march of dimes teamyouth

dear volunteer

Dear March of Dimes Volunteer:

Every year, 15 million babies are born prematurely worldwide. More than a million die, and many more face serious, lifelong health challenges. Up to 75 percent of these deaths can be prevented. Raising awareness of this serious problem is the first step to defeating it.

Join the March of Dimes this November, Prematurity Awareness Month®, and help more moms have healthy babies!

How can you work together for stronger, healthier babies? Plan an event, get your school involved, raise money. There are so many ways you can get involved.

Be sure to use our 2-Week Awareness and Activity Guide on page 5, and check if any of our national partners on page 8 are in your area. You can find a sample letter and email on page 9. Share your success stories with us, or ask questions at **teamyouth@marchofdimes.com**.

Thank you for working together for stronger, healthier babies!

March of Dimes National Youth Council





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educate yourself and others

Give a presentation

Checklist:

- ☐ Get approval from administration.
- ☐ Set up a table outside the cafeteria, in the main campus walkway or in the student center of your college or university. Use purple to attract attention think balloons, shirts, ribbons and more!
- Were you or someone you know born too soon and had to spend time in the NICU?
 With permission, share these stories and photos.
- ☐ Visually demonstrate how small premature babies can be compare a newborn diaper to a preemie-sized one and hold up a Band-Aid® to explain that a premature baby's pressure cuff is about the size of it.
- ☐ Make a list of audiences you can share the information with: your class, school, campus, peers or fellow club members.
- ☐ Invite a family connected to our mission to speak to your school, or show one of the many videos and stories found at **youtube.com/marchofdimes.**
- ☐ Share national and local premature birth statistics (marchofdimes.com/peristats)

Learn more about the global problem of premature birth at marchofdimes.com/borntoosoon.

chool highlight

Yellville-Summit High School (Arkansas)
Future Business Leaders of America
(FBLA) took their presentation efforts
one step further last year by educating
local elementary school students about
the March of Dimes and premature birth
through an informative and fun
presentation. Following the presentation,
elementary students donated a dime
each to support our mission.

Speaking points

What do you say when talking about the March of Dimes and Prematurity Awareness Month? Check out these speaking points. Use them as Facebook status updates and tweets.

- November is Prematurity Awareness Month, when the March of Dimes focuses everyone's attention on the impact premature birth has on babies and families.
- November 17 is World Prematurity Day and when we ask people to spread the word about the serious problem of premature birth. Visit facebook.com/marchofdimes and facebook.com/worldprematurityday to find out how you can help.
- Every year, 15 million babies are born prematurely worldwide. More than a million of them die before their first birthday.
- In the United States, almost half a million babies are born too soon each year that's 1 in 9. The premature birth rate in our country is higher than that in many other developed nations.
- In November, the March of Dimes releases its sixth annual report card that scores the nation and each state on its rate of premature birth.
- Premature birth is the # 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. Babies aren't fully developed until at least 39 weeks of pregnancy. Important development of their brains, lungs and eyes occurs in the last few weeks of pregnancy.
- Most premature babies are born between 34 and 37
 weeks of pregnancy; this is called late preterm birth. If
 a pregnancy is healthy, it's best to let labor begin on its
 own instead of scheduling a delivery. Babies born after 39
 weeks have fewer health problems than babies born early.
- 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.

spread the word

Decorate in purple

Raise awareness all month long: Decorate your school buildings, hallways and/or lobbies in purple.

Checklist:

- Ask to **speak with your principal** about decorating the school in purple during November. On page 9, you'll find a sample letter to ask for permission. Explain the importance of Prematurity Awareness Month and World Prematurity Day. Tell your principal that you want your school to help raise awareness of this topic through notices on the bulletin boards, purple balloons and other decorations and appropriate activities.
- Light up your school in purple. Check to see if your building already has an external lighting system. With administrative approval, contact building maintenance personnel to change the lighting to purple. If the building does not have exterior lights, ask to see if you can light up a lobby and/or elevators.
- ☐ Make T-shirts that state "1 in 9" in reference to the 1 in 9 babies born prematurely in our country. These shirts are great conversation starters. You also can mark 1 in every 9 parking spots, if you have students or faculty who drive to your campus.
- Sell awareness bands on campus. Order them online at awarenessproductsonline.com/mod_product_info.
- □ Think about ways you can represent all the babies who are born too soon in your community, in the United States and around the world. Student groups have used purple flags or markers to represent and honor babies born prematurely. Last year in Northern Ireland, volunteers hung socks on clothing lines using 1 purple sock for every 8 white socks. Find local statistics at marchofdimes.com/peristats or use the global and national numbers included in this guide.

