

HAND to HOLD Impact on Society

Second Quarter 2019

Hand to Hold helps families before, during and after NICU stays and infant loss by providing powerful resources for the whole family. Your contribution to Hand to Hold funds key initiatives to break down barriers to psychosocial support for NICU families nationwide.

What Your Donation Did This Quarter:

- Started production on Beyond the NICU podcast.
- Launched NICU Dad Discussions podcast.
- Held a kangaroo-a-thon at our four participating hospitals.



Kangaroo-A-Thon in the NICU

To celebrate International Kangaroo Care Day on May 15th, Hand to Hold launched a kangaroo-a-thon in the NICUs of our four partner hospitals. This week-long event spotlights the benefits of Kangaroo Care for NICU babies and their parents and encouraged parents to take advantage of this important bonding tool.

Skin-to-skin kangaroo care provides a safe, calm and healing environment for both parent and baby to strengthen their bond. Parents that participate in regular kangaroo care times with their baby show reduced risk for depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, commonly associated with NICU stay.

Hand to Hold family support specialists and nursing staff encouraged parents to kangaroo care their babies and tracked the sessions, ending the week with raffle prizes and a celebration. Over 400 hours of kangaroo time was logged! To continue encouraging kangaroo care, Hand to Hold plans to provide hospitals with Kangaroo Care Kits, consisting of helpful information, scent cloths, books and a hand-held mirror so parents can see their baby while holding.



Something for Moms and Dads this Spring

Mother's Day and Father's Day can be an especially emotional time for NICU parents, parents of preemies, and those who have suffered a loss. This spring and summer, we wanted to show all parents that they are not alone. For Mother's Day, we gifted NICU moms special journals, custom-designed just for Hand to Hold and made possible by your generous donations. On Father's Day we launched an exciting new podcast series, NICU Dad Discussions, hosted by Alex Zavala of The NICU Dad and featuring interviews and helpful topics created for NICU dads, by NICU dads. The podcast has already received excellent feedback from dads in our community, and we are excited to continue adding more episodes in 2019.



Praise for Hand to Hold's Online Communities

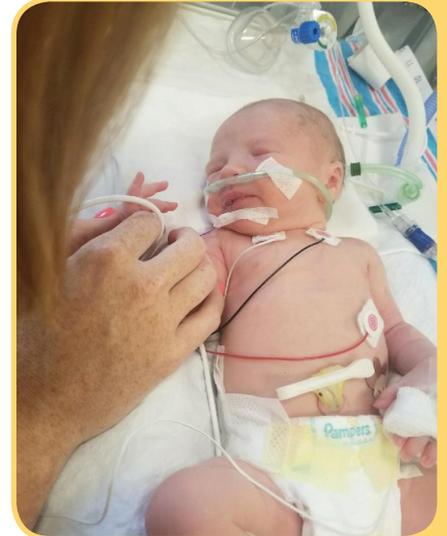
I recently stumbled across Hand to Hold online. The articles are amazing, and I find the judgment-free zone for parents to speak their mind and support others invaluable.

My pregnancy was considered high risk at 20 weeks due to an incompetent cervix, and I went into early labor at 33 weeks. Thanks to our medical team, I was able to remain pregnant until 35 weeks, when I gave birth to our daughter, Alexandria Jeanne. While our NICU stay was only eight days, those eight days were filled with emotion. Alexandria was unstable and on oxygen, and it was four days before I was able to hold her.

I enjoy hearing stories from other parents and knowing that I'm not alone. So many people in my circle have diminished my experience because my daughter was only in the NICU for eight days. I felt I needed to hide my feelings and somehow get over it. But Hand to Hold has taught me that I don't have to let it go. I don't have to hide it. I can scream my story and pain from the rooftops. Because although my experience might be minuscule compared to some, this was our journey.

Just because your child leaves the NICU doesn't mean the NICU leaves you. Because when you go home, that experience, that memory, that emotional roller coaster never leaves you. It takes a while to gain control and understanding of your feelings. For some, including me, those memories haunt you for a long time.

I love learning the different journeys others have been on in the NICU. Now I want to become an advocate for all families of premies. sharing my story and offering support.
Nikki Lipsett, Bethlehem, PA



93% of respondents said Hand to Hold helped them navigate the NICU experience.

"Having a premie is something most people just don't understand. Talking to someone who is in the same boat has been really helpful."

—Renee I., NICU mom

Impact by the Numbers



Fragile Babies. **Family Support.**

TollFree: 855-H2H-NICU

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| handtohold.org

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