

program

March of Dimes New York Chapter Student Convocations

March of Dimes New York Chapter Student Convocations seek to increase student awareness and interest in the life sciences and to encourage students to pursue studies in related fields. These convocations give New York's most promising high school students the opportunity to hear and meet outstanding speakers of national prominence in the fields of science and medicine.

4th Annual Franklin Delano Roosevelt Student Convocation

The 4th Annual Franklin Delano Roosevelt Student Convocation was held on February 26 at the FDR Presidential Library and Museum in Hyde Park. Three hundred Hudson Valley area students and faculty registered for the event. This year's topic focused on "Advances in Perinatal Medicine" with the keynote speaker, Edmund F. La Gamma, MD, FAAP. Ambassador Family Mom Kristi Bogacyzk gave a moving presentation on the premature birth of her daughter, Emma, captivating the students' attention with photos and an appeal to join March for Babies®.



FDR Student Convocation participants responding to keynote speaker, Edmund F. La Gamma, MD, FAAP, demonstrating respiratory distress syndrome in premature babies by using balloons.

37th Annual Nelson Rosenthal Convocation

On March 11, the March of Dimes held its 37th Annual Nelson Rosenthal Convocation for Students at New York University. The keynote speaker was John R. Adler, Jr., MD. His presentation was entitled "Cyberknife Radiosurgery: Who Says Surgery Must Be Painful?" Over 500 students from

Pictured (far right) is Dr. John R. Adler, Jr. sitting with the high school student participants, while listening to the March for Babies® presentation at the Nelson Rosenthal Convocation.



New York City Schools attended the convocation. More than 100 student essays were received and four awards were given.

31st Annual Tina Russo Memorial Student Convocation

The Tina Russo Memorial Convocation for High School Students is named for the longtime Chairman Emeritus and Founder of the March of Dimes Staten Island Division. As a tribute to Mrs. Russo, March of Dimes sponsors this annual educational program for high school students. The keynote address was given by David Bolton, PhD and entitled "Mass Spectrometry Proteomic Approaches to Disease Diagnosis."

7th Annual Hudson Valley Regional Perinatal Forum

On Prematurity Awareness Day, November 12, the Northern Metro Division and March of Dimes National Office sponsored the 7th Annual Regional Perinatal Forum. The topic was "Obesity, Preconception Health, Pregnancy and Lactation: The Impact of Bariatric Surgery, Nutrition and Exercise." In addition, a presentation by Dr. Diane Ashton, Deputy Medical Director of the March of Dimes, was delivered to over 300 conference attendees on the March of Dimes Premature Birth Report Card for New York State. Participant packets also included the March of Dimes Premie Petition Palm Card and Brain Card.



Pictured (l.-r.) standing are Edmund F. La Gamma, MD, FAAP; Jaime Farrel-Lizotte, RN; Diane Ashton, MD; Heather Brumberg, MD; Cheryl Hunter-Grant; Ashutosh Kaul, MD; Joseph Wax, MD; and James Smith, Jr, MD. Seated (l.-r.) are Caren Fairweather; Cheryl Archbald, MD; and Susan Rose at the Hudson Valley Regional Perinatal Forum.



Signing the March of Dimes Premie Petition at the Hudson Valley Regional Perinatal Forum at the Doubletree Hotel in Tarrytown.

New York State Chapter Program Services Committee Grant Review Meeting

The New York State Chapter Program Services Committee (PSC), with representatives from all of the chapter's divisions, meets annually to evaluate Community Service Grant Requests for Proposals. Dedicated volunteers assess, deliberate and make recommendations to the Chapter Board of Directors for the funding of these highly competitive grant projects. The chapter distributed nearly \$500,000 in community grants and awards after this process in 2008, where the best applicants are funded.



Cathy LaMay, PSC Chair, Rebecca Shiffman, MD and Diana Haldenwang, PSC Members, reviewing grants at the annual grant review meeting on November 5.



Asley Scholarship Winner Robert Moakler proudly receives his award from March of Dimes Board Chair Eleanor Conforti and volunteer Carmine DeBetta.

Nell and Will Asley Scholarship

On June 1, Robert Moakler of Staten Island Technical High School was awarded the Asley Scholarship during the 11th Annual Nell and Will Asley Scholarship Ceremony. Stricken with polio at age four, Sylvia Asley later founded The Asley Scholarship in loving memory of her parents, Nell and Will, for their support and constant care that helped her discard her braces and walk on her own. About five years prior to her death, Sylvia developed Post-Polio Syndrome and was confined to a bed. Each year, the March of Dimes awards a four-year scholarship to a college-bound high school student who was born with a birth defect.