November 17, 2013, is **World Prematurity Day.**

Consider planning a special event or activity. Work with your local March of Dimes to invite media and spread the word about the common and serious problem of premature birth.

Join the global community. Share stories, spread hope, save lives.

facebook.com/marchofdimes

Spread the word

Spread awareness throughout your community and online.

Checklist:

- ☐ Send a "virtual hug" to your family and friends to show that you care about prematurity.
- Dedicate your Facebook status and a tweet if you are on Twitter to the March of Dimes.
- ☐ If you have a blog, devote a post to premature birth. You also can send a letter to the editor of your local and/or school newspaper.
- ☐ Join the March of Dimes Team Youth® fan page at **facebook.com/marchofdimesyouth**. Encourage your friends to do the same.
- ☐ Follow us on Twitter at **twitter.com/teamyouth** and retweet our updates. Don't forget to send us an update on what you are doing for Prematurity Awareness Month and World Prematurity Day!



2-week awareness and activity guide

Guidance for student leaders & advisors

- This 2-week plan is a guideline. You can choose the day or week for activities that works best for you and your school.
- Ask to set up a table during lunch for students to sign up for activities. Recognize student participation. Award donated prizes to students with the best outfits each day.
- Educate your school and peers. Make an announcement each day at a set time and/or post the announcements on Facebook and Twitter to let the world know about the serious and costly problem of premature birth.

week one: november 4 - 8

monday Baby photo contest day

Ask teachers and/or students to bring in baby photos. You can have people guess names. Or you can host a cutest baby contest where each donation counts as a vote.

Announcement: Today, nearly 1,300 babies in the United States will be born prematurely. More newborns die from premature birth than any other cause.

tuesday School color day

Wear school colors to support your school.

Announcement: Premature birth is when a baby is born too early, before 37 completed weeks of pregnancy. A full-term pregnancy lasts at least 39 weeks.

wednesday Awareness band day

Sell March of Dimes awareness bands at your school. You can order adult or youth sizes at awarenessproductsonline.com/mod_product_info.

Announcement: Every year, 15 million babies are born prematurely worldwide.

thursday Twins day

You and a friend dress like twins! You can give out a prize for the best set of twins.

Announcement: Twins, triplets and other multiples are at higher risk of being born prematurely than single babies

friday Jeans for Babies

Rock your best jeans! Throw that denim jacket on, too — it's OK if they don't match. You're helping babies! Put up the names of everyone who participates in a central area as a thank you.

Announcement: Having a premature baby can be frightening and overwhelming. The March of Dimes is there with information and comfort for families.

week two: november 11 - 15

monday Crazy socks & hat day

Get silly for babies: pull out your zaniest socks and hat and sport them proudly!

Announcement: Surveys show that most people have no idea how common and serious the problem of premature birth is. Tell a friend what you have learned about premature birth.

tuesday Bagels for babies

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

Announcement: Breads, like bagels, are fortified with folic acid, an important B vitamin. Leafy green vegetables and oranges contain folate, the natural form of folic acid. Taking folic acid before and during early pregnancy can help reduce the risk of certain birth defects of the brain and spine.

wednesday March for Babies® mania

Have you participated in March for Babies before? Visit **marchforbabies.org** to find out more about the March of Dimes signature fundraising event, and start getting people excited for March for Babies (the last weekend in April in most communities).

Announcement: In the United States, 1 in 9 babies is born prematurely. Premature babies may suffer lifelong health problems, including cerebral palsy and intellectual disability.

thursday Sporty spectacular

Ask everyone to wear their 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! View videos and download the full curriculum at **marchofdimes.com/youth**.

Announcement: Learn more about how you can help the March of Dimes at **marchofdimes.com/youth**. Thanks for participating in our March of Dimes prematurity awareness spirit weeks!

weekend World Prematurity Day: All-out purple

See who can wear the most purple — from head to toe! Think socks, shoes, shirts, accessories, even hair color... If you can wear it, make it purple!

Announcement: Join the March of Dimes and organizations around the world in spreading the word about the common and serious problem of premature birth. Visit **facebook.com/worldprematurityday** to find out how you can help.

school ighlight In 2012 Rutgers University (NJ) students customized the 2-Week Fun Fundraising Plan and hosted their own World Prematurity Week in order to raise awareness and funds for the March of Dimes. Activities included an informational booth about the March of Dimes and activities for the week, Bake Sale to raise funds, and Folic Acid Breakfast to educate students on the importance of folic acid before and during pregnancy. In addition, students "painted the campus purple" by covering the campus with purple balloons and encouraging all students to wear purple.

give to help

Mile of dimes[®] & coin campaigns

Raise funds and awareness for the March of Dimes through coin collection activities. Collecting a mile in dimes means you raise almost \$10,000 to help babies 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 marchofdimes.com/youth for more information and a full checklist on Mile of Dimes.

