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## Mark Your Calendars!

Come join us for our next big event!

### Laughing Pizza in Concert

Sunday, November 7, 2010 at 2pm

Quick Center for the Arts,

Fairfield University

(See them at [LaughingPizza.com](http://LaughingPizza.com))



### Ladies' "Elf" Night Out

at Stamford Discount Toys

December 2, 2010

Visit [www.ttmf.org](http://www.ttmf.org) for more information.

## A Letter from the President

Dear Friends of The Tiny Miracles Foundation:

I hope this issue of the Tiny Miracles newsletter finds you relaxing in the summer sun and enjoying the blessings of your life.

It has been another momentous year of miracles and milestones for The Tiny Miracles Foundation. As we celebrated our fifth anniversary, we vowed to remain patient and optimistic through the ups and downs of our economy. Our devoted supporters and positive attitudes have helped us succeed. Thanks to everyone's efforts and support, our programs helping families of premature babies are flourishing in the neonatal units of Bridgeport, Norwalk and Stamford Hospitals. And we are thrilled to be enhancing our presence at Bridgeport Hospital this fall by adding a Tiny Miracles NBICU Family Resource Room!

In this newsletter, we share moving stories about several of the families we have helped over the years, and the differences we have made in their lives. We hope you enjoy the pictures of our exciting fundraising events Cirque Voila and Miracles en Mayo, as well as snapshots of some of our grant funders and special events throughout the community.

You will also read about our dedicated board member and volunteer Eila Johnson, who has devoted five years to establishing and handling all of our media public relations. Her talent and time have educated the entire community about how Tiny Miracles can help.

In other news, we are pleased to announce that our co-founder, Gwen Noto, will take on the role of Interim Executive Director in September, focusing on our development needs. Our Board of Directors asked Gwen to consider this position, and we are thrilled she has agreed! We have no doubt she will embrace it with great energy, experience and passion, and lead us to an exciting future.

On the last few pages of this issue you will see the large list of our supporters who have fueled our success and growth this year. We are forever grateful for their support. As we put together this newsletter, I am once again reminded that this organization is an amazing circle of hope and love; who could ask for anything more?

Wishing you a relaxing summer,

Leelee S. Klein  
President

## In Every Issue

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

**1 The Koetsch Family Story of Taryn, Born at 26 Weeks**

In 2009, my husband was diagnosed with cancer, we were both laid off from our jobs and I found out I was pregnant. At five months, I went to the doctor to have an amnio. Suddenly the doctors were saying there were problems, I was admitted to Bridgeport Hospital and the next thing I knew I was wheeled up to surgery for an emergency C-section! It was completely overwhelming. My baby, Taryn, was born on September 7, 2009 at 26 weeks, 3 days—13 ½ weeks early. She weighed only 1 lb. 13 oz and was 13 inches long.

I was soon contacted by a volunteer from The Tiny Miracles Foundation. It was so wonderful to speak with another person with a similar experience. We were really struggling financially, and the social workers told us TTMF may be able to help. They paid two months of our rent, and it was a huge relief to know that one of our

many problems was temporarily alleviated. My husband and I also relied on the books and pamphlets available on the TTMF bookshelf, especially the ones on breastfeeding. My husband learned about kangaroo care, and was thrilled he could participate in this important therapy for our daughter.

The entire experience was so overwhelming, and I remember being so scared; it was so nice to have experienced preemie parents on our side, in addition to the medical staff. Today, Taryn is doing great. She is an alert and observant nine month old. She is starting to move around on her own and trying to crawl! ♥

Christopher Koetsch, Victoria (sister), Taryn and Lisa Koetsch.



Taryn at birth.

