resource information and support.

TTMF has been rapidly expanding to meet the increasing demand for greater community support. We were thrilled to start serving families at the Bridgeport Hospital NICU in May of this year. Our Bridgeport programs include financial assistance, parent support network, "Tiny Treasures" welcome & homecoming kits, and a mobile resource cart while the hospital finds a permanent location for a TTMF resource room. To further meet the needs of the greater Bridgeport community, TTMF has launched a bilingual initiative, translating our printed materials into Spanish, creating a Spanish language version of our website, and offering bilingual parent support and interpreter services to NICU families and staff.

This massive expansion to help the Bridgeport community will double the number of families TTMF reaches annually from 400 to 800. It also allows us to assist a population in even greater need of financial, informational and other resources than those we have served thus far. As such, our need for financial support to help premature babies and their families continues to grow exponentially.

Even so, some things never change. The unique support provided by parents who have experienced first-hand the premature birth of baby, the complications that arise, the challenges families face, and in sad cases, the loss of a precious tiny miracle, is invaluable to the preemie families we help, and is one of the many things that continues to make The Tiny Miracles Foundation so special. Generous support from friends like you helps make it all happen. Thank you.

Warmest Regards, Gwendolyn F. Noto President & Co-Founder

## Brody Hess - The Story of a Tiny Miracle

In November 2006, Brody John Hess was born weighing a mere 3 pounds, 5 ounces. His tiny body was covered in leads, with oxygen flowing and numerous monitors keeping tabs on his fragile life. Brody spent over 50 days in neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) at both Yale-New Haven and Stamford Hospitals before coming home. Brody is a fighter...and his parents' story is one of love, dedication and the intense highs and lows of having a preemie. Brody and the Hess family are just one of the many local families TTMF has been able to help this past year.

"Nothing can prepare you for what it is like to have a child in the NICU," said Brody's mother, Bernadette. The emotional support TTMF provided usand continues to provide—has been absolutely invaluable." TTMF's involvement with the Hess family started before Brody's birth, when Bernadette was admitted to the hospital just 21 weeks into her pregnancy, suffering from oligohydramnios (low amniotic fluid), and the relationship continues now that Brody is home.

"Leelee [Klein] came to see me after I had been in the hospital a few days...back when I really thought I would be going home." As it became increasingly clear that Bernadette would be hospitalized for the duration of her pregnancy--and her perinatologist planned to keep her pregnant for as long as he possibly could--Bernadette recalls Leelee giving her tips on how to stay positive during bedrest. "I was so scared, but tried to be hopeful and

We are growing!

This year TTMF will support twice as many families as we did in 2006 by expanding our services to meet the needs of families who deliver a premature baby at Bridgeport Hospital.

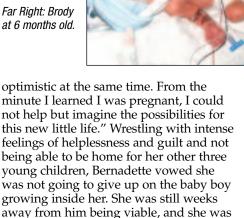
Following a year of planning with the Bridgeport NBICU team, including Chief of Neonatology Dr. Robert Herzlinger, and NBICU Manager Nina Hyde, TTMF was proud to launch our services at Bridgeport Hospital this May.

TTMF looks forward to a long and successful partnership with the Bridgeport Hospital and its staff in supporting their NBICU families.

Right: Brody John Hess spent over 50 days in the NICU.

Far Right: Brody at 6 months old.

terrified.



Bernadette's mother—"her rock" as she refers to her-came across TTMF's website when Bernadette was first admitted to the hospital. She said the TTMF stories gave her hope and encouraged Bernadette to read them. "I cannot tell you how many times I looked at your website when I was in the hospital...With the help of my mentors, Leelee and Kimbel, and reading those 'then and now' stories, John and I were able to stay relatively calm and optimistic because we had an idea of what was coming."

