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A Letter from the President

Dear Friends of The Tiny Miracles Foundation:

I am honored to be writing to you for the first time as the new President of the Board of Directors of The Tiny Miracles Foundation. Our organization has been led by two dedicated and focused individuals, co-founders and past Presidents Gwen Noto and Meredith Daniels. Their dedication, passion and hard work have turned this grassroots organization into one of the fastest growing and most successful non-profit Foundations in our area. I look forward to continuing this momentum by attracting more volunteers and engaging donors to join our team and help us expand to other areas of our community.

I am proud to report that 2007 was another successful year of growth for us. Since our inception in 2004, TTMF has expanded to operate our programs in three major Fairfield County hospitals—Stamford, Norwalk and Bridgeport—as well as offering a variety of services to all families throughout the region. Our programs include in-hospital resource rooms and in-hospital mentoring by a trained team of over 30 volunteer mentors; welcome and homecare supply bags; financial assistance for qualifying families at our three partner hospitals; a parent support matching network; a professional speaker series; a support website (www.ttmf.org); and bereavement resources. In 2007 we also began serving the Spanish-speaking community by adding a Spanish language website (espanol.ttmf.org) and other bilingual resources.

Last year we touched the lives of 800 families at our three partner hospitals, in addition to countless others who connected with our parent support volunteers, attended our lectures and accessed our services online. The cost to maintain and expand our varied programming in 2007 was approximately \$130,000. With the help of over 100 dedicated and passionate volunteers, our hard-working Board of Directors, two part-time employees, and donors like you, TTMF has been able to offer this array of programs and services free-of-charge to the Fairfield County community in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

We still have more to do, a lot more. The rate of prematurity is rising, and is increasing the demand for our programs. Over the next two years we will begin our expansion discussions with Greenwich and Danbury Hospitals. We will also spend time re-evaluating the current programs we provide, always looking to improve and expand the effectiveness of these programs.

The Tiny Miracles Foundation is helping a new family of a premature baby every day. Many of these families we do not meet face-to-face. A family may simply receive our supply bags, use our web site, get a book from our resource rooms, or take a break in one of our resource rooms, use the computer and have a snack. Several of the families write to us, and their simple words of thanks remind us daily that our programs are effective and touch those in need. One family wrote this week, "Thank you for your genuine and constant help, during a very difficult time in our life. We cannot thank you enough for the baby supplies that truly helped us. Our emotions have been so fragile and simply knowing you were there to call, helped us so much."

Your support has helped TTMF continue our programs and pursue long-term goals to expand services to other Fairfield County hospitals. Our mission could not be accomplished without the generosity of friends like you.

With gratitude,
Leelee Smith Klein
President



Mark Your Calendars!

This year's "Carnival of Life" will be held at Wee Burn's Beach Club on Sunday, September 21, 2008.

Sponsors include Callari Auto Group and the Darien Sport Shop. Look for your invitation in the mail!

Miracle Story: Starting Over with a Tiny Miracle

When Gloria Reyes traveled from her hometown in Puerto Rico to visit her parents in White Plains, NY, in April 2007, she had no idea how much her life was about to change.

Twenty weeks pregnant with her third child, Gloria, age 31, had been experiencing marital difficulties with her husband back in Puerto Rico. Throughout this pregnancy, he had become increasingly abusive, a situation that had not occurred when she was pregnant with her daughters Ariana, then 3, and Maria, 1. Gloria thought that the separation during her trip to New York might serve to calm things down at home.

Unfortunately, when she returned home, things got worse. Her husband's abuse escalated and became increasingly physical. Gloria feared for her life and those of her children, and the stress, anxiety, fear and trauma was making her sick. She decided it was time to leave, before it was too late.

So Gloria, pregnant and with two toddlers in tow, secretly contacted a lawyer, obtained the court's permission to leave Puerto Rico with her daughters, and escaped to her parents' home in New York. Once in New York, Gloria, now 7 months pregnant, set about making a new life for her and her children, but there was a constant fear that her husband would track her down and hurt her or her children.

