



## A Message from our President

Greetings Friends and Supporters:

What a successful year we've had! Thanks to our many generous supporters and volunteers, The Tiny Miracles Foundation has grown from a fledgling group of dedicated parents to an established organization providing much-needed support to local families. After the Carnival of Life in September and the induction of our new Board of Directors in October, we rapidly began to launch our first programs. This Newsletter highlights TTMF's Parent Mentoring, Hospital Resource Room and Tiny Treasures Programs, all of which are up

*TTMF co-founders Gwen Noto and Meredith Daniels with their tiny miracles (clockwise from top) Nicholas Noto, Cameron Daniels, Brandon Daniels and Thomas Noto, as featured in Healthline magazine. Photo courtesy of Richard Freeda Photography, Stamford, CT*

and running at Stamford Hospital — with tremendous reception from the NICU staff and patients. In addition, we have received incredible community support in the form of promotional events, business collaborations and local press, and dozens of volunteers have completed our Volunteer Training Program to become Parent Mentors. We are now working hard to expand our current services to Norwalk Hospital and develop our Financial Assistance Program for needy families and our NICU Enhancement Program to help our local NICUs provide the best possible family-centered care. We are looking forward to a highly productive second year, and we hope you will continue to join us in helping the ever-increasing number of local families coping with the premature birth of their tiny miracles.

Gwendolyn F. Noto  
President & Executive Director

## Tiny Miracle Facts

- ♥ The average daily hospital cost for a healthy newborn without complications is \$1,500, while an infant born prematurely averages \$79,000.
- ♥ One in eight babies is born prematurely.
- ♥ Approximately 480,000 babies will be born prematurely in 2005.
- ♥ Norwalk and Stamford Hospital NICUs together discharge approximately 450 premature babies per year, totaling nearly 10% of all premature babies born annually in Connecticut.
- ♥ The Stamford Hospital NICU is ranked in the top 1% in the country among NICUs of similar size.



## WISH LIST

- Preemie Diapers
- Preemie Clothes
- New 5-Point Car Seats
- New Electric Breast Pumps for the NICU
- Financial Contributions to purchase supplies and equipment

## A Special Thanks to our Donors

- American Red Cross
- Ansa
- BabiesAdvantage.com
- Babyemporio.com
- Beiersdorf Inc.
- Bristol Myers Co.
- Chuckleberries.com
- ChildrensMedicalVentures.com
- Drugstore.com
- Galderma Laboratories
- Gcmedicalsupply.com
- Griebs Pharmacy
- Kidsurplus.com
- Pampers Preemie Diaper Hotline
- Playtex
- Preemie.com
- Rosstore.com
- Rugged Bear
- RYVMED.com
- Selfexpressions.com



Newsletter  
Summer, 2005

## Stamford Hospital Resource Room Opens!

The Tiny Miracles Foundation's Parent Resource Room opened at Stamford Hospital on January 10, 2005. Located next to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), the Resource Room provides a comfortable and peaceful setting where parents of premature babies can learn about premature birth, their children's circumstances and their own coping process. The Resource Room offers a computer with internet access, audio-visual equipment, books, informational videos and magazines, all related to parenting premature infants and coping with the NICU experience.



The Resource Room also provides a meeting place for parents to talk with our Mentors, trained volunteers most of whom have had premature children themselves. TTMF Mentors are on-site at the Stamford Hospital Resource Room Tuesdays and Fridays to support families, introduce them to our resources and provide refreshments during a time when parents often forget to take care of their own needs. Since our first Resource Room was launched earlier this year, TTMF has mentored over 25 families at Stamford Hospital.

## The Tiny Miracles Foundation Web Site Goes Live!

Our first resource initiative to launch was our website in September 2004. TTMF's website offers access to a variety of informational material, including lists of helpful books and periodicals, links to preemie-related websites and organizations, and a glossary of neonatal terms to help families navigate the world of the NICU. The site also includes inspirational stories of local families and "then & now" photos of former preemies. Our website is updated and expanded regularly as new information becomes available. Please visit us at [www.ttmf.org](http://www.ttmf.org)

## Launching the Tiny Treasures Program



A dozen local volunteers gathered in March to assemble over 200 Tiny Treasures Welcome Gifts and Home Care Starter Kits designed to help ease parents' practical concerns as they enter into and later transition home from the NICU. The Welcome Gift, given to parents soon after their baby is born, includes an



