



Segment 1:

●● YOU MATTER 8:42 minutes

Teens talking about what the March of Dimes means to them and all that they gain from being a part of "Team Youth" (all March of Dimes youth volunteers).

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the mission of the March of Dimes and what it means to youth.
2. Identify the important role youth have played in promoting the mission since the 1950's.
3. List opportunities for youth as March of Dimes volunteers.

Topics Addressed in Segment 1:

- What is the March of Dimes?
- The Power of Youth Involvement
- Fundraising and WalkAmerica



KEY MESSAGES

The **Mission of the March of Dimes** is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth, and infant mortality.

The March of Dimes was founded by **President Franklin D. Roosevelt** in 1938 to combat polio. “Through the outreach of teen volunteers, the scourge of polio was stopped dead in its tracks; the involvement of young volunteers is essential to the success of the foundation” (Dr. Jennifer L. Howse, March of Dimes President).

In the 1950’s teen volunteers participated in a campaign called, *Teens Against Polio*. Today, the campaign is *Teens Against Prematurity*.

Prematurity: A National Health Crisis

A **premature baby** is a baby born before 37 weeks of gestation. A full term pregnancy lasts 37 to 42 weeks. The **Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)** cares for babies who are born premature or with serious health problems. Not all hospitals have a NICU.

More than 500,000 babies

are born prematurely every year in the United States. Prematurity:

- Affects 1 in every 8 babies
- Has increased by about 30 percent in the past 25 years
- Can happen to any pregnant woman

Premature Birth is Serious

Premature babies aren’t just small babies; they’re babies who aren’t finished developing. Their lives and health may be in jeopardy. Prematurity is:

- The leading killer of babies in their first month of life
- A major cause of long-term health problems, including cerebral palsy, mental retardation, blindness, chronic lung problems
- The number one obstetrical problem in the country

Premature Birth is Costly

Besides the devastating physical toll it takes on babies, prematurity:

- Robs families of the full potential of their beloved children, society of future leaders and our nation of strong and healthy citizens
- Places tremendous financial burdens on everyone. Hospital charges for infants with a principal diagnosis of prematurity average \$79,000, and add up to billions of dollars each year.

Premature Birth is a Mystery

While no one knows what causes half of all premature births, experts have identified certain factors that put some women at increased risk, including:

- Pregnancy with twins, triplets or more
- Previous preterm birth
- Certain uterine or cervical abnormalities

A major reason for the lack of progress in preventing prematurity is the wide gap between identifying risk factors such as these and understanding how they actually cause premature birth. But scientific research is narrowing that gap.

Sources of Data for this Chapter

March of Dimes marchofdimes.com/prematurity

March of Dimes Team Youth marchofdimes.com/youth

References for Teens

March of Dimes Team Youth marchofdimes.com/youth

References for Parents and Professionals

March of Dimes (for parents and professionals) marchofdimes.com/prematurity

Nacersano (Spanish) nacersano.org

Segment 1, Topic 1 YOU MATTER: What is the March of Dimes?

EXCERPTS FROM VIDEO

Sakura: NICU was breathtaking; I was just speechless.

Rae: They are so tiny that they fit in the palm of your hand. When you actually see the babies in the NICU, and see how tiny they really are, it's life-changing.



Brian: In the NICU, you see that the babies are barely grabbing on to any semblance of life.

1. *Why were Sakura, Rae and Brian so deeply affected by their visit to the NICU?*
2. *What can you fit in the palm of your hand? Can you imagine what it would be like to be holding a baby in the palm of your hand?*
3. *Have you or has anyone in your family ever experienced a serious illness that required being in the intensive care unit of a hospital? What was that like for you or for them?*
4. *Why do babies born premature need to be in the NICU? What kind of care do they receive there?*
5. *When can parents expect that their premature baby will come home from the NICU? ["around the time of the mother's original due date, before the baby was born early"]*

Shawn: I was born at just 7 months and my mom didn't think I was going to make it. But when I left the hospital I graduated with the big kids. And now I'm a regular kid.