Unbeknownst to Gloria, the prolonged stress and emotional and physical abuse had taken a toll on her health and pregnancy. Shortly after her arrival in New York, on a trip to visit her sister in Bridgeport, CT, Gloria suddenly started bleeding profusely and felt like she was in labor. She was rushed to St. Vincent's Hospital in Bridgeport, where her son, Angel David was born at 29 weeks, weighing only 3 pounds. Angel was in critical condition, and mother and baby were immediately transported to Bridgeport Hospital, which was better equipped to handle the fragile preemie's needs.

During his fragile first few weeks of life, tiny Angel dropped to 2 1/2 lbs., and needed specialized oxygen equipment and multiple blood transfusions. He had a tube inserted in his chest to release air that had accumulated there. After a month of

Gloria Reyes, and her children Angel (11 mos. old — in Gloria's lap), Maria (2 yrs. old) and Ariana (4 yrs. old).



intensive care, Gloria was told Angel was ready to come home, but then his oxygen levels dropped critically low, and he was forced to remain in Bridgeport's Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NBICU) for a fifth week.

Gloria desperately wanted to be by her tiny baby's side as much as she could. But living in New York and having two young daughters to care for, she was unable to afford the 80-mile round trip back and forth to Bridgeport on a daily basis. The nurses and social workers at Bridgeport's NBICU could see what a wonderful mother Gloria was and they knew how important it was for a mother to be with her baby, so they contacted The Tiny Miracles Foundation and applied for a grant from our Financial Assistance Program (FAP). Thanks to the generosity of our donors, TTMF was able to pay for Gloria's travel expenses so she could spend time each precious day with her son, learning to care for him and helping him grow stronger.

"I was so happy because at the time I was going through such a difficult situation...it was so hard," says Gloria. "I was so grateful for Tiny Miracles' help, I cried for almost a week. To think that my husband, someone so close to me, had let me down, and now people I didn't even know were helping me out; I couldn't believe it. It made me realize that God really does provide for us in times of need."

Today, Angel is 9 months old. Although he is growing stronger, he still requires special care. He gets sick frequently and was re-admitted to the hospital this fall after contracting RSV, a dangerous respiratory illness that can be fatal for babies born prematurely. He needs daily breathing therapy through a nebulizer, and because he is not yet able to roll over or sit up, he receives early intervention services, including physical therapy. Of her experience raising Angel, Gloria says,

"It's been more difficult than I expected. Even though I am an experienced parent, I had never had a preemie, and this is much, much harder. He needs special care, and he cannot do the things a typical child can do. But he is a total joy."

Gloria has finalized her divorce from her abuser. And she and her children have moved to Bridgeport to make it on their own. It is not easy being a single mother with three young children, but Gloria is determined to make it work. The biggest challenge she faces now is that Angel's respiratory condition precludes him from attending any daycare or being exposed to young children who could inadvertently make him sick. That means Gloria cannot work until Angel gets older, stronger and healthier. With her ex-husband refusing to pay child support, Gloria struggles to make ends meet.

"I would love to return to work," explains Gloria. "It's the best way I can help my children in the long run." She has a nursing background and speaks fondly of her work in a medical clinic in Puerto Rico. She dreams of going back to school to finish her nursing degree and becoming a nurse here in Connecticut. She was so impressed with the care she and Angel received at Bridgeport Hospital, she would love to be able to help others the way the doctors and nurses helped her.

The Tiny Miracles Foundation was honored to provide assistance to help Gloria spend time with Angel during his stay in the NBICU, and we are inspired by her strength and determination. We hope you will be, too. ♥

Donor Spotlight: Helping Families Stay on track During Challenging Times

TTMF's Emergency Assistance Program Helps Families in Need

The emotional impact of a premature birth can be devastating, but the financial hardships some families face can also be overwhelming. Many families enter the neonatal intensive care units (NICU) already just scraping by—social workers at Bridgeport, Stamford and Norwalk Hospitals estimate that approximately 35%, 15% and 15% respectively, of families admitted to their NICUs are considered low income or impoverished—while others face daunting financial strain brought on by a sudden and unexpected premature birth and its related expenses.

