



## Today is World Birth Defects Day

Help us mark the first World Birth Defects Day – today -- by participating in social media activities and sharing a story about the impact of birth defects on yourself and your family.



The March of Dimes and 11 other international organizations, including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO), have created the first-ever World Birth Defects Day on March 3 to raise awareness of this serious global problem and advocate for more prevention, care and research to help babies and children. More than 8 million babies worldwide are born each year with a serious birth defect and many of them die in the first year of life; those who survive may be physically or mentally disabled, taking a costly toll on families, communities and nations.

With our partners, we'll be urging governments, non-governmental organizations, policymakers, researchers, and health care providers around the world to help us work together toward a healthier future for children.

Register to be a part of the first World Birth Defects Day Thunderclap: <http://bit.ly/1CViWVO> and join the Buzzday on Twitter today by following [#worldbdday](https://twitter.com/worldbdday).

In 2010, birth defects accounted for about 1 in 7 infant deaths in Connecticut.

## Chapter Events 2015

### March for Babies

Sunday, April 26

Danbury, East Hartford, New Haven

Saturday, May 2

Mystic

Sunday, May 3

Fairfield, Middlebury, Stamford

### Run for Babies

Sunday, April 26

Rentschler Field, East Hartford

### Brunch for Babies

Saturday, June 6

The Riverview, Simsbury

### Signature Chefs Auction

Thursday, September 24

Fairfield Theater Company, Fairfield

### Signature Chefs Auction

Thursday, October 15

The Riverview, Simsbury

### Elm City Legends

Thursday, November 5

Omni Hotel, New Haven

### World Prematurity Day

Tuesday, November 17

### Real Estate Award Breakfast

Thursday, December 3

The Hilton, Stamford

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## Measles Outbreak Highlights Need for Vaccines

The recent outbreak of measles that began in California and spread to 13 other states drives home the basic fact that vaccines are the most effective means of preventing infectious diseases, and the best way to assure that disabling and fatal diseases of the past don't make a comeback in our country, experts say.

Measles was declared eliminated from the United States in 2000, but an outbreak that began in Disneyland® in December 2014 and has sickened more than 100 people, has shone a spotlight on the importance of vaccines in preventing infectious diseases. Most of those infected were unvaccinated.

"All children should receive vaccines to protect their own health and so they don't spread infections to others, especially the most vulnerable, such as pregnant women and babies," says Edward R.B. McCabe, MD, MPH, March of Dimes chief medical officer. "The more children who are fully immunized, the less the risk of exposure to vaccine-preventable diseases."

Parents should ensure their children get all their vaccinations on schedule, including an annual flu shot. Parents and caregivers also should get a booster for pertussis (whooping cough), a highly contagious and potentially fatal disease in babies, so they won't unknowingly infect the children in their lives -- especially newborns too young to get their own immunizations.

The March of Dimes has a long history of supporting vaccines. The organization was founded in 1938 by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, himself a polio survivor, to combat polio. At the time, polio was an epidemic disease that paralyzed or killed up to 52,000 Americans, mostly children, every year. The March of Dimes funded the development of the first safe and effective polio vaccine by Dr. Jonas Salk in 1955, followed by the oral vaccine developed by Dr. Albert Sabin in 1962. Nearly every baby born today receives a lifesaving polio vaccine.

In 2008, the March of Dimes became a founding member of the Immunization Alliance, a consortium of medical, public health, and parent organizations. More information on childhood vaccines is available from the [March of Dimes web site](#).

Since 2009, the March of Dimes has partnered with Sanofi Pasteur to help inform the public about the burden of infectious disease and the value of vaccines through two unique campaigns: *Sounds of Pertussis®* and *Word of Mom: Celebrating Generations of Healthy Advice..* For more information, visit the [March of Dimes web site](#).