Blue Jeans for Babies®

Organize a day when everyone makes a contribution and wears blue jeans to support the March of Dimes and raise awareness about the problem of premature birth. If you can wear jeans every day, encourage your teachers or administrators to support the project and ask that people wear purple tops to add an extra component to the event. Make sure your school's administration approves this project.

- Get promotional materials from your local chapter.
- Promote your event in school media newsletter, newspaper and radio station — and report on how much money was raised!

Volunteer with march of dimes nicu family support®

In every state, the March of Dimes provides comfort and information to families with a baby in newborn intensive care. Contact your local March of Dimes program services staff to find out how you can volunteer at one of our NICU Family Support sites and what items that site might need.

Possible volunteer opportunities include:

- Gathering new or gently used children's books that can be read to babies by their families or lent to siblings during long hospital visits
- Preparing Parent Care Kits, our gift of educational and comforting print materials for NICU families
- Providing scrapbooking materials, crafts materials, disposable cameras and other gift items that can be used to comfort families and provide healing opportunities



school niahliaht

Annually, high schools throughout Portage, Michigan, work together to raise awareness and funds for the March of Dimes through "Breadlift," an annual tradition held during Prematurity Awareness Month in which students ask the community for a donation in exchange for a loaf of bread. In 2012, this event raised more than \$20,000 for the March of Dimes.

service partners

National youth service partners

The March of Dimes has national relationships with the service organizations listed here. You may wish to work with one or more of them in your community to help you put on your Team Youth event. Find links and more information about these partnerships at marchofdimes.com/youth.

You also may choose to work with other organizations at your school or on your campus. Consider reaching out to your school's health center, nurses and/or peer health educators.



College

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Circle K International Delta Psi Sigma Sorority Gamma Sigma Sigma Sorority Phi Beta Lambda Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Zeta Phi Beta Sorority

High school

Family, Career and Community Leaders of America Future Business Leaders of America Key Club International Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc. – Top Teens of America

Middle school

Builders Club Future Business Leaders of America – Middle Level

Recognition

Get involved this November and let us know about it! Give us all the great details of your event at **marchofdimes.com/youth**, and we'll send a certificate of recognition to your school or club. You may be featured on the March of Dimes national website, in our e-newsletter or on our Facebook page.

sample materials

Sample letter and email to school administrators

November is Prematurity Awareness Month®, and November 17 is World Prematurity Day. I hope (SCHOOL) will participate in (EVENT). (EVENT) will be held on (DATE) at (LOCATION) and is organized by (MARCH OF DIMES VOLUNTEER GROUP), of which I am a member. (SCHOOL) can support our efforts by (INCLUDE SHORT DESCRIPTION OF REQUEST). During Prematurity Awareness Month, March of Dimes youth volunteers around the nation will organize activities and events to help raise awareness of the common and serious problem of premature birth. Every year, more than 15 million babies are born prematurely worldwide, nearly half a million of them in the United States. In (STATE), (NUMBERS FROM PERISTATS® marchofdimes.com/peristats) babies are born too soon each year. March of Dimes youth volunteers help educate people of all ages about the importance of a healthy lifestyle before and during pregnancy and the seriousness of premature birth. The March of Dimes helps moms have full-term pregnancies and healthy babies, offers comfort and information

We hope you and the school will support our effort for Prematurity Awareness Month. Thank you for your consideration.

to the families of sick babies in newborn intensive care units and funds research to prevent the problems that

Thank you for working together for stronger, healthier babies!

threaten babies' health. Youth and other volunteers play a big role.

(Name of volunteer attending the school to which this letter is being sent).

Cc: (Superintendent of Schools, March of Dimes local office)

Sample email to friends and family

November 17 is World Prematurity Day. Every year, 15 million babies are born prematurely worldwide. More than 1 million of them die, and many more face serious, lifelong health challenges. Raising awareness of this common and serious problem is the first step to defeating it. Visit **facebook.com/marchofdimes** and change your status to show your support. Learn about the progress we're making in preventing premature birth at **marchofdimes.com**.

P.S. Please forward this message to everyone you know who cares about babies. Tell them you're getting involved and ask them to join you!

Sample tweets

Use these to spread the word and to encourage others to get involved.

- November 17 is World Prematurity Day. Support moms and babies at facebook.com/marchofdimes
- Every week counts. Find out more about premature birth and healthy pregnancy at marchofdimes.com
- Working together for stronger, healthier babies. Find out how you can help at **marchofdimes.com**