We all hear about exorbitant medical costs, but expenses associated with a preemie's prolonged hospitalization are not limited solely to medical care. As gasoline approaches \$4/gallon, transportation to and from the hospital for daily visits can be prohibitive. For parents who don't own cars, multiple trips using a cab service or public transportation are expensive. Costs for childcare for older siblings, who often cannot visit their tiny brother or sister in the NICU for health and safety reasons, creates an additional burden on families.

These financial strains are exacerbated by the fact that in many families with a premature baby in the hospital, at least one parent — usually the mother — remains out of work for an extended period of time. Often the mother has had a complicated pregnancy resulting in medical interventions or extended bedrest that

often leads to multiple or prolonged absences from work, and lost or relinquished jobs. Many times the mother herself faces an illness related to the premature birth and needs significant recovery time. And research and experience show that a mother being involved with her newborn's care during his or her hospital stay is vital to the short- and long-term outcomes of both the baby and the family.

Once a preemie is discharged from the hospital, out-of-pocket expenses can skyrocket. Families often need specialized equipment, supplies or services to help care for their baby at home. In cases where this care risks becoming overwhelming, additional qualified childcare assistance can be essential. Frequently, as a result of compromised respiratory and immune systems, many preemies are unable to attend childcare programs or be exposed to other children who could make them sick for the first several years, and this often means a parent must stay home from work to care for their child, causing financial strain to escalate.

To address these needs, The Tiny Miracles Foundation developed our Financial Assistance Program (FAP). With the generous help of donors, including the Newman's Own Foundation, we are able to provide needy families with emergency respite care, childcare assistance, transportation (see "Miracle Story", page 2), baby equipment, specialized preemie supplies and gift cards for other necessities.



TTMF board member Kathy Konopka Streinger meets with Clea Newman, President of Newman's Own Foundation, a generous sponsor of TTMF's Financial Assistance Program (FAP).

"It is such a privilege to be able to support an organization like 'Tiny Miracles'. They provide such a crucial service for so many families in our area", says Clea Newman, President of Newman's Own Foundation. To achieve that goal, Newman's Own contributed \$10,000 to TTMF's Financial Assistance Program in 2007 and additional funds in 2008.

The Newman's Own funds, along with generous contribution from other major donors, have enabled TTMF to provide much-needed financial assistance to over 50 families throughout Fairfield County. And we are hopeful that with increased funding going forward, we will be able to help more needy families as they struggle to make ends meet caring for their premature babies. ♥

Marching Together

Several tiny miracles and their families marched with The Stamford Hospital Team and the Norwalk Hospital NICU Team at the 2008 March of Dimes "March for Babies" in April 2008. ♥



Grace and Larsen Klein; John and Bernadette Hess's family with their tiny miracle Brody; and Miguel Triay whose daughter, Lola, is a tiny miracle.

Tiny Miracles Celebrates Two Miraculously Successful Fundraising Events!

The Tiny Miracles Foundation hosted two enormously successful fundraising events over the past year: Ashley Dineen spearheaded our fourth annual "Carnival of Life" which entertained over 150 families at Wee Burn Beach Club and raised over \$50,000 in September 2007, and in April 2008, guests were treated to a sophisticated evening of island splendor at Wee Burn Country Club. Carrie Shumway, Christa Struk and Ariane Triay co-chaired the "Night of Bermudian Miracles" gala that quickly sold out and raised over \$170,000. ♥



TTFM mentee, Ellen Crovatto, with her tiny miracle, Christian.



Tiny miracles Sarah Murphy, Morgan Biele, Colby Dineen, Isabelle Leclerc, Ellie Leclerc, Hayley Dineen and Reagan Dineen get ready for the Carnival's fashion show featuring children's clothing from The Darien Sport Shop.



Tiny miracle Thomas Noto, friend Anders Kleinbeck and tiny miracle Nicholas Noto enjoy the festivities.