When Brody was born at 29 weeks gestation, he was immediately whisked away for medical treatment. Hours later, when Bernadette was able to see him for the first time, despite all of the tubes, bandages and IVs, she says "I just saw my beautiful baby." When John first held him, Bernadette remembers her husband looking at her and saying, "He really is small." "We cried a lot." When it was time for me to leave the hospital I had such mixed emotions—I could not wait to be home but nothing could prepare me for how hard it was to leave Brody behind."

Bernadette made the daily trip to the NICU to visit Brody. "Your heart aches in a way you cannot imagine. We were scared and felt helpless. There were some really tough, scary days." Bernadette used CarePages through a link on www.ttmf.org to keep friends and family apprised of Brody's condition efficiently. And in turn, friends were able to communicate back to the Hess's via their CarePage.

Brody's first six months have not been easy on the Hess family, but TTMF has supported them throughout their ordeal. While in the NICU, Brody had a multitude of preemie-related medical complications. TTMF provided Bernadette and John with parent mentoring, a Tiny



Treasures Welcome Bag of information and supplies, the resource room, nutritional support and—at long last—a Tiny Treasures Home Care Kit filled with hard-to-find preemie supplies to help transition Brody home.

Brody still suffers from several medical issues related to his prematurity and has been hospitalized twice for extended periods since coming home from the NICU. In March, he exceeded his prescription drug benefits for the year. To help the Hess's care for Brody, while resuming some sense of normalcy for their other three young children, TTMF provided financial assistance for respite care at home for Brody.

Despite all this stress, Bernadette explains, "Brody continues to amaze us in spite of all he has been through. He brings a sense of calmness to our house and has this amazing equanimity," she says. "It is lonely at times, not being able to do 'normal baby things' since we need to be so careful about exposing Brody to germs." But, it helps knowing TTMF is there. "Having someone call to check in, write motivational notes, and being able to talk to someone who has been through something similar," helps keep Bernadette positive and feeling a little bit more a part of a community.

The Hess family has a long road ahead caring for Brody and healing from the trauma of his early birth. TTMF is proud to have been able to support the Hess's through their ordeal so far and will be there for them into the future. It is tiny miracles like Brody, and parents like Bernadette and John, who inspire us to keep working to improve the lives of premature babies and their families.

## Kids Making Miracles

Children from all over Fairfield County have been coming up with creative ways to support TTMF and our local preemie families. From neighborhood bake sales to school-wide blanket-making projects, hand-made picture frames to hang on incubators to tiny, hand-knit preemie hats, families in Fairfield County NICUs are benefiting from the kindness of some of our youngest volunteers.



Over 100 Aqua Team 7th Graders at Middlesex Middle School in Darien made over 200 cozy blankets to give to preemie families, in memory of baby Sean Maloney.

Parker Biele, Nicole Lue, Millie Cunningham and friends ran a neighborhood bake sale in Rowayton and earned \$385, which they donated to TTMF.



Students and parents from New Canaan Country School made over 100 frames for incubators, and several tiny knit hats during the school's Family Community Service Day.

## Pro Bono Partnership Provides Free Legal Assistance

Non-profit organizations like The Tiny Miracles Foundation regularly need legal advice about all kinds of business matters, but usually don't have funds to hire an attorney. Fortunately, since our inception, Maurice Segall of the Pro Bono Partnership has been addressing that very need by providing expert legal assistance to TTMF at no charge.

The Pro Bono Partnership guided TTMF through our formation phase, helping us incorporate, apply for tax exemption and draft our bylaws. Later, the Partnership provided advice with respect to corporate filings, protection of the Tiny Miracles logo, disclaimer language for our Parent Support Network and issues connected with TTMF's new website.

The Pro Bono Partnership is dedicated to ensuring that non-profit organizations like TTMF have ready access to legal services of the highest

quality so they can preserve their limited resources for their programs. The Partnership's corps of more than 1,000 volunteer attorneys represents a broad range of legal expertise that they call on to assist clients as needed. These volunteers from the region's major corporations and law firms provide substantial leverage for the Partnership's budget which is almost entirely

supported by annual fundraising.
We are incredibly thankful to
Maurice Segall and the Pro Bono
Partnership for meeting all of our legal
needs to date and being so supportive of

our organization.