Ookie® scent-retaining doll to promote mother-baby bonding, tiny NICU outfits with openings for medical leads, and breast milk storage supplies. As each family prepares for their baby's homecoming, they are provided with a Home Care Starter Kit containing a collection of hard-to-find specialized preemie supplies needed to care for premature infants at home, including preemie-specific pacifiers, nipples, bottles, formula, diapers, clothing, blankets and medication syringes. The kit also includes a pamphlet with descriptions of relevant community resources and a list of vendors that sell the enclosed and other important preemie supplies. Many of the items included in the Tiny Treasures gift bags were either donated by local manufacturers and retailers or provided at cost. The Tiny Treasures program was launched at Stamford Hospital in April, and plans are underway to expand the program to Norwalk Hospital in 2006, followed by the other Fairfield County NICUs. ☺



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Mailing label





## Volunteer Profile

In each edition we will profile one of our dedicated volunteers or Board Members. In this issue we proudly introduce Director Patricia Cunningham, Corporate Secretary.

Patricia Cunningham serves on our Board of Directors as the Corporate Secretary of the Tiny Miracles Foundation, Inc. Her son Evan was born at 29 weeks in 1992. Patricia joined the TTMF Board of Directors in October 2004, and began managing legal matters with TTMF's attorney, Maurice Segall of Pro Bono Partnership. Patricia has handled all compliance issues relating to our first year of operations, including tax and regulatory filings, and has overseen trademarking applications and risk management for the organization. A highly qualified member of TTMF's Board, Patricia received her B.S. magna cum laude in Applied Mathematics and Economics from Brown University, her J.D. cum laude from Harvard Law School, and her L.L.M. in Taxation

from New York University School of Law. She practiced tax law for 10 years, first at Rogers & Wells and later at Brown & Wood, specializing in corporate, non-profit and securities taxation. Patricia has been an active volunteer over the years, serving on the Boards of Directors of the Royle School and the Middlesex Middle School PTOs in Darien, CT, and of Darien TOPS (Teen Options Program); co-chairing the 1999 Darien United Way Holiday Wine Tasting Fundraiser, and serving the last 7 years as a den leader for Cub Scout Pack 56. Patricia lives with her husband Bill and two sons in Darien, CT.

TTMF is fortunate to have the dedication of Patricia and the many other talented volunteers serving on our Board of Directors. ❁



Articles about all of our programs have recently been featured in *The Darien News-Review*, *The Darien Times*, *New Canaan / Darien Magazine* and other local Stamford, Rowayton and Fairfield County publications.

## Carnival of Life Fundraiser



Mark your calendars for the second annual Carnival of Life fundraiser on September 18, 2005, at Wee Burn Beach Club in Rowayton, CT!

Last year, blessed with a warm, sparkling day, 100 families gathered at Wee Burn Beach Club to celebrate The Tiny Miracles Foundation's first Carnival of Life. Children and parents alike enjoyed the delicious food, fun-filled activities and gorgeous beach-front location. (Visit [www.ttmf.org/events](http://www.ttmf.org/events) to view photos). Through the generosity of

attendees and donors, we raised over \$37,000 for TTMF programs.

This year Event Chair Kimbel Biele and her dedicated team of volunteers lead by Nicole Perullo have organized another elegant beachside barbecue with even more exciting entertainment for all ages, including Pongo The Clown, Safari Jim and Alex and The Kaleidoscope Band. Other activities will include carnival games, pony rides, pottery painting and moon bounces. In addition, families interested in shopping for the cause can choose from a spectacular array of coveted items at the silent auction tables. Look for your invitation in the mail shortly--this year it is sure to be a sold-out event, so RSVP quickly to reserve your spot! All proceeds from the Carnival of Life help fund TTMF's programs at Stamford Hospital, help expand these programs to Norwalk Hospital, and help develop additional programs to support local families with premature infants. ❁



Learning Express, a toy store in Darien, donated 10% of its sales on March 2, 2005 to The Tiny Miracles Foundation. The support for the event was unprecedented, resulting in over \$4,000 in toy sales. It was the store's biggest revenue day tied to a promotional event and we were happy to accept their \$400 donation.