Tiny miracles Mackenzie Biele, Reagan Dineen, Carnival of Life corporate sponsor Gina Zangrillo of The Darien Sport Shop, Ian Thomas, and Colby Dineen along with Dulcey Payne and Morgan Biele test driving the toy Mini Cooper from corporate sponsor Callari Auto Group.



Scott Hobbs, Hoyt Davidson, James Thomas, Bob Wyckoff and Bob Loonie got in the Bermudian spirit.

See more event photos at www.ttmf.org



TTFM President Leelee Klein with TTFM mentees Danielle and Andy Maloney.



Gala co-chair Carrie Shumway with Bridgeport Hospital neonatologist Dr. Robert Herzlinger.

"...There are no words to describe how honored my husband and I felt by all of [TTFM's] random acts of kindness... When I was on bedrest, we were glad that someone from Tiny Miracles came to visit but we thought we would never need any help. How wrong we were! ...Our daughter was born at just 24 weeks gestational age. At 1 pound 6 ounces and only 12 inches long we had so many questions and very little hope... [Our daughter] has overcome many challenges along a difficult journey but she is finally home... On behalf of our entire family, I want to thank you for all of the support we received from your organization. We have been blessed that Tiny Miracles was there for us..."

—Y. Perez, mother of a 24-week tiny miracle who spent over 100 days in area NICUs

Volunteer Profile: Lisa Tantillo

In each newsletter TTFM profiles a dedicated volunteer. In this issue we proudly introduce **Lisa Tantillo of Westport.**

"Thank God we found each other", Lisa Tantillo remembers thinking after first meeting TTFM co-founder, Gwen Noto. "When I had my twins, Sarah and Joshua, I did not know anyone who had had a preemie. Even without any major medical complications, the experience of having such tiny babies who had to be hospitalized for weeks, and then kept in a kind of 'quarantine' once home was frightening and very isolating. It was comforting to meet other moms who understood what I was going through."

In the months of friendship that followed, TTFM took shape. First, as a sub-group of the local Mothers of Multiples chapter, and eventually as a stand alone non-profit, able to reach an even broader audience of local families. Anxious to make sure that other local families would find the experience of having a preemie a little bit easier knowing support existed in the community, Lisa developed TTFM's website.

"It was extremely gratifying to be involved at the beginning... to ensure that families going forward have a resource they can visit, and garner hope from 24-7." From personal experience, Lisa knew that families of preemies had a ton of questions, but in many cases, their world had been turned upside down and they did not even know where to start feeling empowered to take care of their tiny baby. Lisa wanted to make sure TTFM's site provided plenty of information, but also hope. She started soliciting "before and after" stories from the friends she'd met in the NICU. The

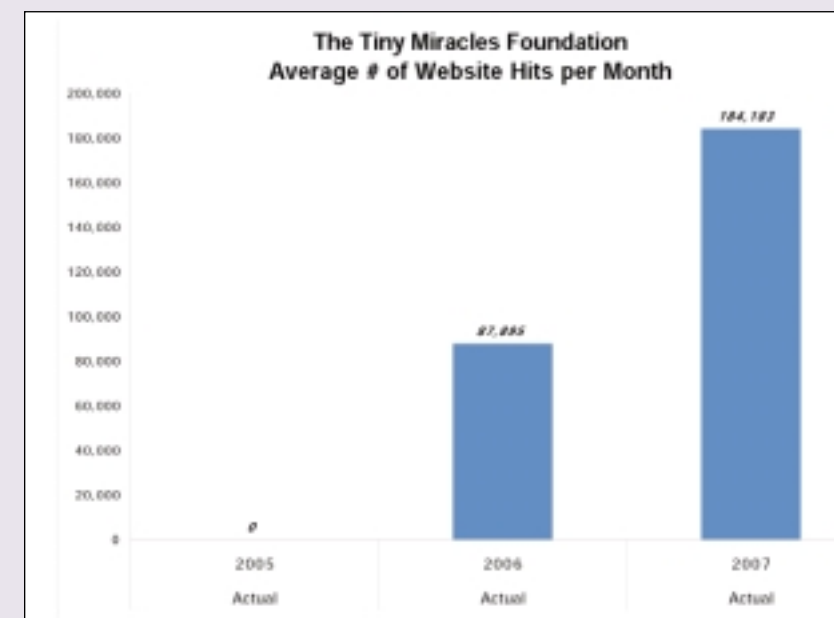


Lisa Tantillo with her Tiny Miracles, twins Joshua and Sarah Berkowsky.

