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March of Dimes to hold biggest annual fundraiser at Racine County Zoo to help babies be born healthy

Racine/Kenosha, Wisconsin – Kenosha County Executive Jim Kreuser and Racine County Executive Jonathan Delagrave are asking residents in both counties to consider participating in the 2017 March for Babies on April 29 at the Racine County Zoo.

Kenosha County Board Supervisor Jill Gillmore, her husband, Matt, and their 7 children are this year's Racine/Kenosha Ambassador Family for the Racine/Kenosha March for Babies, the nation's oldest fundraising walk, which helps more babies survive and thrive.

The Gillmore family knows first-hand about the challenges of premature birth. Their youngest daughter, Marleigh, was born 10 weeks early and weighing 3 pounds. She suffered an immature sphincter valve, pulmonary artery stenosis and spent her first weeks fighting for life in a hospital Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU). Today, the Gillmore family is dedicated to making sure other parents don't have the same experience.

"I am delighted to serve in this important role to raise awareness and urgently-needed funds for the March of Dimes mission to prevent birth defects and premature birth," Jill Gillmore said.

Racine and Kenosha residents can sign up today at marchforbabies.org to start a team with co-workers, family or friends; or make a donation to help more babies get a healthy start in life.

On-site registration on the day of the event will begin at 9 a.m. with the 1.5-mile walk kicking off at 10 am.

"March for Babies is also a memorable and rewarding event for the whole family,"

Gillmore said. “We celebrate children and parents who experienced the Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU) or special care nursery. We’ll recognize these families throughout the day with a Superhero Sprint for kids, complete with a purple cape, a symbolic lei for mom and dad and loads of fun in the kids’ zone.

“Participants will also have the opportunity to walk through our Memory Mile and visit our unforgettable March for Babies Memory Garden. Those who have experienced loss will find a meaningful way to remember their baby by planting a flower in our butterfly garden,” said Gillmore.

Kreuser and Delagrave said they appreciate the work of the March of Dimes as the leading nonprofit organization for pregnancy and baby health.

Premature birth is the leading cause of death among babies in the United States. It affects about 380,000 babies – that’s 1 in 10 -- born each year, including 6,200 in Wisconsin. Funds raised by March for Babies in Racine and Kenosha support community programs such as Centering Pregnancy and Stork’s Nest. March of Dimes programs that provide comfort and support for moms and babies as well as innovative research to find the unknown causes of premature birth and birth defects.

For more than 75 years, moms and babies have benefited from March of Dimes research, education, vaccines, and breakthroughs. For the latest resources and health information, visit our websites marchofdimes.org and nacersano.org. If you have been affected by prematurity or birth defects, visit the March of Dimes shareyourstory.org community to find comfort and support. For detailed national, state and local perinatal statistics, visit persistats.org, and find the March of Dimes on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/marchofdimes), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/marchofdimes) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/marchofdimes).

The 2017 March for Babies is sponsored nationally by Kmart, Famous Footwear, Macy’s, Cigna and HCA.

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