Maurice Segall, Esq., Deputy Director in charge of NY and CT programs (left) and Rick Hobish, Esq., Executive Director (right) of Pro Bono Partnership provide free legal services to nonprofits like TTMF.

## Tiny Miracles Celebrates Two Miraculously Successful Fundraising Events!



Within six months, The Tiny Miracles Foundation hosted two tremendously successful fundraisers. In September 2006, our third annual "Carnival of Life" entertained over 150 families at Wee Burn Beach Club and raised over \$55,000, while in March 2007, our trés chic Mar"tini" Miracles Gala at Wee Burn Country Club drew a crowd of 300 partygoers and raised a whopping \$160,000!

TTMF Co-Founder and President Gwen Noto of Fairfield revels in how far TTMF has come.



JoDeLuca Photography

Photo at left: Tracy and Monty Yort of Old Greenwich, Chris Shumway of Greenwich, Kelly Roberts of New York City and Carrie Shumway of Greenwich hit the dance floor.

Photo below: Maureen Collins of Norwalk, Kristen Fine of Darien, Stacy Greenberg of Westport and Cari Kaplan of Westport



Top left photo: The Struk family of Darien with their "tiny miracles" J.R. and Logan.

Above photo: Perinatologist Richard Viscarello, M.D., and his daughter enjoy the festivities.



Photo below: Mini Cooper raffle winner, Alice Clark of New Canaan is congratulated by Callari



See more event photos at www.ttmf.org

## Stamford and Norwalk Resource Rooms As Calm Havens

When The Tiny Miracles Foundation's original Stamford Hospital Resource Room was needed for cardiac ICU medical space, the Stamford Hospital NICU and TTMF teamed up to create an even better sanctuary for NICU families. The hospital relocated and enlarged the room, making it more comfortable and convenient. TTMF then decorated the room, donating the furniture, rug, flat screen TV/DVD, computer, printer and artwork, as we had recently done at Norwalk Hospital. Both are now beautified and improved havens for NICU families.



Stamford Hospital's Resource Room



Norwalk Hospital's Resource Room

## Volunteer Profile: Carmen Murphy

In each newsletter TTMF profiles a dedicated volunteer. In this issue we proudly introduce **Carmen Murphy of Darien**.

"I firmly believe everything happens for a reason," says TTMF volunteer Carmen Murphy. "Our son Jack was born at 23 weeks and survived less than a day. His twin, Kyle, was born two weeks later, at 25 weeks and weighing only 1-1/2 pounds. I needed to turn our experience into something positive — to be there for someone else."

And be there she has. For the past three years, Carmen has been an incredible asset to The Tiny Miracles Foundation, dedicating *countless* volunteer hours to help other families. She has supported numerous families as a parent mentor at Stamford Hospital, comforted bereaved parents through our Parent Support Network, and actively solicited auction items for TTMF's fundraisers. Carmen's fellow volunteers call her "empathetic", "considerate," "motivated" and "reliable". And it's true. Carmen is willing to do whatever it takes for the cause: from delivering Tiny Treasures Bag to local hospitals, to modeling clothes at a charity fashion show, to simply stuffing goody bags for the Mar"tini" Miracles Gala.

Kyle is now 10 years old and in 3rd grade. He experienced typical preemie-related developmental delays, but "that gap closes over time," says Carmen. As she tells her son's story, Kyle goes from tossing the baseball with his dad to playing soccer with a neighbor... just like any ten year-old boy.

It's the memory of the NICU "rollercoaster ride" that inspires Carmen to mentor local preemie families. "Being at the NICU to talk to a parent, and really understanding what they are experiencing, motivates me," says Carmen. "Though well meaning, my friends and family didn't understand what my husband and I were going through. They didn't talk about it because they didn't know what to say, or they didn't want to upset me," she explains. "I can help someone because we have been there."



