



HAND to HOLD
Fragile Babies. Strong Support.

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Preemie Power Celebrates Super Hero Children, Builds Community
Hand to Hold Invites NICU Graduates, Families and Healthcare Professionals to Community-Wide Celebration; Announces Photo Contest Winners

AUSTIN, Texas (November 8, 2011) – Premature birth is a serious problem with 1 in 8 babies being born too soon (before 37 weeks gestation). Parents whose babies require a neonatal intensive care unit stay are often jolted into a complex world of life or death decisions, medical terms, surgeries and medical equipment. And often, special care may be required long beyond the hospital doors. Despite this traumatic experience, many of these babies persevere and thrive with what seems like super human strength as they defy the odds against them.

Hand to Hold, a local nonprofit that directly supports parents of preemies, is hosting Central Texas' second annual, community-wide [Preemie Power Family Celebration](#) to honor all NICU graduates, their families and their healthcare providers. In recognition of November as Prematurity Awareness Month, the family-friendly event will be held Sunday, November 13, 2011, from 1 p.m. until 3 p.m. within the gymnasium at Covenant Presbyterian Church located at 3003 Northland Dr., in Austin, Texas.

Preemie Power kicked off in October as parents across the country were invited to submit pictures and essays for the Preemie Power Online Photo and Essay Contest. More than 90 families from 29 states and as far away as Canada submitted photos and stories about the accomplishments and milestones of their amazing super hero child/ren. To date, the contest has received almost 40,000 visits. To read some of the amazing stories that were submitted, visit <http://wildfireapp.com/website/6/contests/154302> or read about the [finalists](#).

Preemie father and Chief Operating Officer of St. David's Medical Center, Richard Hammett, will serve as the "Master of Preemies" during the short program which will honor all the attendees and contest participants. He will also have the privilege of announcing the contest winners.

The Preemie Power event is free to all attendees and will include a super hero theme, bouncy houses, carnival games, music, refreshments and crafts. Current and former neonatal nurses and physicians from all area hospitals are invited to attend (in super hero costume if desired) to help celebrate these powerful

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Continued “Premie Power Celebrates”

preemies. Families will be able to reconnect with one another and find the unique fellowship of others who have shared similar journeys.

“Premie Power is about turning a traumatic experience in to something life-empowering and positive,” said Kelli Kelley, founder and Executive Director of Hand to Hold. “The experience of having a baby in the hospital or a loss can be especially isolating. Premie Power inspires these families to connect with one another, to share their child’s unique strengths, to learn of ways to volunteer and to access free support which is available at any time during their journey.” Kelley is the mother of two children born preterm.

Hand to Hold is grateful to title sponsors St. David’s Foundation, St. David’s Healthcare and Enfamil. Additional thanks go to Austin's First Steps, Epic MedStaff, Germer Gertz Beaman & Brown, LLP, H-E-B, Knight Construction, Mothers' Milk Bank at Austin, Roger Beasley Mazda, Proof Advertising and Sonic for their support of Premie Power. Read the latest about the event by visiting <http://www.premiepower.org>.

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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, 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.