Photo courtesy of Richard Freesta Photography, Stamford, CT

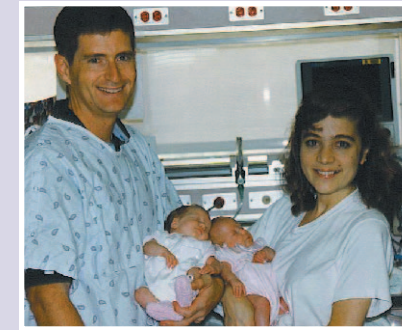


The Tiny Miracles Foundation was featured in Stamford Hospital's *Healthline* in April 2005. Dr. Gerald Rakos, Director Of Neonatology, stated "We provide excellent medical care for these babies — as do many other facilities. Where we really distinguish ourselves is in providing an entirely different level of psychosocial support as well. For example, the Tiny Miracles Foundation matches NICU parents with others who have had similar experiences." The *Healthline* article also describes the role of The Tiny Miracles Foundation within the NICU and features our founders, Gwen Noto, Meredith Daniels and their children.

## A Miracle Story

Sharon Jones and her husband Earl have two sets of premature twins. In 1997, Sharon went into labor with her first set of twins at 23 weeks. She was hospitalized and was able to hold off delivery until 28 weeks and 3 days. At birth, Lillian (2 lbs. 8 ozs.) and Hanna (3 lbs.) were immediately brought to the NICU where they were put on ventilators, given lumbar punctures, brain ultrasounds, blood transfusions and daily blood tests. They experienced so many episodes of apnea and bradycardia that they were nicknamed the "Brady Girls". After 8 weeks of good days and bad, Lillian and Hanna, both weighing 5 lbs and breathing on their own, were finally able to go home. They are now healthy, happy 7-year-old girls with no signs of their tumultuous beginnings.

Sharon and Earl's second set of twins were born a few years later. Virginia (4 lbs. 9 ozs.) and Weston (5 lbs 10 ozs.) were born at 33 weeks and 2 days. They were



Photos clockwise from top, left: Earl, Hannah, Lillian and Sharon on Sept. 8, 1997, going home from the hospital. A Happy, Healthy Family: Sharon, Hannah, Weston, Ginni, Earl and Lillian. Weston and Ginni on Sept. 25, 2003 in the hospital. Hannah and Lillian with a nurse at the hospital.

what NICU staff call "feeders and growers" and happily went home 13 days later. A second set of tiny miracles! "When my twins were born, I had no support group to help guide me through such an emotional time. With the launch of The Tiny Miracles Foundation, I can build from my own experience to help encourage and

support new parents of premature children. We give back and help others cope during one of the most stressful times in their lives. TTMF has filled a void; I wish it had been there when my children were born. I am so happy to help new parents of preemies and hopefully make their transition a little easier." ❁

## Parent Support Network Volunteers Begin

In the past 12 months, over 40 volunteers have become Mentors with TTMF's Parent Support Network. Each volunteer has completed a specialized training session, the first of which was run by Kathy Livolsi, NICU Nurse Manager, and Annette Maiberger, NICU Social Worker, at Stamford Hospital. Since then, TTMF has developed its own program to train the continuing flow of new volunteers in areas such as "active listening", cultural diversity, confidentiality and hospital protocol. Mentors also receive a comprehensive Volunteer Handbook

to supplement the live training.

Parent Mentors are available to support preemie parents in several ways. Parents visiting the NICU can speak with Mentors on-site in our Hospital Resource Room on a regularly-scheduled basis. Parents seeking more in-depth personal support can be individually matched for an ongoing relationship with a Mentor who has had similar experiences. Parents can also call our Support Hotline with specific questions and connect with Mentors who have personal experience in their area of concern. To date, TTMF Mentors have



helped over 25 families in our Resource Room at Stamford Hospital, and we have matched six families seeking additional support with personal Mentors. ❁



Thanks to **Bank of America**, High Ridge Road Branch in Stamford, which featured The Tiny Miracles Foundation as the "Business of the Month" during February 2005.



## NICU ALUMNI COW

Did you know that the NICU Alumni Cow located in front of the Whittingham Pavilion was painted in the year 2000 during an alumni celebration with the handprints and footprints of children born prematurely at Stamford Hospital?