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***Good Morning America* and ABC News Chief Meteorologist GINGER ZEE Takes the Stage in Austin for Hand to Hold's Annual Baby Shower on Nov. 2**

***Honorary Chair Camila Alves McConaughey to co-host Fifth Annual Baby Shower,
helping Hand to Hold care for families of premature and medically fragile infants***

AUSTIN, TEXAS -- A beloved tradition for growing families, baby showers are celebrations to welcome new life. Yet when one out of eight Austin babies arrive too soon, families' dreams are replaced with painful realities: life in the hospital, continual anxiety, debilitating fears of loss and death, and the stress of life-or-death medical decisions. That's why Austin-born nonprofit Hand to Hold is leading the way to help families get the support and best care when their fragile babies are born too soon.

Hand to Hold welcomes **GINGER ZEE**, a writer, dancer and *Good Morning America* meteorologist for ABC News, as she headlines its fifth annual **Baby Shower – Seasons of Life: Gathering Strength from the Storm** in the Grand Ballroom of the JW Marriott in downtown Austin on Friday, November 2, 2018, from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The Hand to Hold Baby Shower raises funds to provide support and programs for families in Central Texas and in communities across Texas. Hand to Hold's resources and programs for families provide Peer Support, Psychological & Emotional Support, Whole Family Care and NICU & Beyond programs.

ZEE will inspire guests with her message of resilience and self-care, leaving attendees feeling renewed, empowered, and intensely moved by her raw, poignant chronicle of life as a Natural Disaster.

"When babies need intensive care and an extended hospital stay, we are right there with parents and families to make sure their emotional needs are met, too," says Kelli Kelley, co-founder and executive director of Hand to Hold. "When hospital care centers on the whole family, their babies also do better. We help parents cope with in person support, podcasts and online information so that they have hope, courage and wisdom to parent their medically fragile child."

Baby Shower guests represent many families who have experienced life with a baby in neonatal intensive care and also, infant loss. With luxury prizes from jewelry and spa treatments to fine dining, Hand to Hold's fanciful Baby Shower games will delight and surprise guests – some of whom didn't have their own baby showers due to premature birth or loss -- as they gather to raise support NICU families and also honor their own birth and parenting experiences.

Seasons of Life: Gathering Strength from the Storm is hosted by neonatal ICU Parent Graduates Heather Nichols and Beth Cohen, Co-Chairs, with Honorary Chair Camila Alves McConaughey; Hand to Hold Founder and Executive Director Kelli Kelley; and a committee of 25 Central Texas volunteers. Sponsors include Austin Area Obstetrics, Gynecology and Fertility, Lana Macrum-Craig and Jeff Craig, Villa Del Lago Events, and St. David's HealthCare.

Guest speaker **GINGER ZEE is an** Emmy Award-winning chief meteorologist at ABC News and the face of our nation's weather headlines on ***Good Morning America*** and across all ABC News broadcasts and digital platforms. She is also the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Natural Disaster: I Cover Them; I Am One*. Since joining ABC News, Zee has covered almost every major weather event and dozens of historic storms. A mother of two, Zee lives in New York City with her husband.

Tickets for the Fifth Annual Baby Shower are \$175 a person and available at www.handtohold.org.

About Hand to Hold

Hand to Hold is a national nonprofit that helps families before, during, and after NICU stays and infant loss by providing powerful resources for the whole family, and most importantly, one-on-one mentoring from someone who has been there. Hand to Hold resources include in-hospital programs, articles and blogs, social networks, trained peer mentors, and its popular podcast, NICU Now. All were designed with the emotional, physical, and social needs of the whole NICU family. Hand to Hold was the 2012 recipient of the Becky Hatfield Family Support Award, given by the National Perinatal Association. In 2015, Hand to Hold was ranked as one of the top 10 resources for NICU parents by About.com. All services are offered without charge. For more information, visit www.handtohold.org.

About premature birth in Central Texas: Two leading causes of disability or death among newborns are premature birth and birth defects. Premature birth – a baby born before 37 weeks of gestation -- affects 54 families each week in the Greater Austin Area - Travis, Williamson, Bastrop, Hays and Caldwell Counties (*Texas Department of State Health Services, 2012*). Other babies may be referred to the NICU because of a defect or other health concern -- five percent (5%) of all Texas babies are born with one or more birth defects (*Texas Birth Defects Registry, 2011*).

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