1. *Do you know anyone who was born premature?*
2. *How do you think Shawn feels about being born premature?*
3. *How do you think Shawn's mother felt when Shawn was born?*
4. *What part of the hospital cared for Shawn when he was born so soon? [NICU] What do you know about the NICU?*
5. *How did seeing the premature babies in the NICU on the video make you feel?*



ACTIVITIES: MISSION

Activity:	1 in 8 Babies
Time:	10-15 minutes
Purpose:	To visually demonstrate how prevalent prematurity is in the US today.
Materials:	None
Instructions:	<p>Have every participant number themselves from 1 to 8. Ask that all the participants stand up except for those who counted themselves as #1, who should sit down. Explain that 1 in 8 babies in the US are born premature, amounting to more than 500,000 babies, and that each participant sitting represents 1 baby born premature. Ask participants to visualize the number 500,000 – such as by asking what city they know of that has a total population of approximately 500,000 (Las Vegas, NV; Cleveland, OH; Oklahoma City, Long Beach, CA)</p> <p>Discuss reactions to this activity.</p>

Activity:	Premature Breathing
Time:	5-15 minutes
Purpose:	To give teens an experience of what it is like to be born premature.
Materials:	Small coffee straw stirrers (one per participant)
Instructions:	<p>Hand out a stirrer to each participant. Ask the participants to breathe through the straw for as long as they are able. Explain that the difficulty that they have breathing through the straw is what it is like for babies who are born premature, with underdeveloped lungs, to breathe.</p> <p>Discuss reactions to this activity.</p>

Activity: Visualize a Premie

Time: 5-15 minutes

Purpose: To help participants understand how small premature babies are through visual images.

Materials: At least one ring, paper clip, and band-aid. (ideally, one per participant)

Instructions: Hand out the paper clips and band-aids to each participant or demonstrate one at the front of the room, along with a ring (such as a wedding ring, class ring, etc). Provide participants with the following information:

1. The earlier a baby is born, the less they will weigh, the less developed their organs will be, and the more health complications they are likely to face.
2. Babies born early are at greater risk for breathing problems, brain and other neurological problems, digestive problems and death.
3. Every baby is at risk for a premature birth because we don't know the cause of preterm birth and we can only identify about half of women who are at risk of giving birth before 37 weeks (full term pregnancy).
 - > A premie's blood pressure cuff is about the size of a **Band-Aid**.
 - > An ordinary wedding **ring** can slip around the arm of a low birthweight baby.
 - > A preterm baby's foot is about as large as this jumbo **paper clip**.

Discuss reactions to this activity.



PRE-TEST/POST-TEST

Instructions:

Presenter distributes to participants before session begins and then provides correct answers at the end. The test is not collected and not graded – it is a self-assessment for participants.

1. What is the mission of the March of Dimes?

2. A full term pregnancy lasts:

20-24 weeks

37-42 weeks

45-50 weeks

None of the above

Not sure

3. How many babies are born too soon each year in the US?

1 in 100

1 in 10

1 in 8

1 in 4

Not sure

4. Premature birth is: (check all that apply)

The leading cause of death in the first month of life

The most common, serious and costly infant health problem facing the US

A birth occurring before 37 weeks of pregnancy

All of the above

Not sure

5. Babies that are born very premature or with serious health problems are cared for in the:

Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)

Pediatric Unit

Nursery

Maternity Ward

Not sure

6. What I hope to learn (pre-test) or what I did learn (post-test) from the session:

Segment 1, Topic 1 YOU MATTER: What is the March of Dimes?



PRE-TEST/POST-TEST ANSWERS

1. The Mission of the March of Dimes is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth, and infant mortality.
2. 37-42 weeks
3. 1 in 8
4. All of the above
5. NICU
6. Open response



HANDOUT

Key Messages

- The Mission of the March of Dimes is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth, and infant mortality.
- The March of Dimes was founded by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1938 to combat polio.
- In the 1950's teen volunteers participated in a campaign called, *Teens Against Polio*. Today, the campaign is *Teens Against Prematurity*.
- Every year in the US, 1 in 8 babies arrives too soon. More than 500,000 babies a year.
- Premature birth is the **leading cause of death** in the first month of life. Premature birth is the most common, serious and costly infant health problem facing our nation.
- A **premature baby** is a baby born before 37 weeks of gestation. A full term pregnancy lasts 37 to 42 weeks.
- The **Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)** cares for babies who are born premature or with serious health problems. Not all hospitals have a NICU.

Take Away

I understand how serious premature birth is. I will:

Share what I learned with my peers, family members, or neighbors.

Visit a NICU or find out more about the topic.

Think about becoming a health care professional or researcher.

Ask my mother what my own birth was like for her.

Other: _____

Want More Information?

The March of Dimes Mission

March of Dimes Team Youth

marchofdimes.com/youth

March of Dimes (for parents and professionals)

marchofdimes.com/prematurity

Nacersano (Spanish)

nacersano.org



KEY MESSAGES

The March of Dimes involves youth of all ages, from Kindergarten through College, in fundraising activities as well as mission awareness programs. Today, there is a nationwide network of more than 1 million youth volunteers who are actively involved in promoting the March of Dimes mission, raising millions of dollars each year.

