



HAND to HOLD
Fragile Babies. Strong Support.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hand to Hold Honors Corporate Heroes, Names Volunteer of the Year at Spring Reception

AUSTIN, Texas (May 14, 2012) – Families, medical professionals and supporters who have been impacted by premature birth attended Hand to Hold’s spring reception Thursday, April 26, 2012. Hand to Hold, a nonprofit parent support organization for families who have had a baby in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) or a loss, honored corporate heroes, volunteers and supporters who have advanced its mission. The nonprofit was founded to fill the critical gaps in our community’s social and health services ecosystem for families caring for medically fragile infants and children.

St. David’s HealthCare, Mead Johnson Nutrition and a local foundation were honored as corporate heroes for 2011-2012.

St. David’s HealthCare has supported Hand to Hold since its start, serving as a pilot location for innovative support and education programs for parents of preemies. Their dedicated leadership and staff play an important role in the continued growth of the organization, and Hand to Hold is honored to serve as one of their many community partners dedicated to the health and well-being of Central Texans.

“A stay in the NICU can be challenging for families, and we know that caring for the entire family goes beyond providing exceptional medical care. Offering innovative support and education for parents of preemies is key to ensuring long-term healing for the infant and his or her family,” Susan Griffin, chief nursing officer of **St. David’s** Medical Center, said. “We are honored to receive the Hero Award and to have had the opportunity to support Hand to Hold since its inception.”

St. David’s HealthCare is one of the largest health systems in Texas and Austin’s third-largest private employer, with more than 60 sites throughout Central Texas, including seven hospitals, four urgent care centers, four ambulatory surgery centers and two freestanding emergency departments, with a third set to open in Bastrop this summer. St. David’s HealthCare has a long history of serving the residents of Central Texas with exceptional medical care. Their 7,500 employees touch more than 858,000 lives each year with a spirit of warmth, friendliness and personal pride.

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Hand to Hold has begun a collaborative partnership with **Mead Johnson Nutrition** whose products directly benefit the lives of hundreds of thousands of babies all over the world. This unique collaboration will ensure parents of preemies receive information, support and education during and after a NICU stay, starting with distribution of Hand to Hold's parent newsletter *Hand Prints* to 600 Level III NICUs across the country beginning this spring.

For more than a century, Mead Johnson Nutrition has led the way in developing safe, high-quality, innovative products to help meet the nutritional needs of infants and children, including the only commercially sterile liquid human milk fortifier on the market. With more than 70 products in over 50 countries, Mead Johnson products are trusted by millions of parents and healthcare professionals around the world. Founded in 1905 by E. Mead Johnson, whose son had special health care needs complicated by feeding challenges, the company's mission is to nourish the world's children for the best start in life.

Marty Barnes, Hand to Hold's Volunteer Parent Education Coordinator, was named Volunteer of the Year. Barnes, a parent of a preemie, serves as a Helping Hand peer mentor and has been the driving force behind Hand to Hold's Lunch & Learn series. These monthly, public educational presentations bring parents and health professionals together to talk about topics concerning their child and family's care.

"Marty's willingness to share her knowledge, passion and experience has benefited the families of Hand to Hold in innumerable and immeasurable ways," shared Erika Goyer, program director of Hand to Hold.

Hand to Hold is grateful to President and CEO of Austin Community Foundation Jeff Garvey who gave opening remarks expressing confidence in Hand to Hold's leadership and strategic direction. Hand to Hold also recognizes the following event sponsors, including Cook-Walden Funeral Homes, Erica Egner Graphic Design, Sarah Sharp & Buffalo Speedway, Mansion at Judges' Hill, OfficeMax at Lakeline, Peary Photography, Tito's Vodka and Melissa Turner.

About Hand to Hold

Hand to Hold, a nonprofit organization, 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. Based in Austin and serving families across the country, 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. For more information, visit www.handtohold.org.

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