

## Championing for Babies

Just for moms

[marchofdimes.com/  
newsfornewsneed](http://marchofdimes.com/newsfornewsneed)

All newborn babies are a source of wonder—those born healthy and those who need help to survive and thrive. The March of Dimes has been helping moms bring precious babies into this world for decades, and as the leading nonprofit for pregnancy and baby health, won't stop working until every family knows the joy of having a healthy baby.

Today, that's not the case. Half a million American babies are born prematurely every year, some so small, they have to fight for their lives.

Prematurity, the leading cause of newborn death in the first month of life, is still on the rise and affects 11.7% of all Pennsylvania-born babies. An early delivery isn't the only threat to babies. Every 4 ½ minutes in the U.S., an infant is born with a birth defect. Nearly seven babies in every 1,000 born in the U.S. (eight of every thousand in Erie County) will die before their first birthdays. Too many babies' cries are not being heard.

Local culinary experts are making a difference. November 3, 2008, marks the night of the area's most acclaimed gourmet extravaganza, the **15th Annual March of Dimes Signature Chefs Auction** at the Ambassador Banquet & Conference Center, where Erie area restaurants join together and share their signature dishes with attending guests. Add a silent and live auction, featuring travel, art, fine dining, and wonderful packages from Erie's most admired retailers, and it's a recipe that creates an evening to savor.

Reserve your seat

[marchofdimes.com/  
pennsylvania](http://marchofdimes.com/pennsylvania)



All moms and their babies benefit from March of Dimes programs.

Funds raised during this event will benefit programs to give every baby a healthy start. The March of Dimes researches the reasons behind prematurity and the genetics of birth defects; produces health information for consumers, businesses, and health professionals; offers direct-to-consumer services and outreach programs; funds community grants and awards; and believes in the importance of bipartisan advocacy in support of policies and programs to help babies live healthy lives. Participants, guests, donors, volunteers, and generous sponsors of the Signature Chefs Auction are making it possible for the March of Dimes to continue to fight for all babies.

In Pennsylvania, the March of Dimes recently accomplished a legislative victory. On July 5, 2008, Governor Rendell signed into law House Bill 883, which once in effect, will guarantee that every baby born in Pennsylvania will be screened at birth for twenty-nine (29) "core" treatable conditions as recommended by the American College of Medical Genetics and endorsed by the March of Dimes and American

Academy of Pediatrics. Until now, Pennsylvania newborn screening mandates required testing for the least amount of conditions, lagging behind all other states and the District of Columbia. Babies not properly screened and treated, if necessary, for these potentially life-threatening

One local mom speaks out about her experience with preterm labor. Carlee Wood, of Erie, remembers the excitement of finding out she was expecting in October of 2005. Her husband, Perry, and she immediately bought nursery furniture.

"The idea that I may experience complications during pregnancy or that I may be among the half a million women each year who give birth to a premature baby was not a thought in our minds. I was young and healthy, so why wouldn't I be able to carry a baby to term?"

Twenty-three weeks into the pregnancy, Carlee was at a routine doctor's appointment when she was told she was already six centimeters dilated. She was rushed to the hospital to stop preterm labor. For the next five weeks, Carlee laid in a hospital bed, not sitting up, showering, or even going to the bathroom. Every day was crucial for her daughter.

Although every precaution was taken to prevent an early delivery, Isabella Grace Wood still arrived prematurely, weighing just three pounds. Her parents spent the next seven weeks visiting her during her stay in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at Hamot Medical Center, sometimes only allowed to watch her through the glass of the isolette.

Today, 'Bella is a healthy young lady, but because not every family's story has a happy ending, the Woods have joined the March of Dimes to help more pregnancies reach a full nine months.

conditions are left at risk. Every baby is touched by the March of Dimes in the first few days of life, now more than ever, thanks in part to this newly expanded screening.

Every mom, too, whether she realizes it or not, also benefits from the March of Dimes mission for stronger, healthier babies. For seventy years, the March of Dimes has been funding Nobel Prize®-winning research and scientists, discovering new solutions for full-term pregnancies and healthier babies. The March of Dimes joins moms in the feeling of joy, pride, and accomplishment, knowing that every birth is an important occasion.

For all things baby-related, visit [marchofdimes.com](http://marchofdimes.com).



'Bella at birth, April 2006



'Bella is the 2008 Local March of Dimes Ambassador

Meet 'Bella & hear her story at the Signature Chef's Auction!