**2 The Herrera family story of Martin, Born at 26 Weeks**

After spending one week in the hospital under constant monitoring due to some spotting, Fernanda Herrera and her husband Dennis Herrera were allowed to return home. On the second day, after feeling slight contractions, Fernanda and her husband didn't hesitate in calling their physician who immediately told them to go to the hospital for monitoring to make sure that everything was alright. After several exams Fernanda was admitted to the birthing room since she was having contractions and was dilated. She was barely 26 weeks pregnant. The doctors tried to stop the contractions for hours with magnesium sulfate IVs and pills but nothing worked. In just a matter of minutes Fernanda was being taken to the operating room to perform a C-section, but suddenly there was no time for that because her water broke and natural childbirth ensued with the complication of the baby not in position. "Dr. Feruchi, with his experience and blessed by God, was able to deliver the baby in good condition. Our baby was born at 3:05 am September 18, 2009, weighing only 2 lbs and 1 oz." said Fernanda "We knew that God was always with us from the very beginning because this situation came about in a very special and precise way that only God could have planned." Since then their lives have changed as parents.

After a couple of hours they were able to see their son. As soon as they saw him they were ecstatic, but at the same time very anxious and worried. "We thought of a name with a special meaning and so we decided to name him "Martin", meaning fighter. We thought he would always be our champion." said Fernanda.

Fernanda made the decision to stop working in order to be with her son the entire time he was in the NICU to give him the medicine that he needed most at that time — "a mother's love". The first information given to the Herreras by the neonatologists was that the baby's first seven days were critical, and



Martin a few days after birth.

that if the baby could fight through these first few days, then there was a greater chance that he would be able to survive. A Tiny Miracles Welcome Bag was given to the Herreras and the hospital mentors offered their support. "Thanks to Leelee S. Klein for her words of support, despite the sadness and pain, she gave us great hope that my son would live. This is something we will always remember in our hearts." Fernanda said. The Herreras placed the Ookie bonding doll in Martin's incubator for comfort. They spent many days caring for Martin in the NICU and the Tiny Miracles resource room soon became a place of comfort. Fernanda continued to get support from more Tiny Miracles mentors who came to the hospital every week.

On his tenth day of life, Martin suffered a blood infection with E Coli, resulting in neonatal meningitis. His parents watched as Martin endured countless needle jabs in his spinal column to learn whether the meningitis was severe or had caused brain damage. Martin fought for his life, and over the next 21 days, Martin slowly improved.

Approximately three months after their son's premature birth, the Herreras were told Martin was ready to go home. They were given a Tiny Miracles Homecare bag filled with hard-to-find preemie supplies. "As parents, we were so excited to bring Martin home, but also anxious to leave the NICU. Our first three months were filled with vivid memories of the doctors and nurses who cared for Martin so lovingly. The hospital truly had become our second home" said Fernanda. "We



President Leelee Klein gets a visit from Fernanda, and is thrilled to hold a healthy Martin after he is home from the NICU.



A recent photo of Dennis Herrera, Martin and Maria Fernanda Herrera.

would like to thank the NICU department at Stamford Hospital for all their dedication to our baby and for giving him so much love when he needed it most and special thanks to TTMF for being there, proving to us that miracle babies do exist, and that they are everywhere. We also thank them for their supply bags, financial support and the beautiful playpen."

Martin is now 9 months old and weighs 13½ lbs. "We are very pleased to see that he is very healthy and growing more and more each day. We love you Martin" says Fernanda.

♥  
(Miracles stories continued on p. 4)

**THIS YEAR, WE CELEBRATE FIVE YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS!**

**In the last five years, TTMF has:**

- ♥ Grown from an idea and a mission to operating on-site programs in three partner hospitals, community-wide programming and a website with far-reaching access to families in need of support as they struggle to find resources while living through the daily experience of having a premature baby.
- ♥ Built two fully-equipped Resource Rooms at Stamford and Norwalk Hospitals, which provide a respite from the NICU 24 hours a day and a place to visit with family not able to come into the NICU, browse our resource and lending library, use the computer with internet access or phone to connect with friends and family or research medical needs. Finished plans for the third resource room at Bridgeport Hospital.
- ♥ Delivered almost 3,000 Tiny Treasures bags of specialized preemie supplies to Stamford, Norwalk and Bridgeport Hospitals and to families needing assistance transferred to advanced life-saving care at other hospitals.
- ♥ Become a thriving organization, growing from 6 to over 100 volunteers, including 20 mentors who visit our partner hospitals weekly to meet with families - and increasing our staff from one to three part-time staff.
- ♥ Given \$65,000 in financial assistance to 67 families struggling with the financial stress of caring for their premature baby.
- ♥ Expanded our network of supporters like you to help us raise almost one million dollars over five years to support these programs.