stories were incredibly personal. The photos were mind boggling. Tiny 1 or 2 pound babies who were so ill and fragile in the NICU were then shown a couple of years later running, jumping, playing. "When my babies were in the NICU, living in isolettes and I was only able to see them every 3 hours after putting on an isolation gown and scrubbing in, it was so hard for me to imagine them as children doing something normal, like riding tricycles. I wanted TTFM's website to tell parents 'it's ok to be scared'... but also to offer perspective and hope."

Lisa's commitment to TTFM and the development of our website has been well worth all of her late nights and hard work. Since 2006, www.ttmf.org has logged more than 3.4 million hits and was translated into Spanish (www.espanol.ttmf.org) to meet the needs of even more local families as TTFM expanded its services.

"Our website helps ease the emotional impact of having a preemie. It's real— sometimes it's scary, sometimes it's sad. But then you see these kids now... Hopefully TTFM's volunteers and all the first-hand knowledge we put into our programs helps parents feel a little more empowered and confident to care for their baby. We want to be there for these families, whether they want to talk to a mentor who understands, or log onto our site late at night and just quietly take in the before and after photos. Just so long as they know we have been there, we understand." ♥



Lisa Tantillo's dedication to constantly improving TTFM's website (www.ttmf.org) is meaningful. The site averages almost 185,000 hits a month, or 2.2 million hits a year.

TTF Welcomes Two New Members to our Board

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

Tara Leclerc graduated magna cum laude from Vanderbilt University. She has worked as both an Analyst at Goldman Sachs and Co. in New York and a Marketing Manager for iVillage.com, overseeing online marketing. She is an active community volunteer who has had roles on the YWCA Activities Board, chaired the first OPUS for Person-to-Person "Big Rig Gig", served as chairperson of the Saint Luke's Parish School Parent-Teacher Committee and was active on the Saint Luke's Parish School Management Board. Additionally, Mrs. Leclerc spent three years on the OPUS for Person-to-Person Board of Directors, most recently as Co-President, as well as being a committee member for special events at Stepping Stones Museum for Children. Presently she serves on the PTO of Tokeneke School. Her twins, Eloise and Pierce, were born at 28 weeks gestation in 2002. Mrs. Leclerc lives with her husband

Réal and their three children in Darien, CT.

Ariane Triay is a graduate of Colby College. She spent five years planning elaborate private and corporate events in the U.S. and abroad with both Andy King Events and Avi Adler. Her clients included firms and foundations such as Target,

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Condé Nast, and The Robin Hood Foundation. Her experience in that field brings depth to TTF's ability to coordinate initiatives. Ms. Triay's daughter Lola was born at 28 weeks gestation. Ms. Triay lives in Darien with her husband Miguel and their two children. ♥



TTF's 2007-2008 board (left to right): Gwen Noto of Fairfield, Kathy Streinger of New Canaan, Lisa Tantillo of Westport, Tara Leclerc, Ashley Dineen, Becky Esposito and TTF President Leelee Klein, all of Darien, Kimbel Biele of Norwalk, Patty Cunningham of Darien, Rich Goldman of Greenwich, Ariane Triay of Darien, Eila Johnson and Eileen Thomas both of New Canaan. Not pictured: Cheryl Egan of Darien.