## MEASLES IN THE UNITED STATES

### What Is Measles?

Measles is a highly contagious disease that is spread through the air through coughing and sneezing.<sup>1</sup> Measles starts with a fever, runny nose, cough, red eyes and sore throat and is followed by a rash that spreads all over the body.<sup>1</sup>

Measles can be serious, especially for children younger than 5 years of age.<sup>1</sup> It can lead to pneumonia, encephalitis (swelling of the brain) and even death.<sup>1</sup> For every 1,000 children who get measles, one or two will die from the disease.<sup>2</sup>

### How Is Measles Spread?

Although measles was declared eradicated in the United States in 2000, the disease is just a plane ride away.<sup>3</sup> Unvaccinated travelers who get measles while they are in areas where measles is still common — including parts of Europe, Africa, Asia and the Pacific — can bring the disease into the United States.<sup>3</sup> They can then spread measles to other people who are not vaccinated against measles.<sup>3</sup>

## You can walk or RUN

Attention runners! Did you know that now you can support the March of Dimes by lacing up for sneakers for a 5K run?

Join us on Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup> at Rentschler Field (PRIOR to March for Babies) for the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual [Run for Babies!](#) Registration is just \$30 and is now open [online](#).

This fast and flat timed 5K will kick off with registration at 7 am and the Run will begin at 8 am. Awards will be given to the overall 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place finishers (men and women), along with awards for age groups (men and women).

Make it a fun family morning. Run for Babies and then join [March for Babies](#) with your family!



## Spring into Action – Register Today



Spring is right around the corner, and so is March for Babies – seven weeks away in fact! So spring into action and [register for a walk](#) near you! Then reach out to family, friends and co-workers and ask them to donate and/or join your team.

For your efforts, there are several rewards for helping babies. Set a goal to raise at least \$200 and you'll earn a March for Babies t-shirt (left) as our thank you. Raise \$350 or more and you'll also earn a Macy's and Kmart gift card!

And remember that if you reach \$1,000 or more, you'll become a member of our **Circle of Champions!** Find out more about this exclusive top walker club [HERE](#).

New to March for Babies or just need some tips to help get you started? Our [web site](#) is full of easy-to-follow and motivational tools to help you reach your fundraising goal. Here are some links to tools you can use:

[Company Team Captain Guide](#)

[Family Team Captain Guide](#)

[Circle of Champions](#)

[Quick Guide to Online Fundraising](#)

[Spread the Word – Social Media & More](#)

[March for Babies Blog](#)

## Why We Walk

We walk in [March for Babies](#) and fundraise because we feel honored & fortunate to be parents of our little survivors. We walk to raise awareness about pregnancy loss and prematurity. We walk to support those who have or who are currently experiencing the NICU roller coaster. We walk to encourage others to become a part of something bigger than themselves. We walk because someday ALL babies will be born healthy!

Brooke Lalumiere (team Lalumiere Superheroes)



## Get to Know Us – Meet Becky Smith, Family Teams Specialist



**When did you join the March of Dimes and why did you want to be a part of the organization?**

I first joined March of Dimes in high school as a walker and student ambassador. I was born premature so it was a mission that affected me. I started working for March of Dimes in March of this year after my son was born full term and healthy! I knew that I could help to make a difference and I felt very passionate about becoming a part of this community.

**What is one of your most inspiring March of Dimes moments?**

I am inspired emotionally every time I visit a NICU, seeing those tiny or very sick babies, and I am inspired in an overwhelmingly joyous way at each March for Babies walk. Seeing the energy of the crowd is so infectious!

**Outside of the office, how do you like to spend your time?**

I love spending time with my husband and one-year old son, as well as reading, watching movies, taking Zumba classes at my gym, scrapbooking, and baking! I blog at [theoptimisticbaker.com](http://theoptimisticbaker.com). I also sell Tastefully Simple if you're ever in need of some delicious beer bread!

**My favorite March of Dimes event is...**

Brunch for Babies. Signature Chefs. March for Babies! Can't pick just one!

Becky can be reached at 860-815-9361 or by [email](#).