"A Healthy Baby Begins with You" Program

In February, the March of Dimes commenced a partnership with the Federal Office of Minority Health Resource Center to support the "A Healthy Baby Begins with You" Program, an educational campaign to raise awareness about the high infant mortality rates in the African-American population. Tonya Lewis Lee, mother, author, attorney, producer, and wife of filmmaker Spike Lee, served as spokesperson for the campaign, along with several members of *Behind the Bench*, the National Basketball Wives Association. The first New York City "Healthy Baby" event, was held on February 20 at the Historic Concord Baptist Church in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. Over 150 individuals attended, including a large number of expectant mothers.



Tomorrow's Healthy Babies Begin with Today's Healthy Women

The Long Island Division co-sponsored a professional conference entitled "Tomorrow's Healthy Babies Begin with Today's Healthy Women: Preconception and Interconception Care" on May 22 at Adelphi University. 175 people attended and Dr. Karla Damus from the March of Dimes was the keynote speaker.

Fetus at Risk Conference

The 12th Annual Fetus at Risk Professional Education Conference was held on September 24 at the Hilton Garden Inn on Staten Island. The conference, entitled "Strategies for Improving Perinatal Outcomes," drew over 200 participants from the tri-state area. Speakers included Dr. Lorraine Boyd of New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Dr. Cynthia Chazotte of Albert Einstein College of Medicine/ Montefiore Medical Center, Dr. John P. Flaherty of Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, Sandra Gardner of Professional Outreach Consultation, and Dr. Judith Lothian of Seton Hall University. The conference was held in partnership with the Institute for Basic Research and Richmond University Medical Center.

To celebrate Black History Month, Tonya Lewis Lee speaks at the "A Healthy Baby Begins with You" Program.

program



March of Dimes Perinatal Nurses Conference participants patiently listening to the plenary speakers.

Perinatal Nurses Conference

Clinical Update for Perinatal Nurses, presented by the March of Dimes New York State Chapter Nurse Advisory Committee, brings together nursing and other health care experts to provide state-of-the-art information for clinical practice. Developed by nurses for nurses, the conference focuses on continued clinical excellence in the face of current restructuring and redesign in health care delivery. This year's conference was a unique event for the chapter, with three plenary topics including "Healthy Babies are Worth the Wait," presented by Karla Damus, RN, MSPH, PHD; "Perinatal Patient Safety - A Team Responsibility," presented by Susan E. Brown Will, MS, RN; and "Neonatal Hyperbilirubinemia," presented by Susan J. Gennaro, DSN, RN, FAAN.

Mothers-To-Be Education Day

On March 15, the chapter hosted the Mothers-To-Be Education Day at the Doubletree Hotel in Rochester. Nearly two hundred moms attended and were accompanied by a person of their choice, who played a supportive role in their pregnancy. The average age of the participants was late teens to early twenties. Topics covering nutrition, preconception/interconception health, and signs and symptoms of preterm labor were discussed, while prizes were distributed to increase participation. Generations, Goodman Pediatrics and Babies "R" Us were the presenting sponsors.

Public Affairs Highlights

AWHONN Conference

On November 10, AWHONN (Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses) held their annual New York State section conference, "The Future of Maternal-Newborn Nursing" at the Rye Town Hilton. March of Dimes displayed public and professional education materials and gathered conference participant signatures for the March of Dimes Petition for Preemies.



Signing the Chapter Advocacy Cards and Petition for Preemies at the AWHONN Conference in Rye Brook.

Lobby Day

On May 20, the March of Dimes held its annual Lobby Day in Albany to advocate for two main issues: NICU Family Support[®] Funding and the Perinatal Advisory Council Bill. The state legislature also enacted perinatal initiatives, kept funding at current levels for maternal child health programs and increased funding to the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIPS). Volunteers partnered with staff (11 total) and made over 15 visits to legislators during a very positive day.

On October 30, volunteers and staff made targeted visits to the Legislature, the Department of Health (DOH) and the Governor's Office. The visits were made to the Albany area legislators who toured the March of Dimes NICU Family Support[®] Program at Albany Medical Center.

The request was made to include funding of the program in their member item allotment. At the DOH, volunteers emphasized the importance of newborn screening, the Prenatal Care Assistance Program and the Children's Health Insurance Program, given the current state budget shortfalls.

Legislative Tours

On June 4, the NICU Family Support[®] Program at Albany Medical Center hosted a site tour for Senator Neil D. Breslin and Assemblymen John J. McEneny and Ronald Canestrari. The tour was part of the follow-up to visits the Chapter Public Affairs Committee made to them to request legislative funding for the program, a Chapter Public Affairs priority. All three legislators demonstrated how the NICU visit made an impact on them and encouraged the March of Dimes to visit their offices in the fall.

In August, the NICU Family Support[®] Program at Stony Brook University Medical Center on Long Island also hosted a tour and provided a photo opportunity for longtime supporter Senator John J. Flanagan, who then toured the new hospital. The senator sat with families to discuss their experience in the NICU.