Community Support for TTF

Over 800 families of preemies in Fairfield County NICUs are benefiting from the generosity and volunteerism of local retailers, schools and community organizations who have supported TTF this past year, including:

- Best & Co. who donated a percentage of "Penelope Peapod" doll sales to TTF
- Community Cooperative Nursery School which donated proceeds from both a children's art show and a Christmas Tree sale to TTF
- Darien Library which held a knitting drive, resulting in over 70 preemie sized hats for area NICUs
- Greens Farms Academy students who volunteered at the "Carnival of Life"
- Middlesex Middle School students who made over 300 cozy blankets for preemies
- New Canaan Country School children who stuffed hundreds of "Tiny Treasures" bags
- Phyllis Heuer of Sarasota, FL hand knit 50 preemie hats for NICU babies
- The Darien Sport Shop which held a summer fashion show and donated a portion of the proceeds from Vineyard Vine's "Seersucker Saturday" to TTF
- The Princess Ball which made TTF the charitable recipient for this special father-daughter event
- The Weston Women's League's which donated proceeds from their "Children's Holiday Breakfast" to TTF
- Tokeneke School's first grade Brownie Troop 50630 which raised enough money selling Girl Scout cookies to go to Build-A-Bear and make bears for hospitalized tiny miracle babies ♥



Best & Co.'s Vice President of Marketing and Public Relations, Anne Randell, and TTF volunteer Jami Goldman at the Best & Co winter shopping event, which benefited TTF.



7th Graders from Darien's Middlesex Middle School made 300 cozy blankets to give to preemie families, in memory of baby Sean Maloney.



Brownies from Tokeneke School proudly display the teddy bears they made for tiny miracles.

Children from the Community Cooperative Nursery School in Rowayton raised \$2,000 for TTF through a children's art show.



Tiny miracle Grace Klein and her father, Michael, at The Princess Ball.

Grants Support Tiny Treasures Program



Thomas Bartram, First County Bank's President & Chief Operating Officer, TTF board member Cheryl Egan, TTF Vice President Becky Esposito, TTF President Leelee Klein, and Richard Taber, First County Bank Foundation's Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer.

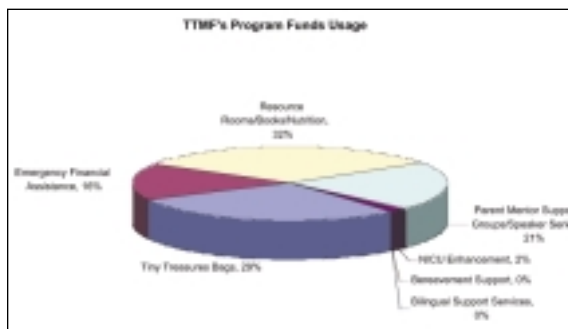
The Tiny Miracles Foundation received generous grants from community foundations and service organizations to guarantee expansion of their "Tiny Treasures" supply bag program. First County Bank Foundation contributed a \$10,000 grant, The Young Women's League of New Canaan contributed a \$5,000 grant and The Newcomers Club of New Canaan contributed \$2,500 to TTF's "Tiny Treasures" program. The program provides hard to find preemie-related supplies, educational materials and information to every parent of a premature baby in Stamford, Norwalk and Bridgeport Hospitals. This year, thanks to supporters like The First County Bank, Young Women's League and New Canaan Newcomers, TTF will distribute 1,600 of the supply bags to area families—twice as many bags as last year! ♥



Tiny Miracle Dante Esposito and his father at the Weston Women's League's Children's Holiday breakfast which benefited TTF's Financial Assistance Program (FAP). The poster in the foreground shows Dante's father reaching out to touch Dante's tiny hand when he was 2 days old.



Children from New Canaan Country School packed hundreds of "Tiny Treasures" bags. Back row (L to R): Mackenzie Swirbul, Macy Potter, Allie duBoulay, Caroline Leonard, Jay Wong, Phebe Wong, Charlie Krause, Will Hayden, Mayze Teitler, Charlotte Murphy, Megan Slaughter, Caroline Willis. Front row (L to R): Anna Gilbert, Caroline Frank, Ivy Wappler, Charlotte Noels, Grace Zaro, Annie Leonard, Michelle Basta, Emily Agnew.



