

LEARN MORE ABOUT MARCH OF DIMES

ABOUT THE MARCH OF DIMES ORGANIZATION

- The March of Dimes is the leading nonprofit organization for pregnancy and baby health.
- March of Dimes was founded in 1938 by Franklin D. Roosevelt, but was originally known as the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis.
- March of Dimes Mission: To improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth, and infant mortality.

MARCH OF DIMES 2010 NATIONAL AMBASSADOR—JOSHUA HOFFMAN

- Born 4 months early at 1 lb, 11 oz
- Joshua stayed in the newborn intensive care unit for 14 weeks.
- He received treatment for serious breathing, heart, and vision problems.
- Even after he left the hospital, he faced the challenges of eye surgery and worked hard to walk and talk.
- Today, Joshua is an active 7 years old. Not even partial blindness can keep him from doing what he loves most: reading, building castles with his brother, swimming and playing the piano.
- “The March of Dimes saved my life, and now I want to fight for preemies and reach for the stars,” says Joshua.

FACTS ON PREMATURE BIRTH

- Each day, babies are born fighting for their lives and every day, the March of Dimes helps them win.
- More than half a million babies are born prematurely in the United States each year. With 1 in 8 babies born too soon, our country lags behind many other developed nations.
- Premature birth is the No. 1 cause of death during the first month of life. Even babies born just a few weeks too soon can face serious health challenges and are at risk for lifelong disabilities, such as cerebral palsy, lung problems, and vision and hearing loss.
- Premature birth means a baby is born too early, before 37 completed weeks of pregnancy, before the lungs, brain and other organs have time to fully develop. Most premature babies are born between 34 and 36 weeks of pregnancy; this is called late preterm birth. Survival is possible for babies born as early as 23 to 26 weeks.
- Mom’s health is the best indicator of her baby’s health. Early and regular prenatal care is very important to monitor mom and baby to identify problems before they become serious. Every mom-to-be should know the signs of preterm labor and what to do if they occur.

DID YOU KNOW?

\$50 provides a family who has lost a baby with a bereavement package.

\$100 could help 10 families with babies in neonatal intensive care learn how to care for their baby when he/she comes home.

\$240 could provide educational videos and brochures for low-income pregnant women living in rural areas.

\$270 could supply 2 clinics in low-income areas with prenatal education materials.

\$375 could educate 40 nurses about how to reduce the risk of premature birth.

\$760 could provide prenatal care classes for 15 pregnant women.

\$3,800 could fund a program to help 180 pregnant women quit smoking.

\$150,000 could provide a research grant to study malfunctioning genes responsible for many birth defects.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

MARCH FOR BABIES

Participate in the March for Babies walk! When you walk, you give hope to the families of babies born too soon or sick. The money you raise supports programs in your community that help moms have healthy, full-term pregnancies. And it funds research to find answers to the serious problems that threaten our babies. We've been walking since 1970 and have raised an incredible \$1.8 billion to benefit all babies.

1. March for Babies registration: Sign up online at www.marchforbabies.org and create your own fundraising page.

2. Finding a team: Search for a walk location near you by typing in your ZIP code on www.marchforbabies.org. You can create a team, join an existing team, or you can be an individual walker. (We may be creating a Circle K International team that anyone can join.)

3. Build the team: Work together and have fun! You can hold kickoff events before the walk, inspire the walkers by reminding them what this is all about, and even wear team t-shirts!

4. Fundraise: There are so many ways to fundraise before the March for Babies walk. Learn some fundraising

ideas in the FUNDRAISE section.

5. Attend the Walk: You've been working hard towards this day. Enjoy the walk with your team and all of the other participants who are fighting for the same cause: to see the day every baby is born healthy.

RAISE AWARENESS

1. Prematurity Awareness Day/Month

November is when the March of Dimes focuses everyone's attention on the impact premature birth has on babies and families. On November 17, Prematurity Awareness Day, the March of Dimes releases their third annual report card that scores the nation and each state on its rate of premature birth.

a. "Project in a box": This tool kit can be used as a quick and easy way to supplement your Prematurity Awareness Month activities in November. It includes an introduction letter, a "Where Your Money Goes" flyer, and a coin collection box. Contact teamyouth@marchofdimes.com to request the "Project in a Box" materials.

b. Spirit week: Setup a March of Dimes Spirit Week during Prematurity Awareness Month! (Be sure to go all-out on Prematurity Awareness Day!)

c. Activities: Here are some activities that you can do during Prematurity Awareness Month, Day, or Spirit Week to raise awareness, funds, and fun!

All-out purple: See who can wear the most purple - from their head to their toes! Think socks, shoes, shirts, accessories, even hair color... Whoever has the best getup can win a prize!

Baby photo contest day: Have teachers and/or students bring in baby photos. You can have people guess or match baby photos with who they are for fun, or you can host a cutest baby contest where your donation counts as your vote.

Service Projects: Get people to participate in service projects that can help the March for Babies cause! Some project ideas are listed in the PROJECTS section.

Door decorating contest: Have residence halls and offices compete for best decorated door! This can be based on creativity, but also on which raises the most awareness on premature birth and the March of Dimes organization.

Dine and donate: Ask local restaurants if they allow organizations to setup dine and donate. Invite everyone you know because the restaurant will donate (generally) 20 percent of their bill to your cause!

Awareness band day: Sell March of Dimes Awareness Bands at your school. You can order adult or youth sizes at the "Activities" section of marchofdimes.com/youth.

