



HAND to HOLD
Fragile Babies. Strong Support.

MEDIA ALERT

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Contact:

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Preemie Power Photo Contest Underway

Local Contest Celebrates Children's Triumphs, Raises Awareness About Prematurity

WHAT: In recognition of November as National Prematurity Awareness Month, Hand to Hold is kicking off its inaugural Preemie Power event with a photo contest to recognize local preemie "super-heroes." Parents are invited to submit photos of their preemies and participate in a creative writing essay contest that highlights their preemie's "super powers."

Families are invited to send in recent photos of their preemies along with responses to a few quick questions to better demonstrate the submitted child's "super-hero qualities." After all submissions have been made, online voting will take place. Top submissions receiving the most numbers of votes will move on to a finalist round where local celebrity judges will determine the winners in each age category (0-1 year, 1+ year to 5 years, and 6 years and older).

Confirmed local celebrity judges include Kim Pleticha of *Parent:Wise Austin*; Stephanie Klein, bestselling author, mother, and internationally celebrated blogger; and Dr. John Loyd, a preemie who grew up to be a neonatologist.

Winners will be announced live at the Preemie Power Family Celebration event November 14. The top winner in each age category will receive local recognition and a prize package valued at more than \$450 provided by Baby Bugaloo, Babyearth.com, Brilliant Sky Toys, Brooke West Photography and Mellow Johnny's Bike Shop.

WHY: The photo contest recognizes the strength of preemie "super-heroes" in the Austin area to raise awareness of the realities of premature births. The journey of premature birth is very difficult but also provides exciting opportunities for

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celebration as the tiniest Texans celebrate triumphs over challenges to simply eat, regulate body temperature and breathe.

Premature birth is a serious and growing problem. It's the leading cause of newborn death and often results in lifelong disabilities, including Cerebral Palsy, mental retardation and chronic lung disease. Challenges many preemies face include: sensory integration disorder, asthma and allergies, developmental delays, developmental coordination disorder, reflux, self-feeding issues and lack of hunger, ADHD and problems processing information.

WHEN: Submit photos anytime between October 12 and midnight on October 31. Online voting begins 8 a.m. November 1 and concludes at midnight on November 10. Winners will be announced November 14, 2010 at the Premie Power family celebration event.

WHO: Families who have had a premature child are invited to submit recent photos of their preemie in one of three age categories to win recognition in the local media and valuable prizes.

WHERE: Photos can be submitted online by visiting www.handtohold.org or through the following direct link: <http://wildfireapp.com/website/6/contests/65899>.

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Please contact Kelli for any additional information about the Premie Power Photo Contest or the Premie Power Family Celebration.

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About Hand to Hold

Hand to Hold, a nonprofit organization, provides comprehensive 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 with plans to expand, 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.