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Ms. Heather Baker

Mr. & Mrs. Mark Baltimore

Ms. Tracy Barclay

Mr. & Mrs. David Barnard

Mr. & Mrs. Christopher Bastek

Mr. & Mrs. Eric Baurmeister

Mr. & Mrs. Preston Bealle

Ms. Shirley Bean

Mr. & Mrs. Wells Beck

Mr. & Mrs. Bruce Becker

Mr. & Mrs. Ryan Bell

Ms. Melissa Biele

Mr. & Mrs. Sebastien Bilodeau

Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Bischoff

Mr. & Mrs. Barry Blake

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Blake

Mr. & Mrs. Mike Boldt

Mr. & Mrs. Ward Borden

Ms. Eva Bourke

Mr. Gregory Bower

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Mr. & Mrs. Edward Brown

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Mr. & Mrs. Scott Church

Mr. & Mrs. Michael Cippoletti

Mr. & Mrs. Jesse Clarke

Mr. & Mrs. Peter Clarke

Mr. & Mrs. John Colon

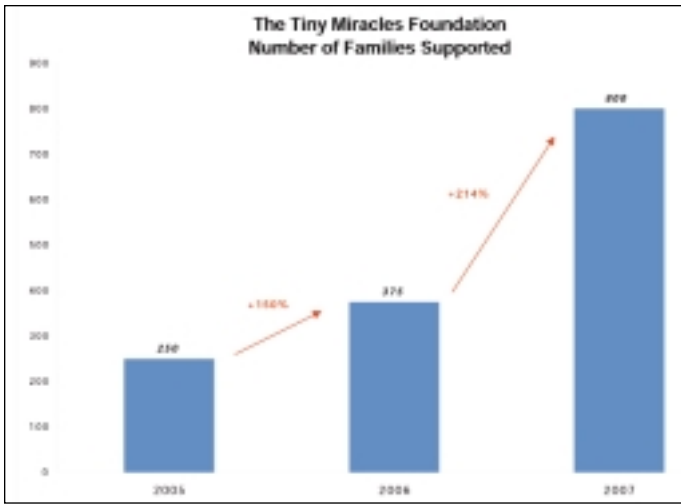
Ms. Elizabeth Conway

Mr. & Mrs. Sean Corrigan

Mr. & Mrs. Charles Cortellesi

Mr. & Mrs. Howard Courtemanche

Ms. Jill Crystal



The Need for TTMF's Support Services Continues to Grow! The number of families TTMF has supported has more than tripled since 2005.

"Thank you very much for being exceptionally wonderful during our time of need. Your quiet but ever present support has been invaluable. We are so grateful to know you."

— Anu and Besh Pertab, parents of twin boys born 3 months premature

Continued Support for Families

While in the NICU, parents are surrounded by caring, competent medical staff. But bringing a preemie home can be daunting. TTMF's "Preemie Parents Talk" Speaker Series is offered free of charge, and is designed for parents of preemies of all ages as well as parents of other special needs children. This series is a forum where parents can hear directly from experts and connect with each other on similar subjects. Speakers this year included:

- Pediatric Pulmonologist **Hossein Sadeghi, MD** speaking on asthma, RSV and the long term care of fragile infants
- Perinatologist **Richard Viscarello, Jr., MD** speaking on childbearing after having a preemie
- Pediatric Gastroenterologist, **Mark S. Glassman, MD** speaking on reflux
- Speech Therapist **Landria M. Seals, MA, CCC-SLP** speaking on preemie speech delays and how to encourage verbal development
- Registered Dietician **Michileen Kang, RD, CDN** speaking on the nutritional needs of premature babies and how to help them thrive
- Social Worker **Anne D'Elia, LCSW** speaking on the emotional rollercoaster parents experience when having a baby in the NICU and coping after a premature birth
- Pediatric Occupational Therapist **Rae Suba, OTR/L**, speaking on Sensory Integration Dysfunction
- Licensed Massage Therapist **Lisa Mecca** demonstrating how to help your preemie through massage. ❤️

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