

March of Dimes
Foundation

Pennsylvania Chapter

Southeast Division
1019 West 9th Avenue
King of Prussia, PA
19406
Telephone (610) 945-6050
Fax (610) 945-6060

marchforbabies.org

news release

Release Date: **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: **Brad Smith, Senior Community Director, CELL: (610) 420-5609**
Michele Frennier, State Director of Communications, CELL: (412) 965-6014

Philadelphia School District Raises More Than \$125,000 for March of Dimes *Local District's Efforts Earn Them Title of Top March for Babies School Team in Pennsylvania*

(PHILADELPHIA, PA, JUNE 22, 2010) -- Thousands of residents joined together in support of the smallest members of our community—babies—by participating in the Philadelphia March for Babies to benefit the March of Dimes. The annual walking event was held on Sunday, April 25 at the Philadelphia Art Museum and raised over \$750,000. Teams are an important part of the continued success of March for Babies.

One such team was the Philadelphia School District. Administrators, teachers, students and their families joined together to support the March of Dimes. This year, the Philadelphia School District efforts were quite impressive, raising more than \$125,000 to support March of Dimes programs to give every baby a healthy start in life. Their successful campaign also earned the school district the distinction of Pennsylvania's Top March for Babies School Team among the 674 Pennsylvania schools that registered.

This is the second year for the Philadelphia School District's participation in March for Babies. In 2009, they raised \$82,000 surpassing their goal by \$22,000. In 2010, they set an aggressive goal of \$100,000 and exceeded that by more than \$25,000. The Philadelphia School District recently presented a check to the March of Dimes. (Photo available upon request.)

"I want to personally thank everyone who participated on our March for Babies team," said Dr. Arlene Ackerman, Superintendent of the Philadelphia School District, and this year's March for Babies Honorary Youth Chair. "Many people are not aware that one in eight babies in this nation is born premature. Among African American families, one in six babies is born preterm. Premature birth and low birthweight are the leading cause of newborn death. "

“Babies who survive a premature birth face the risk of serious life-long health problems including learning disabilities, cerebral palsy, blindness, hearing loss, and other chronic conditions including asthma. As educators, we see the impact that preterm birth has on the academic performance of our school children here in Philadelphia. We are proud to support March for Babies in funding research that will improve birth outcomes and improve the lives of our children.“

The most urgent infant health problem in the U.S. today is premature birth. It affects more than half a million babies each year, with the number growing every day. The March of Dimes issued a [Report Card](#) on Premature Birth, giving the nation a D and Pennsylvania a D. Babies born too soon are more likely to die or have disabilities. The March of Dimes is committed to reducing this toll by funding research to find the answers to premature birth and providing comfort and information to families who are affected.

Funds raised by March for Babies help support prenatal wellness programs, research grants, neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) family support programs and advocacy efforts for stronger, healthier babies.

Currently, the March of Dimes is investing more than \$4.1 million in research and programs in Pennsylvania alone. Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, Drexel University College of Medicine - St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children, Lankenau Institute for Medical Research, Magee-Womens Research Institute-University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania State University, The Wistar Institute and Thomas Jefferson University are among the Pennsylvania hospitals and institutions conducting March of Dimes supported research. Pennsylvania Community Service Grants support pilot programs at Pennsylvania Hospital, Hamot Medical Center, Lehigh Valley Health Network, Penn State Hershey Medical Center, Family Medicine Collaboration, Abington Memorial Hospital, Jefferson University Hospital, Jefferson OB Department and Children’s Hospital of UPMC.

In 2010 national March for Babies sponsors are Kmart, the March of Dimes’ No. 1 corporate supporter, CIGNA, Famous Footwear, Farmers Insurance Group, FedEx and Mission Pharmacal.

In Philadelphia, March for Babies is sponsored by CIGNA, FedEx, Health Partners, University of Phoenix, UnitedHealthcare, St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children and NBC10. Geisinger Health System is the March of Dimes Pennsylvania Prematurity Partner.

The March of Dimes is the leading nonprofit organization for pregnancy and baby health. With chapters nationwide and its premier event, March for Babies the March of Dimes works to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. For the latest resources and information, visit marchofdimes.com or nacersano.org.