**3 The Salvo Family Story of Ross and Chrissy, Born at 27 Weeks**

All parents of premature babies experience the roller coaster ride of spending time in the NICU. But for Diane Salvo and her husband Pat, their ride has had more dips and dives than most. Diane was 26 weeks pregnant with twins when her mom suffered a cracked vertebra at her home in North Carolina. Given the permission to fly, Diane went to visit her mother. The trip was stressful, and when Diane returned home, she was hospitalized for preterm labor. Then came the next crashing blow: Diane's mother had suffered a stroke and died. Several days later, Diane and Pat's twins were born by emergency c-section at Norwalk Hospital. Christine, at 2 lbs. 4 oz., was the healthier twin while her brother Ross, at 2 lbs. 6 oz., fought for his life. Ross took a turn for the worse after the first 24 hours, suffered a brain bleed, and required surgery to repair a defective heart. He was transferred to Yale where both conditions were treated and he remained in the NICU at Yale. This left Diane and Pat shuttling between work, Norwalk Hospital, Yale Hospital and their home in Newtown, CT.

Through the guidance of a social worker at Norwalk Hospital, Diane and Pat were granted financial assistance by TTMF in order to tackle their mounting medical bills. Finally, Chrissy came home from the hospital on May 10, 2006, with Ross following two weeks later. Diane took her maternity leave to care for the infants, but the challenge of dealing with both tiny babies, each with their own medical conditions, proved

too overwhelming. After several sleep deprived weeks, filled with panic attacks, mounting anxiety, and post-partum depression, Diane made the brave and drastic decision to admit herself to Norwalk Hospital under psychiatric care. As Diane's emotional state improved, TTMF sprung into action arranging for a doula to care for Diane, Chrissy and Ross, and for additional financial assistance for the family. "I never would have made it without the incredible support of TTMF," says Diane. "I can only hope that other parents are not ashamed to ask for help. It is not a sign of weakness to ask for help, it is a sign of strength."

Four years later, Diane reports that Chrissy and Ross are bright, active four-year-olds who attend a special education preschool in Newtown. Ross struggles with the effects of his traumatic first weeks—cerebral palsy affects his ability to walk, and he has hydrocephalus. Chrissy receives speech

therapy. Both children are truly "tiny miracles", as are Pat and Diane for leading their brave fight. And we are twice blessed to have met Diane, as now she is an active volunteer and parent mentor for The Tiny Miracles Foundation. ♥



Left: Chrissy Salvo a few days after birth. Below: Ross Salvo a few days after birth. Bottom: Recent image of Chrissy & Ross Salvo.



**4 The Jones Family Story of Renata, Born at 29 Weeks**

At 27 weeks, and pregnant for the first time, Glaucia Jones was alarmed to see her body swelling up. But her doctor wasn't overly concerned, since her blood work and blood pressure measured in a normal range. Glaucia tried to believe this was a typical course of pregnancy and resumed her full-time job, since her baby wasn't due to arrive for 13 more weeks. Two weeks later, on Thanksgiving eve, Glaucia became violently ill. She was rushed to the hospital, writhing in pain. Her blood pressure had sky-rocketed. Glaucia was told she had preeclampsia and would have to deliver her baby—at 29 weeks gestation. Within hours, baby Renata was born, weighing just 2 lbs. 9 oz. on November 25, 2005. Her lungs were underdeveloped and she had a hole in her heart. Renata was swiftly rushed to the NICU for care. Because Glaucia's own health took a traumatic turn, she did not get to see her baby. Glaucia had developed HELLP syndrome, a life-threatening obstetric blood disease. Both mother and baby were in critical condition. It was three days before they met.

