

First Candle/SIDS Alliance Media Advisory

First Candle/SIDS Alliance Partners with the March of Dimes November Designated as Prematurity Awareness Month

As a partner in the March of Dimes prematurity campaign, First Candle is pleased to announce that November has been named "Prematurity Awareness Month." Citing premature birth as the #1 health risk for America's newborns, the March of Dimes intends to draw attention to this growing common, costly and serious public health problem with a national outreach campaign to raise awareness and reduce the incidence of premature birth.

"First Candle is honored to have been chosen as a partner in this important campaign," said Marian Sokol, president of First Candle. "Complications of premature birth is the second leading cause of infant mortality in the United States; and premature babies are at increased risk of SIDS, the third leading cause of infant mortality. The opportunity to work collaboratively with like minded organizations will strengthen our ability to accomplish our goal of ensuring that all babies are provided the best possible chance to survive and thrive." The mission of First Candle is to promote infant health and survival during the prenatal period through age two with programs of research, education, advocacy, while at the same time providing compassionate grief support to those affected by an infant death.

Tuesday, November 16, has been designated "Prematurity Awareness Day," and buildings and bridges across the country will be lit in pink and blue to remind Americans of the growing crisis of premature birth, including:

- Niagara Falls, Buffalo, New York
- New York City -- The ConEd Building in Union Square
- Chicago -- Palmolive Building, LaSalle-Wacker Building & Towers
- Philadelphia -- Benjamin Franklin Bridge, Strawberry Mansion Bridge, CIGNA World Headquarters
- Miami -- Bank of America Building (designed by I. M. Pei) on Biscayne Bay
- Springfield, MA -- The Basketball Hall of Fame
- Milwaukee -- U. S. Bank Building
- Oklahoma and Wyoming -- State Capitol Domes

If you would like to get involved, visit www.clicktosavebabies.org to find out about local events, sign an online petition for increased research, or connect with other families affected by premature birth.

For more information on helping babies survive and thrive, to access local support services or to make a donation, please call First Candle at 1.800.221.7437 or visit www.firstcandle.org.