



# News Friends of Tiny Hearts

Issue 1: November 2015

## Tiny Hearts, Big Miracles at UCMC's NICU

Contributor: Timothy Russell, UC Foundation - Communications

*"There is no foot too small that it cannot leave an imprint on this world" –  
Author Unknown*

Friends of Tiny Hearts is a group of passionate NICU graduate families, friends and staff members committed to supporting families on their NICU journey and improving the outstanding care available at the UC Medical Center. The organization works to raise money for research and to raise awareness of premature birth and NICU care – yet their primary focus is on providing assistance to families who are grappling with the challenges of a premature birth.

"One of the most important things a baby in the NICU can have is a parent or family member by his or her side," says Elaine, one of the founding members of Friends. "But the sad reality is that many parents and families can't maintain a constant presence no matter how badly they want to be there. Things like taking time off work, arranging care for other children and making long trips to be in the NICU present major hardships. And many families simply don't have the resources to do that, which can create feelings of guilt on top of the emotions they are already experiencing."

Contributions raised through Friends of Tiny Hearts support these families in a variety of ways – fuel cards to support long-distance journeys, hotel accommodations, and supplies needed for the baby once he or she is discharged from the NICU. These resources help reduce the stress parents and families are under and allow them to focus on their baby or babies.

In the two years since Friends of Tiny Hearts was formed, more than \$30,000 has been raised to help families and enhance the facilities available to care givers and parents alike. The group is pleased with their progress, but endeavors to do much more in the years to come!

## First NICU Reunion in over 10 Years, a Huge Success!

Contributor: Anne McIntosh, Chair, Friends of Tiny Hearts

On June 6, 2015 UCMC held its first NICU reunion in over 10 years. The event was hosted and coordinated by Friends of Tiny Hearts. The day was beautiful, warm and sunny with just enough cloud cover to keep the temperature comfortable. In one word the day was perfect. The UCMC courtyard was transformed into a festive area with tents, games, food and music. Over 275 people attended the event representing over 65 graduate families. It was a day of celebrating graduation from and life beyond UCMC's NICU. Hugs, smiles and laughter were shared all over the courtyard.

Thanks to our generous sponsors; Skyline, LaRosa's, JTM, Kroger, March of Dimes, Aramark and John Morrell, and many volunteers, the day was filled with plenty of food and fun. Activities included a photo booth, face painting, games and an educational area regarding the ABC's of safe sleep for babies. Fun was had by all. It was an awesome day of hanging out, reconnecting and rejoicing.

The NICU reunion was a dream come true for many people. For me personally, it was one of the best days ever for 2015. The goal is to continue to have a UCMC NICU reunion every 2 years. Keep June of 2017 open!



## Have You Become a Member?

Did you have the opportunity to join forces with our Friends of Tiny Hearts & University of Cincinnati Medical Center's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit to help provide support for the tiniest hearts among us, and empower their parents?

Become a part of our team today by visiting:  
[UCHealth.kintera.org/nicu](http://UCHealth.kintera.org/nicu)



### A Special Thank You to Our Donors

To date we have raised over \$35,000 to support UCMC's NICU thank you to our 172 donors! The efforts made by the Friends of Tiny Hearts are not possible without your support! – Thank you!

To learn more about giving opportunities please contact:  
Tricia Mullins 513-584-6936 or [tricia.mullins@uc.edu](mailto:tricia.mullins@uc.edu)

### Upcoming Events

#### **Friends of Tiny Hearts Monthly Meeting**

November 19, 2015 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

No December Meeting

#### **Friends of Tiny Hearts Fundraiser:**

Come support our Friends on December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2015 for Rock Bottom Brewery's Seasonal Tapping Party. \$10 donation to the Friends of Tiny Hearts will give guests an appetizer and a pint of the seasonal beer tapped that night. 100% of the proceeds benefit Friends of Tiny Hearts. All season long Rock Bottom will donate 25 cents of every seasonal beer sold during that quarter to the Friends of Tiny Hearts!

Rock Bottom, 10 E. Fountain Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45202

### March of Dimes NICU Family Support Program

Contributor: Amy Mueller, March of Dimes NICU Family Support Specialist

UC Health and the March of Dimes joined as partners in 2014 to provide support for families with a baby in the NICU at UC Health. This program provides support and education on topics that are related to your baby's stay in the NICU. It offers educational classes on Caring for Your Baby While in the NICU (also known as NICU 101), Skin to Skin, Infant Nutrition/Breastfeeding, Infection Control, Caring for Yourself and Caring for Baby at Home.

In addition to educational classes the March of Dimes also has craft classes and holiday celebrations. The program most recently held a craft class where the parents made Halloween costumes for their babies. It will be a good memory and we are honored to provide these opportunities to educate and help parents through the NICU journey.

To reach the March of Dimes NICU Family Support Specialist email [AMueller@marchofdimes.org](mailto:AMueller@marchofdimes.org)