"Just thinking about that experience gives me the chills. I remember my husband giving me the Ookie doll from our TTMF

Tiny Treasures bag and explaining that it would retain my scent and then be put into my daughter's isolette. I hadn't even met my daughter. I felt so helpless, this meant so much to me," Glaucia recalls.

Glaucia's daughter spent two months in the NICU. "You never think you'll have an experience like this," Glaucia explains. "One of the parent mentors from TTMF told me that there would be good days and bad days. She told me it's ok to cry. It meant so much to me to know that there was someone out there who understood what we were going through."

Five years later, Glaucia is giving back. "TTMF's comfort and support meant so much to me. I used the TTMF's Resource Room every day when visiting Renata in the NICU. Since we were only able to visit our daughter every three hours, the resource room was a private, cozy place for me to go in between." This personable, trilingual volunteer recently served on the planning committee for TTMF's "Miracles en Mayo" fundraiser, and she forged a relationship between TTMF and Stamford Toys for an upcoming fundraising event. "I am glad I can give back", says Glaucia. "I truly believe in the cause. I know firsthand how much TTMF means to parents of a preemie." ♥



Glaucia holds Renata only a few weeks old in kangaroo care with help from her husband Christopher.



Today, Glaucia and her daughter Renata.

**Helping Many Families Outside of Fairfield County**

Each year, The Tiny Miracles Foundation assists many families of premature babies outside our local community who are referred to us by friends and volunteers or who find us on online. We support them via phone and email, and we send them supplies as needed. This year, TTMF felt compelled to assist premature babies affected by the earthquake in Haiti. We shipped cases of premie diapers and over 200 Dr. Brown's premie plastic bottles to *Love A Child* orphanage in Haiti to aid in feeding many of the premature babies in the earthquake's most devastated areas.



Marcos De Jesus manager of Darien UPS Store and owner Alan Shapiro, help pay the costs of shipping supplies to preemies.

**We welcome Kelley Chapman to our staff**

We were delighted to welcome our new program and office manager Kelley Chapman to our staff in late July 2009. Kelley has taken on her role with great energy, organizational skills and wonderful southern charm. She handles all daily program management, volunteer coordination and office administration. Please feel free to call or email Kelley at [kellychapman@ttmf.org](mailto:kellychapman@ttmf.org) for any needs or questions!



TTMF Office manager Kelley Chapman and her husband Nick, at our "Miracles en Mayo" gala event.

## Tiny Miracles Celebrates Two Miraculously Successful Fundraising Events!

The Tiny Miracles Foundation hosted two fabulous fundraisers over the past twelve months to support our ongoing programs and operations. Our first public event was a benefit performance of Steve Love Productions show called "Cirque Voila" that was held at The Quick Center for the Arts at Fairfield University on December 6, 2009. The day was a "high flying" success thanks to local sponsors including Capital One Bank, Sun Products, BMW of Bridgeport, LTB Properties, Bluff Point Associates, Withers Bergman, LLP and many other local businesses. The crowd of 450 people was entertained by renowned artists from all over the world. Performers included a juggler, illusionist, hula-hoop acrobat, clown, contortionist, aerialist, and acts of incredible strength. Families from throughout the area came to enjoy this first-time adventure to help us raise over \$20,000.

In May, our "Miracles en Mayo" gala event was held at Wee Burn Beach Club in Rowayton. Over 270 guests enjoyed a spectacular beachside setting and delicious food while helping raise over \$140,000 for the Foundation's programs and for the creation of a new parent resource room at Bridgeport Hospital. The event was blessed by a perfect spring evening, and the gorgeous weather contributed to the beauty of the colorful Mexican-themed decorations under a tent overlooking the Sound. The gala was generously supported by numerous event sponsors including Bridgeport Hospital Foundation, Broder & Orland, LLC, Callari Auto Group, Norwalk Hospital, and Stamford Hospital, as well as several local families and family foundations. ♥



Twins Grace and Larsen Klein of Darien surrounding Jack Johnson of New Canaan.



Above left: Families enjoy VIP hour prior to the circus. Left: Face painting fun.



Kristine Gore, Stef & Spencer Boggess, Jaakob Gore, all from New Canaan.



