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Hand to Hold Honors Four Medical Professionals at Annual “For the Love of Babies” Awards Breakfast

AUSTIN, TEXAS – February 13, 2015 — Hand to Hold, a nonprofit that supports parents of preemies and babies who spend time in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU or “nick-you”), will recognize the efforts and accomplishments of four Austin area healthcare providers at its 2015 “For the Love of Babies” Awards Breakfast on Thursday, February 26, 2015 at 8 a.m. at the Renaissance Austin Hotel’s Glass Oaks Ballroom, 9701 Arboretum Blvd., Austin. Four medical professionals were named as Hand to Hold’s 2015 honorees:

- Pediatrician Juan Guerrero, M.D.- Austin Diagnostic Clinic
- NICU Nurse Sharon Jones, RN- Seton Medical Center
- NICU Case Manager Becky Roberson, BSN, RNC-NIC- Seton Medical Center
- Neonatologist Peter Untalan, M.D.- Pediatrix Medical Group / St. David’s Medical Center

In addition to providing quality medical care, the honorees went above and beyond in their attention to their tiny patients and families. A calming presence, understanding phone call and even at-home visits were just a few of the extraordinary characteristics demonstrated by these seasoned medical professionals that motivated their patients to nominate them for these awards.

Dr. Juan Guerrero has been a pediatrician for 30 years and has been with Austin Diagnostic Clinic since 1989. His peers have selected him as a *Texas Monthly* Super Doctor six times in the past nine years. As a pediatrician, Dr. Guerrero cares for patients from prematurity, through infancy and into adolescence.

Through the births of two babies, one preemie and one full-term, the Talkington family knows first-hand that Dr. Guerrero truly is a super doctor. “Dr. Guerrero was just the pediatrician we needed to ease our anxiety and assured us that he would be with us every step of the way,” says Katie Talkington. “Finding Dr. Guerrero and ADC has been a perfect situation for our family. We are so proud of our healthy and thriving children, but know much of that is because of the knowledge, love and care we received from Dr. Guerrero.”

Sharon Jones, RN, has more than 40 years of experience as a nurse. For the majority of her time in the NICU at Seton Medical Center, she has been a staff nurse, focusing on primary nursing. She cares for the same babies from birth to discharge, working with families and their healthcare teams to plan and develop a plan of care to meet their needs and enable them to continue that care after discharge. Jones prides herself in keeping in touch with “her babies” after they leave the NICU.

Nominator Becky Pemberton immediately knew Jones was special. “Equally important as the top-notch healthcare she provided for our son, Sharon gave our family strength to confront the reality of Cole's prognosis and to love and enjoy life with him during the short time he had,” Pemberton recalls of their time in the NICU.

Becky Roberson, BSN, RNC-NIC, has been the Neonatal Case Manager at Seton Medical Center Austin for 20 years. After working in the hospital supply department, as a surgical nurse, and as a respiratory therapist in the neonatal intensive care unit, she was inspired to pursue a career as a NICU nurse. Roberson also played a vital role in the lives of the Pemberton family. Pemberton, who nominated both Jones and Roberson, noted that “Becky Roberson and Sharon Jones were our guardian angels.”

Dr. Peter Untalan has been a practicing neonatologist for nearly 20 years at St. David’s Medical Center. Dr. Untalan was the primary doctor for preemie Edgar Benitez-Aguirre. Edgar’s mother, Yadira Aguirre-Rivera, felt better knowing her son was in good hands. “Dr. Untalan always made the best decisions for Edgar and was so helpful and understanding, always giving us hope and encouraging us to not give up.”

Hand to Hold founder Kelli Kelley knows the overwhelming stress and loneliness that can come along with having a child in the NICU. “The men and women that make up a NICU healthcare team are a vital lifeline for families when it comes to support. Hand to Hold’s For the Love of Babies Awards honor the hardworking medical professionals who deliver strong support, compassionate care and extraordinary medicine to ensure best outcomes for NICU families.”

About Hand to Hold

Hand to Hold, a nonprofit organization serving NICU families nationwide, provides comprehensive navigation resources and support programs to parents of preemies, babies born with special health care needs and those who have experienced a loss due to these or other complications. Hand to Hold’s core service is matching experienced peer mentors with new parents who have had a child in the NICU to offer support and equipping parents with education they need to care for their baby, family and themselves. Hand to Hold was the 2012 recipient of the Becky Hatfield Family Support Award, given by the National Perinatal Association. All services are offered without charge. For more information, visit www.handtohold.org or call toll-free 855-H2H-NICU.

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