



## executive leadership team

Don Henderson, Chair

Donny Abraham

Susan Adams

Lisa Bishop

Sandria George

Teri Keel

Richard Kelley

Patty Lesmerises

Dr. Charles Mojock

Tina Morrison

Sandy Mullin

Marc Robertz-Schwartz

Jose Zamperlini

## march for babies kicks off in style



March for Babies Chair Don Henderson recently welcomed team captains, top fundraisers, sponsors, and volunteers at the 2015 March for Babies Citywide Kick Off.

He spoke about the important work that the March of Dimes is able to do for all babies with the funds raised from March for Babies, including advocacy efforts, research, community grants, and our "Healthy Babies Are Worth the Wait"

initiative to eliminate non-medically necessary c-sections and inductions before 39 weeks.

Sandy Mullin from Leesburg Regional Medical Center, Dr. Charles Mojock of Lake-Sumter State College and Lisa Bishop of South Lake Hospital also rallied the crowd with their fundraising tips and tools for a successful March for Babies campaign, including team captain and fundraiser recruitment, goal setting, vendor campaigns, and company matching gifts. They also said that identifying a team ambassador, holding internal team kickoffs, and challenges between departments or branches encourages success.

Our Ambassadors, Brian and Kayla Dees with their 2 1/2 year old daughter, Sydney, thanked everyone for their participation in March for Babies to ensure that all babies are born full term and healthy.

Thank you to OakWood Smokehouse & Grill in Lady Lake for generously donating the lunch.

## march to help babies

Join more than 300 participants for March for Babies, a 3.5-mile walk at the Wellness Trail, LRM C Campus at 600 E. Dixie Avenue in Leesburg on Saturday, May 9, 2015. Expect a day of entertainment, family activities, food, fun, and much more!

March for Babies is the number one fundraising event for the March of Dimes and is a great opportunity for your company and family to show you care about the babies and families in your community.

Be sure to log in at [marchforbabies.org](http://marchforbabies.org) and start your fundraising today. For more tips and tools for a successful March for Babies campaign, contact Annabelle Croy at 352-942-3780 or [acroy@marchofdimes.org](mailto:acroy@marchofdimes.org).

Visit us!

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## raising awareness about racial disparities

Birth outcomes in the United States show considerable variation by race and ethnicity, and the factors that influence disparities in perinatal health care are complex and not fully understood. According to the March of Dimes Premature Birth Report Card, released last November, the preterm birth rate (all live births less than 37 completed weeks gestation) in Florida for black infants was 17.7%, followed by Native American, 17.0%; Hispanic, 14.3%; Asian, 12.3%; and white, 11.2.

Racial and ethnic disparities also occur in other birth outcomes, such as low birthweight and infant mortality. March of Dimes reports that during 2010 – 2012, black infants (13.2%) were about twice as likely as Hispanic infants (7.2%) to be born low birthweight (less than 5 ½ pounds). Likewise, during 2008 – 2010, the infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) in Florida was highest for black infants (11.9%), followed by Native Americans (5.6%), whites (5.2%), and Asians (5.1%).

"During February, as we celebrate Black History Month, it is a great opportunity to talk about the high prematurity rates that persist among African-American families," said Dr. Karen Harris, Chair of the Program Services Committee for the March of Dimes Florida Chapter. "Although we have no definitive explanations for why prematurity affects this group more often than others, poor prenatal care, malnutrition, socioeconomic status, genetics, stress and unhealthy habits, such as smoking, might all be contributing factors."

March of Dimes is currently working toward the reduction of disparities in birth outcomes. One of the goals of the strategic mission investment of the Florida Chapter is to obtain a 2% overall decrease in the preterm birth disparity between black babies and white babies by the end of 2015.

Working toward this goal, the organization has funded and partnered with REACHUP in Tampa – whose goal is to help communities achieve equality in healthcare and positive health for families – on the "Undoing Racism" and "Affirming Fatherhood" workshops in Tampa, which had a 100 percent satisfaction rate among the 154 fathers attending. The Florida Chapter also funded projects by Stork's Nest of Jacksonville, allowing it to purchase baby items and educational resources, and by Healthy Start Coalition of Sarasota County, to promote prenatal and interconception health. Both grants were made to benefit low-income African American women in particular.

For more information about March of Dimes programs and research, visit [marchofdimes.org](http://marchofdimes.org).



## join us and advocate for all babies



Are you interested in joining the other volunteers at the Capitol in Tallahassee to advocate on behalf of babies?

Last year, volunteers from around the state represented March of Dimes at the Capitol for our annual Advocacy Day.

They were overwhelming successful helping the state legislature understand the cost of preterm birth on Florida's families, communities, and business.

This year we will continue the tradition of success on February 17, 2015. If you would like to get involved, contact Keith Nash at [knash@marchofdimes.org](mailto:knash@marchofdimes.org).

## don't miss out!

Our Early Bird incentive for this fabulous March for Babies drawstring bag runs through February 28—and it's yours if you raise \$100 in online donations\*. Carry it with pride and show everyone you care about helping moms have full-term pregnancies and healthy babies.

Head over to [marchforbabies.org](http://marchforbabies.org) and start your fundraising today!



\* Incentive is for individual fundraisers, not team totals.

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## meet elijah jackson

### 2015 march of dimes national ambassador



Elijah was born at 25 weeks and weighed a little over one pound. After 7 months in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), his parents, Elise and Todd, were finally able to take him home. Elijah's medical expenses totaled more than \$1.2 million. Today, he is a happy and personable young man who continues to overcome challenges and motivate others.

The Jackson Family is looking forward to their year of service as our 2015 National Ambassadors, and they are especially excited to work alongside March for Babies 2015 National Chair John Rainey from United Airlines to help build a successful March for Babies campaign.

Elijah his parents will travel the country aboard United, Official Airline Sponsor of the National Ambassador Program, to share his story and help raise awareness for stronger, healthier babies. Be sure to follow their adventures on Facebook @marchofdimesnationalambassador.

## your reward for helping babies



Set your goal with these fundraising levels in mind. These gifts are our way to say thank you for your efforts.

Registered March for Babies participants who raise \$1,000 or more earn membership in the March for Babies Circle of Champions.

Raise	Receive
\$200	March for Babies T-shirt
\$350	\$15 gift card* and T-shirt
\$500	\$25 gift card* and T-shirt
\$1,000	\$50 gift card*, T-shirt, and Circle of Champions button and decal
\$2,500	\$125 gift card*, T-shirt, Circle of Champions button and decal, and listing on marchforbabies.org.
\$5,000	\$250 gift card*, T-shirt, Circle of Champions button and decal, listing on marchforbabies.org, and a letter from March of Dimes President Dr. Jennifer Howse.
\$10,000	\$500 gift card*, T-shirt, Circle of Champions button and decal, listing on marchforbabies.org, letter from Dr. Howse, and a signed print from photographer Anne Geddes.
\$20,000	\$600 gift card*, T-shirt, Circle of Champions button and decal, listing on marchforbabies.org, letter from Dr. Howse, and a signed print from Anne Geddes., and a 2015 March of Dimes Commemorative Coin.

\* Choice of Kmart or Macy's Gift Card