Bridgeport Hospital Foundation friends, neonatal nurses and TTMF mentors gathered for a team photo.



Darien High School event volunteers Katie Southworth, Samantha Johnston and Charlotte Phillips.



Kelley and Rick LaFerriere of Southport, and Carrie and Chris Shumway of Greenwich.



Planning for the gala, members of the gala committee help stuff the invitations... Medha Thomas of Westport, Susie Swirbul and Lori Church of Darien and Kerry Hanson of New Canaan.



Elizabeth and Robert Duffy of Darien, Jami and Richard Goldman of Greenwich.



Eila and Jeff Johnson, Ally and Dirk Dunlap, all of New Canaan with Joannie and Marcus Chioffi of Greenwich.



Scott and Lori Church of Darien and Paula McInerney.



Gina Ely of Norwalk, Sue Lue of Rowayton, Ramsey Goodrich of Fairfield and Alex Ely of Norwalk.



Stamford NICU nurse Lorraine Schlidnecht of Darien, TTMF Co-Founder Gwen Noto of Fairfield, and retired Stamford NICU nurse Krista Lilly.



Norwalk Neonatologist Dr. Dave Viral and his wife Ami.



Michel and Marlous Lagarde of New Canaan, Amanda Briggs of Rowayton, and Katie and John Owsley of New Canaan.



Great weather encouraged a lively golf competition.



Gala co-chairs Kerry Hanson, Shelli Milazzo and Tara Leclerc enjoying their success at the event.

## Generous Shoppers Supported Us Too!

TTMF friends and supporters enjoyed discounted shopping to support The Tiny Miracles Foundation at a special event hosted by J.Crew of Westport on April 8, 2010. Over 100 shoppers attended this fun evening.

Several other local companies in our area generously provided shopping opportunities to benefit TTMF programs. Those companies included **New Canaan Wine Merchants, Marna Ringel Flowers, Pierre Deux, Lord & Taylor,** and a special event hosted by Carrie Shumway and CZ Baby. ♥



Sara Alvord, Annika Sotirhos and Sarah Grow all of New Canaan.



Kimbel Biele and Sue Lue of Rowayton.

Board Member Kerry Hanson of New Canaan, Manager of J.Crew Westport Jodi Doyle, TTMF President Leelee Klein of Darien, J.Crew Corporate Marketing Manager Samantha Weston, J.Crew Private Shopper Patricia Dailey of Darien, TTMF Program Manager Kelley Chapman of Norwalk and Board Member Ariane Triay of Darien.



Shoppers Liz Janiga of New Canaan, Amanda Briggs of Rowayton and George of New Canaan.

## Community Support for TTMF's Parent Support Programs

The families we help are also benefitting from the generosity and volunteerism of local schools and community organizations who have supported TTMF programs this past year.

On Friday, April 30, **science teacher Kelley Depiano** (founder and developer of "Blankets For Premies") led **Darien's Middlesex Middle School 6th Grade Red Team**, their teachers and parents to make 400 fleece blankets. The Tiny Miracles Foundation volunteers then delivered the blankets to Stamford, Norwalk and Bridgeport Hospital neonatal units.

The blankets are:

- a tool for nurses to keep the incubators dark and quiet, which helps the brain development of the fragile babies who are experiencing sight and sound too early.
- a visual guide to the parents who arrive in a crowded NICU. Very often their baby's incubator has been moved and they can only locate their child by the fleece blanket incubator cover.
- a warmer for when parents hold their baby outside the incubators using Kangaroo Care.
- a stabilizer for a tiny baby going home in a car seat that is too big for his or her body.
- a gift that has special memories for the baby's family to cherish as a keepsake forever.
- a comfort to fragile new parents from people who care.

The Blankets For Premies Club, led by the 6th graders, raised the funds to buy the fleece. The students solicited local stores to donate to their raffle to raise funds and for prizes for students who made the most blankets. They helped motivate and mobilize their parents to help cut the fleece and then all 100 students spent the entire school day making the blankets.

