



500,000 babies every year.....

...are born prematurely every year in the United States. This number is now 12.5% of all births, an increase of 30% over the last 25 years. This dramatic increase is considered by experts to be escalating out of control.

Our organization, the NICUPS (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Parent Support), plays a significant role in the prematurity problem in the St. Louis area. Since 1991, our purpose has been to support and empower others to be the strongest advocates possible for their babies. As parents of premature or ill infants, we have all experienced this difficult and life-changing journey through the NICU.

At St. John's Mercy Medical Center we assist families during their baby's stay in the hospital until they are healthy enough to go home. The NICUPS help families by:

- Providing one-on-one emotional and educational support.
- Provide, free-of-charge, books and other educational materials.
- Having family classes and meetings.
- Financial assistance during crisis situations.
- Making available breast pumps, car seats, baby clothing and other necessities as needed to those in need free of charge.

We have reached thousands of families and babies over the last 15 years. As a volunteer organization that is **funded entirely by donations** we are hoping that you can assist us during our annual fundraiser, Letters from Santa. This campaign allows friends and relatives to send information about children (young and "older") and the child receives a personalized letter from Santa closer to the holiday.

Here is how you can help:

- Place the forms at your business so that customers can take one with them. We would provide the holder and forms (see attached).
- Send an e-mail to friends, family and clients about the campaign.
- Order, order, order letters for kids and others who you think would like to receive one. In the past we have sent letters to adults and pets too.

Simply, we ask that you assist in any way that you think would be best. We can use all the help we can get. It is the only way that we can continue to help families and their babies. Everyone should be able to come home with a healthy baby right away. We know, through experience, that parent support such as ours makes the journey with a premature and/or sick baby easier.

Please visit our web site at www.miraclebaby.org to learn more about our group. If you find that you can lend us a hand in any way, please contact me by e-mail at lettersfromsanta@hotmail.com or by calling our NICUP Line at 314-251-6636.

Thank you in advance,

Scout Gibson

Letters from Santa Chairperson, NICUPS
St. John Mercy Medical Center