Justin and Carmen Murphy with son Kyle, who was born at 25 weeks, and daughter Sarah at TTMF's 2006 Carnival of Life.

## TTMF Welcomes Four New Members to our Board

Four parents of preemies have joined the Board of The Tiny Miracles Foundation, bringing the total number of Board members to thirteen.

Meredith Daniels co-founded The Tiny Miracles Foundation in 2003 and served as our first President in 2003-2004. She rejoined our Board in 2006 as our Volunteer and Parent Support Network Coordinator. Meredith received her Bachelors degree from Manhattanville College and obtained a Masters degree from the University of Bridgeport. She taught elementary school for 11 years, finishing at Westover School in Stamford. Presently, Meredith is a Literacy Specialist for the Greenwich Public School System. She has volunteered extensively as an Ambassador Family with the March of Dimes and with the Epilepsy Foundation of Connecticut. Meredith lives in Stamford with her husband Stephen and their twins, Cameron and Brandon, who were born at 25 weeks gestation in 2001.

**Ashley Dineen** received a Bachelors degree from Pine Manor College. She

worked for Morse, Williams & Company, a private investment management firm, before moving to Morgan Stanley's asset management/private client service department as an analyst. Subsequently, Ashley received her Real Estate license and currently works for Kelly Associates, Inc. in Darien. She serves on the board of directors of Opus for Person to Person, and is involved with several other local charities. Her twin daughters, Colby and Reagan, were born at 33 weeks gestation. Ashley lives in Darien with her husband Duke and their three daughters.

Cheryl Egan received her Bachelors degree from Pennsylvania State University. After obtaining her teaching certifications, she taught elementary grades at several public and private schools, most recently at South Elementary School in New Canaan. Currently living in Darien with her husband Tim and their two children, Cheryl has remained an active community volunteer, fundraising for the Center for Hope, March of Dimes and her children's elementary school.

Cheryl serves as co-chair of The Tiny Treasures Program. Her son Timmy was born at 27-1/2 weeks gestation in 1999.

Richard M. Goldman is the President of Security Global Investors (SGI), a specialist investment management company. Prior to joining SGI, Rich served as Chairman and CEO of Forstmann-Leff Associates, an equity and hedge fund management investment company, and was CEO and Managing Director of Deutsche Asset Management's institutional business in the Americas. Before joining Deutsche Asset Management, Rich held institutional sales and marketing positions with State Street Global Advisors in Boston and spent eight years with IBM. He received his Bachelors degree magna cum laude from Bowdoin College. Rich is a graduate of the King & Low-Heywood Thomas School where he presently serves on the Board of Trustees. He and his wife Jami live in Old Greenwich with their two children. Samantha who was born at 29 weeks, and Matthew.

## Brightening The Runway



In April 2007, the Darien Sport Shop hosted a spring fashion show that featured several TTMF mothers and daughters as models. The store donated a percentage of the day's sales of Lilly Pulitzer branded clothing to The Tiny Miracles Foundation. The festive fashion event was preceded by an Easter egg hunt for kids, and shoppers were treated to entertainment and refreshments during and after the show.

(front), and Hayley Dineen and Maggie Strienger (back) model Lilly spring fashions at the Darien Sport Shop fundraiser in April.

Katie Esposito, Sarah Murphy, Parker Biele, and Gabrielle Streinger

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### \$100,000 and up

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## Se Habla Español

TTMF now offers Spanish language resources and interpreter services to NICU parents, staff and mentors wishing to use our programs. Even www.ttmf.org is available in Spanish!