The energy and excitement in the room increased throughout the day as the bags of blankets filled the room. To help educate the students about prematurity, teacher Kelley Depiano and Leelee Klein, TTMF President, spent one class period educating the children about premature birth in our community and presented a short film to show them how The Tiny Miracles Foundation helps families with premature children.

The "Blankets For Premies" program at the middle school was developed by Kelley Depiano in memory of her friend's son, Sean James Maloney, who died from complications of premature birth. Mrs. Depiano also wanted to give back to the medical community that helped her family care for her twins, who were also born prematurely. ❤️



Parent volunteers Lauren Connelly, MMS science teacher and Blankets For Premies founder Kelley Depiano, Andrea Cragin and Diane Laughlin help pack the blankets for TTMF to deliver.



Nora Markham, TTMF volunteer Carmen Murphy, miracle Kyle Murphy, Savannah Chaput and Jack Flanagan complete a blanket.



A New Canaan Country School student volunteer helps move supplies for deliveries to hospitals.



Students from New Canaan Country School donated their time to hang posters for TTMF's Cirque Voila fundraising event.



Volunteer parents Deborah List and Susan Kunin help stuff the gift bags at the JCC Mitzvah Day.

## More Community Support for TTMF

**New Canaan Country School** supported TTMF again this year during their Community Service Day by providing parents and students to help move several boxes from our storage unit to our office to facilitate the delivery of our Tiny Treasures Bags to the hospitals. They also helped rearrange the supplies in our office storage so we can easily meet the needs of our deliveries.

As part of their Mitzvah Day in November 2009, **The Jewish Community Center** in Stamford packed and donated over 100 gift bags to families of premature babies in the NICU over the holidays. The gift bags included knit hats, small fleece blankets, handmade frames, inspirational beaded key chains and special handmade cards. These gifts were delivered by our volunteers to the families in the NICU and helped warm their hearts during the holidays.

We were blessed again this year to be selected to benefit from **The Princess Ball**, which was held at the Long Shore Inn in Westport in February. The Princess Ball is a nonprofit organization that hosts father-daughter dances to raise funds and awareness for children's charities in the area. ❤️

## Volunteer Profile: Eila DeBard Johnson

After the premature birth of her son Jack in 2003, Eila Johnson spent all day, every day, in the NICU. "Jack was born eight weeks early. We were two young, healthy parents whose friends all had these pink bundles of joy they brought home from the hospital right after birth. We had no reason to believe our parenting experience would be any different. Jack's premature birth truly turned our world inside out."

When Jack was 18 months old, Eila saw a photo spread in the New Canaan/Darien Magazine describing a fundraiser hosted by an organization called The Tiny Miracles Foundation. "I went online and read about the organization and thought, 'wow, just think about how different our experience could have been if I'd known about Tiny Miracles'. To be able to talk to someone who understood the isolation and uncertainty of having a premie, and who now has a child who's walking, talking... just imagine."

Eila attended an information session to learn about volunteer opportunities for the fledgling organization. "Strategically, they had a solid plan. And TTMF had the most amazing group of volunteers—parents who had premies themselves. These volunteers were pouring their hearts into this organization, determined

to provide comfort, information, supplies and financial assistance to families of premies." While she wanted to become involved in the organization, Eila knew she wasn't able to be a mentor. "It's too raw. Even now, 7 years later, I still well up and become very emotional when I talk about the experience of our son in the NICU."

But Eila did see a place she could help out in a meaningful way. "What we needed to do was shout it from the rooftops. We needed to let people know that this unique and incredible support network exists." At that night's meeting, Eila offered to take on public relations for the organization.

"Looking back, I have to laugh. I didn't have PR experience, but boy, did I have passion for the organization. By day, I'd raise Jack. And then I'd stay up late at night writing these press releases." Hundreds of articles later, Eila is credited with increasing local and national awareness about TTMF.

