



Tri-City Medical Center

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March of Dimes Ambassador Visits Tri-City Medical Center

Oceanside - Joshua Hoffman of Weston, Fla., was born so early and with so many underdeveloped organs that doctors could not say whether he would survive — or if he would ever walk, talk, see or hear. Today, the 7-year-old is the March of Dimes 2010 National Ambassador. He visited Tri-City Medical Center October 14 to share his inspiring story and to thank the staff for participating in this year's March for Babies event.

Tri-City Medical Center CEO Larry Anderson was the North County Walk Chair for the Walk for Babies which was took place in April. About 200 hospital employees and their families participated in the 5K walk through Encinitas and raised over \$50,000 for the March of Dimes to support research and community programs that help babies just like Joshua.

Joshua's mom, Melanie Hoffman, recalls, "My first minutes of motherhood and I was completely devastated. My husband, Lee, and I couldn't be more terrified, and I was positive that after just 24 hours I had no more tears left." Joshua was born more than 4 months too soon, weighing a mere 1 pound, 11 ounces.

The Hoffman family credits the research and treatments funded by the March of Dimes with helping Joshua overcome his premature birth. He spent 3½ months in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at Baptist Hospital in Miami, Fla., and had many surgeries and treatments, including heart surgery, laser eye surgery and blood transfusions.

Today, Joshua has a visual impairment with blindness in his right eye and a low field of vision. But that hasn't stopped him from doing what he loves most - reading, building things, swimming, and giving speeches at March of Dimes events. His father, Lee, says, "Our hearts still skip a beat every time we see Joshua smile, hear him talk and laugh and feel his strong hugs and soft kisses."

As national ambassador, Joshua, along with his family, is helping to inform the public that premature birth is a common problem with serious health consequences.

“As the only North County hospital with a Level III NICU, we understand the importance of the March of Dimes and the work they do to support premature babies and their families,” said CEO Anderson. “The Tri-City staff has jumped wholeheartedly into this cause like they do for our patients every day, and I’m so proud to be a part of these two organizations that make such a difference in the lives of our community members.”

The 2011 North County March for Babies walk will take place May 7 in Oceanside.

Tri-City Medical Center’s Level III NICU treats over 350 premature babies each year.

For more information about the Walk for Babies visit www.marchofdimes.com or for more information about Tri-City Medical Center visit www.tricitymed.org