The March of Dimes partners with national **Student Clubs and Organizations**, providing leadership opportunities, service learning, health education, and more to those who get involved. There is a chapter in every state. Top youth leaders are elected to a **National Youth Council**.

The March of Dimes offers teens the opportunity to:

- Build and develop leadership and public speaking skills
- Network among like-minded student leaders nationwide
- Advocate for policies that benefit children and families
- Earn community service credits and enhance their resume
- Learn about a healthy lifestyle today and for the future
- Give back to their communities and make a difference

Teens help the March of Dimes achieve its mission by:

- Increasing awareness about the problem of premature birth
- Promoting daily folic acid consumption
- Supporting anti-smoking activities
- Lobbying for policies that benefit women and children
- Participating in WalkAmerica and other fundraising events
- Serving on state and local advisory boards

“The involvement of young volunteers in the March of Dimes is essential to the success of the foundation.” Dr. Jennifer L. Howse, March of Dimes President

Sources of Data for this Chapter

March of Dimes Team Youth marchofdimes.com/youth

References for Teens

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References for Parents and Professionals

March of Dimes (for parents and professionals) marchofdimes.com/prematurity

Nacersano (Spanish) nacersano.org

Segment 1, Topic 2 YOU MATTER: The Power of Youth Involvement
EXCERPTS FROM VIDEO

Natalie: Working with the March of Dimes is different from other organizations. The March of Dimes goes to the youth to get their help.



1. Has anyone asked you to help them recently? How did you feel about it?
2. Have you ever volunteered for an organization before?
3. Name some ways that youth can volunteer in your community?
4. What would you want to gain from a volunteer experience?
5. What would make a volunteer experience fun, or worthwhile?

Ben Murane: The March of Dimes has continued to say "I want you. And so now it is my turn to find other students and say, 'I want you and we need you'." The March of Dimes needed my voice on the local level, the state level, and the national level.

1. What does Ben mean by "needed my voice"?
2. What does advocacy mean to you?
3. What do lobbyists do, and why is their job important?
4. Have you visited your state capitol or the US Capitol in Washington, DC?
5. Can you name your US Representative and Senators to Congress?

Arianny: One person can make a difference. It's just whether you try or not.

1. Who has made a difference in your life?
2. Name one person who made a difference in your community? Your state? Your country? The world?
3. Who would say that you have made a difference in their life?
4. If you were introduced before winning an award, what would you want you want the introduction to say about you?
5. Where do you see yourself making a difference in the lives of others?



ACTIVITIES: VOLUNTEER

Activity:	Define Famous
Time:	15-20 minutes
Purpose:	To encourage teens to think about what it means to be known for an accomplishment and how achievements are evaluated in the eyes of their peers.
Materials:	Chalkboard or flipchart
Instructions:	<p>Have participants call out the names of famous people. Write down the first 10 to 15 names. One by one, ask participants to identify qualities of each famous person on the list and then vote on which of the famous people listed has had the most significant impact on the most people. Optional: include Jonas Salk, the scientist who discovered a cure for polio, among the list and explain that Dr Salk's research was funded by the March of Dimes. Alternate option: include President Franklin D. Roosevelt, a polio victim himself, among the list and explain that he founded the March of Dimes.</p> <p>Discuss reactions to this activity.</p>

Activity:	Start Your Own Event
Time:	20-45 minutes
Purpose:	To encourage participants to think about how to plan a volunteer event on their own and to trouble-shoot challenges to a successful event.
Materials:	Copies of the <i>Fundraising Activities for Youth</i> and the <i>Mission Education Activities for Youth</i> references located at the end of this section.
Instructions:	<p>Divide the participants into groups of 5. Hand out the <i>Fundraising Activities for Youth</i> and the <i>Mission Education Activities for Youth</i> references included at the end of this section. Ask each group to choose an activity and to create a plan for the event at their school or in their community. Give the groups 10-15 minutes to plan their event, including when and how it will take place, what permission they may need for aspects of the event, and what barriers or challenges they must overcome. Allow 3-5 minutes for each group to report about their event and answer questions from the other groups. After all presentations, ask the participants which activity they would most likely join if invited. Discuss why.</p>

Activity: The Ideal Community

Time: 30-45 minutes

Purpose: To encourage teens to work collaboratively to identify and prioritize what they feel is most important to a community. The activity encourages participants to assume a position of leadership and consider what they would do if they had the power to make decisions about how their neighborhood or town is run.