"I'd have to say my crowning glory was the recent cover photo and recognition of the leadership of TTMF's President Leelee Klein. It's great to see TTMF's news in print



Jack Johnson (7 years old), parents Eila and Jeff Johnson, and Oliver Johnson (3 years old).

throughout the year, but being able to combine that with a successful nomination of Fairfield County's "Most Dedicated Committee Member" in Moffly Media's "Light a Fire" Awards — and to have TTMF's President on the cover of the magazine for all to see — now that was amazing. I mean, just think of how many more people know about TTMF's support network now!"

Today, Eila continues to be committed to TTMF as a fundraiser, board member, telephone mentor, and she supports our new public relations volunteers. Thank you Eila, for all your tremendous work! ❤️

## In the News...

The Tiny Miracle Foundation's programs and services were profiled in three major publications in our community over the past twelve months. The 2010 Director's Report at First County Bank, the Bridgeport Hospital Foundation Annual Report profiles, and Moffly Media's November/December 2009 special philanthropy issue!



In our small community of Fairfield County, Connecticut, 1200 babies are born prematurely each year. We currently provide direct support to 800 of those families through our hospital programs and we help many more through our website and other connections.



**2009-2010 Board Of Directors** (L-R) Leelee Klein (President), Robert Duffy, Eila Johnson, Patty Cunningham (Secretary), Kimbel Biele, Gwendolyn Noto (Co-Founder), Ashley Dineen, Shelli Milazzo, Lisa Tantillo, Tara Leclerc, Cheryl Egan, Kerry Hanson, Ariane Triay and Rich Goldman. Not pictured: Rebecca Esposito (Vice President), Jill Hooper, Sarah Payne and Christa Struk

### New Board Members Join Our Team

**Robert Duffy** is General Manager for Global Business Development at General Electric. Prior to joining GE, Rob was a Managing Director in mergers and acquisitions with Credit Suisse in New York and London. He received an AB from Harvard College magna cum laude in economics, an M.Sc. from the University of Wales in international economics and a J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center magna cum laude. His son Nicholas was born prematurely at 24 weeks in 2000. Rob lives with his wife Elizabeth and their three children in Darien, CT.

**Kerry Hanson** received a Bachelor of Arts degree in World Politics from Hamilton College in 1993. From 1993-1997 she worked at Conde Nast Publications and the Hearst Corporation in New York, planning events and commentating fashion shows for Glamour, Mademoiselle and Town & Country magazines' advertisers. In 1997, Kerry joined the sales team at Lehman Brothers' Fixed Income division, relocating to San Francisco with Lehman in 1999. Shortly thereafter she transitioned to selling

Internet advertising sales, working for ESPN.com until 2001. Kerry then returned to school at U.C. Berkeley to study Interior Design and Interior Architecture, while also working for Edward Lobrano Interior Design. In 2003, she established her own interior design firm, Kerin Hanson Design. She moved back east from San Francisco in 2007 and continues to work as an interior designer. Kerry successfully co-chaired TTFM's "Miracles en Mayo" gala event this year, along with fellow board members Tara Leclerc and Shelli Milazzo. Her first daughter, Ellie, was born at 32 weeks gestation in 2003 and her twin daughters were born at 33 weeks in June of this year. Kerry lives in New Canaan with her husband, Mark, and their four daughters.

**Michele ("Shelli") Leigh Milazzo** received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Vanderbilt University's College of Arts & Science in 1996, graduating magna cum laude in her major, Communication Studies. She worked in Special Events and Promotions at Calvin Klein, Inc. from 1997-1998 and as an assistant in public relations at Burson-Marsteller from 1998-1999, before earning her J.D. from Emory University School of Law, graduating

with honors in 2002. Shelli then practiced law at Dewey Ballantine LLP (now Dewey & LeBoeuf) as an Associate in the Intellectual Property and Technology group from 2002-2004. In 2004, she joined The Associated Press as Associate Counsel, where she focused her practice on corporate governance issues, intellectual property transactions and international and domestic content licensing. While practicing law, Shelli was involved in numerous pro bono endeavors including work with New York Public Radio (WNYC). Since moving to Darien in 2007, Shelli has also volunteered with OPUS Person to Person as a committee chair for their annual Big Rig Gig in 2007 and has been an actively involved with The Holly Pond School since 2008. Shelli began volunteering with The Tiny Miracles Foundation in 2007 and became a mentor in 2009. Shelli successfully co-chaired TTFM's "Miracles en Mayo" gala event this year, along with fellow board members Tara Leclerc and Kerry Hanson. Her first son, Leighton, was born prematurely at 26 weeks gestation in 2005. Shelli lives in Darien with her husband, Matthew, and their three children. ♥

