

NEWSLETTER



Bettianne Welch, Melanie Grim and Betsy Grim

A Year of Growth

Happy Holidays! During this season of thanks and giving, we have much to be thankful for as the year comes to a close. 2006 was very kind to the Isabel's Gift Organization. We started the year with another wonderful Bull and Oyster Roast. We raised more than \$12,000 while having a really good time. In April, founder and board president Christa Grim and board member Cynthia Giorgio hosted a workshop about Isabel's Gift and our programs to more than 40 NICU social workers at the National Convention of Perinatal Social Workers (NAPSW) in Las Vegas, Nevada. Following the workshop, we selected two hospitals nationwide to take part in our inaugural pilot program, which will launch in 2007. We also delivered more than 200 bags to families in the NICU at Anne Arundel Medical Center, and our new Pink Heart Families program is helping families with financial needs. As always, a warm thank you and best wishes for a happy healthy holiday season to our generous supporters!

Isabel's Gift Board of Directors

Update on 2006

January: Our newly formed Board met for an all day retreat where we formed exciting short and long term goals for our organization.

March: Our 2nd Bull & Oyster Roast at Michael's 8th Avenue in Glen Burnie, MD was a fun night of food, dancing and "wheel spinning" that netted more than \$12,000 for Isabel's Gift.

April: Founder and president Christa Grim was honored with a Community Trustee Award sponsored by Leadership Anne Arundel and the Capital Gazette newspaper group. This prestigious honor, the first of it's kind in Anne Arundel County, honors local individuals dedicated to making a difference in their own communities. Ms. Grim was one of the inaugural honorees of this new annual award.

Also in April, Isabel's Gift Board Members presented at the National Convention of Perinatal Social Workers in Las Vegas. More than 250 social workers from around the country gathered at this annual convention to network, learn and share ideas. Our workshop, Isabel's Gift – A New Vision for Helping NICU Families In Need had more than 40 participants in attendance and was very well-received. Our evaluations were glowing!

Summer: As a result of our workshop, we were thrilled to receive many applications for our new pilot program from NICU social workers nationwide. Our new pilot program will help train and organize new Isabel's Gift organizations in other NICU's around the country. Congratulations to Cincinnati Children's Hospital and Children's Healthcare of Atlanta on becoming our very first Isabel's Gift pilot programs for 2007!

December: See events on page 2.

Anne Arundel Medical Center Update

Our flagship program at Anne Arundel Medical Center (AAMC) continues to help NICU families and support them during their life-changing NICU experience. In 2006, we distributed more than 200 Isabel's Gift Comfort Bags to families in need. This year we also gained a fabulous advocate for our organization, NICU Social Worker Kari Barcome. When Kari arrived at AAMC February 2006 she was excited and enthusiastic about our programs. She was also the inspiration for our new Pink Heart Families Program, which delivers immediate financial assistance to NICU families experiencing financial hardship. Ms. Barcome has a background in pediatric hospice. Previously, she worked at Johns Hopkins with their adult patients. Since coming on board at AAMC, she has heard countless "thank yous" from NICU families for their Isabel's Gift bags. We thank her for her support and for her daily work as the eyes and ears of Isabel's Gift at AAMC.

We're Going National

The New Year will bring new cities and new families to Isabel's Gift. Two pilot programs will be started, one at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center in Ohio and the second at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta in Georgia. Both locations have a dedicated staff and many enthusiastic families who are looking to give back to the NICU. The Board and volunteers in Maryland are eager to share their knowledge learned since our organization began in 2003. Board Members will be traveling to both cities this winter to meet with volunteers and deliver a tool kit to get them started in their hometowns.

Cincinnati Children's Hospital actually began with the aid of another Isabel – Ms. Isabelle Hopkins, who was enlisted by a friend in 1883 to start a hospital for young patients. Now, what began as a three-bedroom house, is one of the top pediatric facilities in the country and includes a Level IIIc NICU with 59 beds.

Children's Healthcare of Atlanta's mission is "to enhance the lives of children through excellence in patient care, research and education." It is a not-for-profit organization and is comprised of three hospitals: Scottish Rite, Egelston and Hughes Spalding. The 35 bed Level III NICU is located on the Scottish Rite campus in North Atlanta.

December Events

Please join us at Barnes & Noble in Annapolis Harbor Center on December 13 and 14 from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. each day. Isabel's Gift will be gift wrapping and all donations go to our 2007 programs!

Isabel's Gift volunteers will be serving holiday cookies and tea to the families in the AAMC NICU to wish them and the nursing staff a happy holiday!

New in 2007

Online donations – Now you can support Isabel's Gift with just the click of a mouse! Visit our website at www.isabelsgift.org to learn more about our new online donation service, and make your tax-deductible donation today. It's the easiest way to support NICU families in need.

Pink Heart Families – NICU families struggling with financial difficulties in addition to the stresses of the NICU are now eligible for emergency assistance grants through our new Pink Heart Families program. We help families off-set the cost of everything from diapers and formula to car seats and transportation costs to and from the hospital. Families in need can receive up to \$250 to help fend off urgent financial crises. Our grants are quick, easy and often delivered to families overnight!

On-line newsletter – Too much mail in your mailbox? Sign up today for your on-line version of our newsletter! Visit our website at www.isabelsgift.org and sign up to become an on-line subscriber today.

Special Thanks To:

Edelman Public Relations and **Moms Club of Odenton** for their comfort bag drives. If your company or office would like to donate time and resources for preparing comfort bags please email info@isabelsgift.org.