Bagels for babies: Sell bagels on campus and get double the benefits: fundraising and education. Check with your cafeteria to see if you can sell bagels in the morning.

Bowling for babies: Hold a fun fundraiser by inviting friends and family to bowling! Ask them for a flat fee that will cover a game and shoes, the rest will go to March of Dimes.

March for Babies mania: Have you ever participated in March for Babies? Well, wear your T-shirt! And tell everyone else at school how they can participate and be champions for babies. Visit marchforbabies.org and share this site with others.

Sporty spectacular: Ask everyone to wear his favorite sports gear, and talk about the positive benefits of a healthy lifestyle. Use the *Teen-2-Teen* video and resources to share healthy lifestyle messages! Download resources at marchofdimes.com/youth. You can watch the videos there or at youtube.com/marchofdimes.

2. Presentation

Teach others about the March of Dimes mission by giving a presentation. Consider setting up a table outside your cafeteria, in your main campus walkway or in your student center if at a college or university (make sure you get administration approval first). Use purple to attract attention - from balloons to shirts to ribbons! Also, consider bringing a laptop with a slideshow presentation of babies and March of Dimes event.

3. Social media

- Dedicate your Facebook status or a tweet to the March of Dimes.
- Write a blog post on premature birth or a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.
- Create an event on Facebook to promote your activity.
- Mention the Help fight premature birth action website, www.marchofdimes.com/fight, in your blog posts.
- Change your profile picture to one that is related to the mission of the March of Dimes.
- On Facebook, join the March of Dimes fan page at www.facebook.com/marchofdimes. Encourage your friends to do the same to spread the word about premature birth and how we can help give every baby a healthy start.
- Follow the March of Dimes Team Youth page on Twitter at www.twitter.com/teamyouth so you can retweet updates and send us your own on what you are doing for Prematurity Awareness Month.

FUNDRAISE

1. Mile of Dimes and coin campaigns

Raise funds and awareness for the March of Dimes through coin collection activities. Collecting a mile in dimes means you raise more than \$9,000 to help every baby be born healthy! How can you raise change? Here are a few ideas.

Empty your coin jar, turn out your pockets, look under the sofa cushions and check in your car.

Set up a collection box at your school so people can donate their change.

Visit the "Activities" section at www.marchofdimes.com/youth for more information on Miles of Dimes.

2. March of Dimes cut-outs: Contact your local chapter for paper cut-outs and sell them for \$1-2 at your school, your parents' workplaces or in a central location on your campus.

3. Online

Use online tools provided by www.marchforbabies.com to ask for donations, allow people to donate via credit card, and keep track of your donations so far.

4. Events

Hold events that participants can attend and also donate money to March of Dimes. This can include dine and donates, bowling, talent shows, silent auctions, car washes, among others.

VOLUNTEER

1. Help in a local neonatal intensive care unit (NICU)

- **Meal:** Hold a breakfast or dinner for the families waiting in the NICU. Families can spend a lot of time waiting in the hospital for their new baby to come home, which doesn't always allow them the time or energy to get a good meal.
- **Decorate:** Make decorations that the NICU can use in the hospital and offer to put them up for them.
- **Books:** Gather new/gently used children's books that can be read to the babies by their families or lent to siblings during long hospital visits.
- **Parent care kits:** The kit can provide educational and comforting print materials for families in the NICU and they will appreciate the kind and useful gift.

2. Assist at March for Babies

Help with getting participants signed in, directional assistance, handing out prizes or water bottles, among other things. Learn more are www.marchforbabies.org.

PROJECTS

1. Awareness ribbons: To raise awareness and help with fundraising, make small ribbons to represent March for Dimes. When giving them out to people ask for a small donation of any amount they can!

Supplies: purple ribbon, pins, glue, scissors

Directions: Cut about 2 inches of ribbon, twist into a loop, glue to pin, give them out to everyone and anyone

2. Letter-writing campaign: Send letters out to people in your family or community that you think would donate to the cause of March of Dimes.

- Supplies: Pre-drafted letter (these can be found at marchofdimesyouth.com/tools/index.asp), envelopes, stamps, addresses to send to
- Tips for success: 1) PERSONALIZE with photos and text. 2) DEFINE your cause. 3) STATE your mission. 4) UNDERLINE its importance to you. 5) THANK them with a follow up.

3. Cards: Make cards for the family members to help brighten their day and let them know that people are supporting them.

- Supplies: construction paper, markers, fun/nice stickers, glue, scissors
- Directions: Decorate cards and write thoughtful notes, take these to your local NICU

4. Scrapbooking: Create scrapbook pages with spaces for the newborn's pictures. This will allow them create their first memories with their new baby and help lighten their worries.

- Supplies: scrapbook paper, construction paper, markers, fun/nice stickers, glue, scissors
- Directions: Decorate the scrapbook pages with various materials, leave spaces open for the families to place baby pictures, take these to your local NICU

SOME INFORMATION WAS PROVIDED BY THE FOLLOWING

1. Back to School Webinar: March of Dimes National Service Partners
2. Prematurity Awareness Month (November) Toolkit for 2010
3. March for Babies Toolkit for 2010
4. Texas-Oklahoma Fall Retreat—Small Service Projects
5. www.MarchofDimes.com

6. www.MarchforBabies.org
7. 2010 MYC Newsletter August
8. Project in a Box—September 2010