### Moving On...

#### Kathy Konopka Streinger and Eileen Thomas Transition to our Honorary Board

We have been blessed by both **Kathy Konopka Streinger's** and **Eileen Thomas'** longstanding commitment to The Tiny Miracles Foundation over the years. **Kathy Streinger's** first Board project brought in our first and largest grant from The Andor Capital Management Foundation. Kathy also initiated and organized our expansion into Norwalk Hospital, oversaw the construction of our Resource Room there, secured the invitation for grant funding from Newman's Own Foundation for two years, and has been a committed mentor at Norwalk Hospital and to other families in need. As an Honorary Board member, Kathy plans to stay involved with TTFM as a mentor, advisor, supporter and fundraiser. We thank Kathy for her steadfast dedication and accomplishments over the years.

**Eileen Thomas** came to our Board with valuable expertise as a consultant from McKinsey & Company global management consulting, and as a veteran director of a large Manhattan non-profit organization. Eileen's wise advice and counsel has proven invaluable to the overall strategic planning and operations of our organization over the past four years. In addition, Eileen initiated the corporate and community grant funding for TTFM, successfully winning our first of several community grants. Under Eileen's tutelage, other Board members learned the art of grant writing, and Eileen managed our funding cycle for several years. She has also been a mentor at Stamford Hospital and to many community families over the years. Eileen will continue as an advisor to our strategic planning committee, as well as to offer mentoring and support. Many thanks to Eileen and her family for their overall commitment and support! ♥

#### TTFM Co-Founder, Gwen Noto takes new leadership role as Interim Executive Director

**Gwendolyn F. Noto** co-founded The Tiny Miracles Foundation with Meredith Daniels in 2004 to meet the needs of families struggling with premature birth after they both had twins born at 25 weeks. While overseeing the tremendous growth of our organization, Gwen has remained a steadfast and active volunteer and member of our Board of Directors, designing and developing the organization's services and programming, helping establish TTFM's presence in our partner hospitals,

and soliciting grant funding. Gwen has served as President of our Board from 2005-2008, and as a member of the management and strategic planning committees. She has been a mentor at both Stamford and Bridgeport Hospitals and continues to mentor community families as well. In addition to her role with Tiny Miracles, Gwen served five years on the Board of Directors of the Mothers of Multiples of Lower Fairfield County, has been an active volunteer in her community and with her children's preschools

and elementary schools, and currently serves as Roger Sherman PTA Membership Co-Chair. Prior to having children, Gwen worked as a judicial law clerk in New Haven and Danbury, CT, and as an associate attorney at the law firm of Casper & de Toledo in Stamford, CT. Gwen graduated magna cum laude from Connecticut College in 1991 and earned her J.D. from Northeastern University School of Law in Boston in 1996. TTFM is excited to have Gwen take on this formal leadership role for our organization. ♥

In April 2010 the March Of Dimes web site indicated that the preterm birth rate dropped to 12.3 percent, according to the report, "Births: Preliminary Data for 2008," which was released by the National Center for Health Statistics. That's down from the 2007 preliminary rate of 12.7 percent. The declines follow a more than 20 percent increase in the preterm birth rate between 1990 and 2006. They also reported that children born prematurely have higher rates of learning disabilities, cerebral palsy, sensory deficits and respiratory illnesses compared to children born at term (IOM, 2007). These negative health and developmental effects of preterm birth often extend to later life, resulting in enormous medical, educational, psychological and social costs. Do we need any more reasons to keep focused on our mission?



Board Member Eila Johnson of New Canaan, and Cynthia Gorey, Executive Director of the New Canaan Community Foundation.



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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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