Photo by Gary Esposito

Mr. Joseph L. Lazaroff

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Mr. & Mrs. Bradley Wurst

Ms. Amelia Yankovich

reflux, sensory integration, and having another baby after having a preemie. Schedules and locations are available from our local NICUs or at www.ttmf.org. Ms. Sandra P. Young Mr. Winell L. Yow Mr. & Mrs. Martin Yurkovic Ms. Andrea Zaff Ms. Susan Zakon Mr. & Mrs. Steven A. Zamsky Mr. & Mrs. John A. Zaro Mr. & Mrs. James Zech Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Zeigler In Kind Donors 2005-2007 20/20 Optical-20/20 Kids A Little Pocket Change Agabhumi Age of Reason Toy Store Alex and the Kaleidoscope Band All Seasons Marine Works American Girl AOL / Mr. Kevin Conroy Arbonne International Auction-Key com Baby Talk Magazine Barrett Bookstore Bay Harbour Management, LLC Beauty and Main Below Deck Bergdorf Goodman Beiersdorf Birdies in the Nest Blue Tulip Inc. Body Tuning Broadway.com Brooke Connors Designs Callari Auto Group CancerCare of CT Candy Nichols & The Loft Carmen and Justin Murphy Cava Wine Bar & Restaurant Charisse Photography Charlotte Kendrick Childrens Medical Ventures Christopher Rollinson Design Cin Cin Designs Classic Aviators COCO Nails & Spa Cookie Magazine Cornelia Day Spa Cotton Candy Kids Dana Beringer DandyTales Darien Doughnut Inn Darien Spa & Nails Darien YMCA Darien YMCA

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Essential Health Catering

Fountainhead Wines/Fat Cat Pie

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Equinox of Darien

Everyday Jewels

ForYourParty.com

Flowers by Jun

Frederic & Co.

Garelick & Herbs

Gates Restaurant

GE

Continued Support for Families While in the NICU, parents are surrounded by caring, competent medical staff. But bringing a preemie home can be daunting. Preemie mother Bernadette Hess echoes a common sentiment when she says, "the support you have in the NICU is excellent, but when you get home...it can be

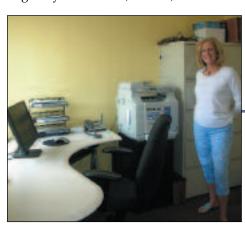
completely overwhelming." Thanks to TTMF's "Preemie Parents Talk" Support Groups, families like the Hess's meet a community of other parents with whom they can share experiences. Our support groups are offered free of charge and are open to welcome parents of premature babies of all ages, from all hospitals, whether their babies are currently in the NICU or have transitioned home. Led by TTMF parent mentors with guidance from licensed social workers, the support groups also feature guest speakers to address preemie-specific topics such as developmental delays, therapies, nutrition,

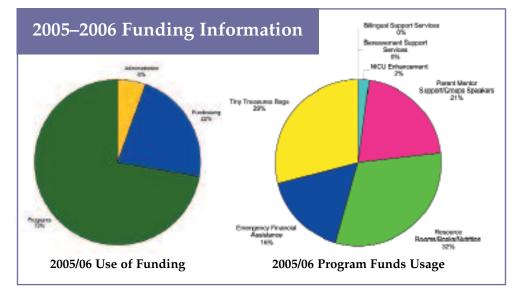
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The SONO Baking Company The Sweeney Family The Thomas Family The Tuffet Company The Whitney Shop Tin Cup Production TOGS T-Party Antiques and Tea Room Unilever Valworth Veronique Maternity Vineyard Vines Voss Water

## TTMF Gets a New Office!

In the past, office manager Erika Morro maintained the TTMF office from her home. But thanks to a generous donation of office space from Michelle Bunn and Media Pros of Darien, we recently relocated to 972 Post Road in Darien. Our friend Steve Gatto of Stamford Office Furniture kindly donated a desk, chairs and filing cabinets. The new TTMF office number is 203-202-9714 and for emergencies, 203-934-7321. Our mailing address remains the same: 25-13 Old King's Highway North #189, Darien, CT 06820.





Our New Office!
Pictured is Michelle
Bunn of Media Pros
who donated the
office space to TTMF.
The office is located
in Darien.

## 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.

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