Materials: Paper for 4 groups – ideally 4 flip charts.

Instructions: The group's mission is to create an *Ideal Community*. Ask participants to volunteer for the following Committee Chair positions: (a) Head of Health and Public Safety; (b) Secretary of Education; (c) Director of Development: Housing Commercial Construction; and (d) President of Parks and Recreation. Allocate an equal number of participants to each of the Committees – this can be done by participant interest or by presenter selection. Give the Committees 10-15 minutes to discuss and come up with their top 3-5 priorities for the *Ideal Community* based on the role they have been assigned. The Chair of the Committee then reports the results to the full group (2-3 minutes each report). Spend 10 minutes discussing the results. Were there any priorities that conflicted? What resources would be needed to ensure all priorities were met? How did the groups respond to one another and to their Committee Chairs? What would they do differently if the activity were held again?



FUND-RAISING ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH

Some of the more popular ways in which youth raise funds for the foundation include:

- WalkAmerica
- WonderWalk/WalkMania
- Coinstar Program
- Coin Banks
- Two Colors, One Cause Ribbon Pins
- Tye-Dye Wristbands for Awareness (wearable bracelets + virtual bands)



WalkAmerica

WalkAmerica is the March of Dimes' largest fundraiser and typically takes place in late April. Visit walkamerica.org to sign up online and find the date and location in your area. On the site, choose "Register now;" then choose whether to walk with an existing team (if you know anyone walking), walk as an individual, or create a new team by asking your local March of Dimes chapter to add your new team. Find your local chapter by entering your zip code in the box at the top of marchofdimes.com/youth.

WonderWalk/WalkMania



WonderWalks and WalkManias are fund-raising and community service events for children in preschool, elementary, and middle schools. The events offer young students the opportunity to learn how to volunteer and older students the opportunity to experience leadership by helping to organize and hold the event. These events require little effort and are inexpensive and easy to prepare. They also work equally well in rural and metropolitan areas.

To make the most of your Walk, try these fund-raising ideas:

- Investigate opportunities for in-kind incentives and refreshments, such as healthy snacks (pretzels, fruit, etc) and water (especially for WonderWalk and WalkMania events)
- Consider incentive items like pizza parties, classroom TV/DVD player and gift certificates.
- Use incentives that are easy to distribute and redeem (gift certificates, pizza parties, etc).
Note: Incentives should be awarded immediately following the conclusion of the event.

To obtain WonderWalk and WalkMania materials, contact your local March of Dimes chapter by entering your zip code at the top of the Team Youth Web site: marchofdimes.com/youth. In many cases, March of Dimes chapter staff can help you with most aspects of the event.

Guidance for WonderWalk is on the Elementary School page of the Team Youth Web site. Guidance for WalkMania is on the Middle School page of the Team Youth Web site.

Coinstar® Program

The March of Dimes has a partnership with Coinstar®, the worldwide leader in self-service coin-counting. Coinstar® Centers accept donations on behalf of the March of Dimes through a feature available in most of the 11,000 supermarket-based machines. For an administrative fee of 7.5%, individuals have the option to donate to the March of Dimes by simply pouring their loose change into the machine (which automatically counts the change) and entering the March of Dimes code (1-2-3-0). A tax-deductible receipt for the amount of the requested donation is printed. The money is allocated to chapters according to the zip code of the machine.



To find the nearest Coinstar® Centers or for more information regarding our partnership, visit www.coinstar.com. Check to be sure the Coinstar® machine nearest you includes the March of Dimes among its charities.

Coin Banks



Coin box collections are popular among students of all ages and can be done as a promotion for WalkAmerica teams and WonderWalk/WalkMania events. The milk carton-shaped boxes can hold up to \$100 in quarters.

Before initiating a coin box campaign, it is very important to gain support and permission from school officials, starting with the Superintendent of Schools, then individual school principals. Work with school principals to determine who will be the staff lead for this project. Consider a staff member who is not the school's principal.

One person who may be ideal is the school secretary who, in most cases, has direct access to all teachers and is in daily contact with the principal and other school officials. Since most schools do not allow teachers to hold money raised by students, consider activities that encourage students and teachers to collect funds over the weekend.

School clubs and organizations can also help implement a successful coin box campaign, especially when done as part of a community service project. Clubs and organizations that have national partnerships with the March of Dimes include: FBLA-PBL, Key Club, and FCCLA.

To obtain coin boxes or other coin-collection supplies, contact your local March of Dimes chapter by entering your zip code in the box at the top of the Web site: marchofdimes.com/youth

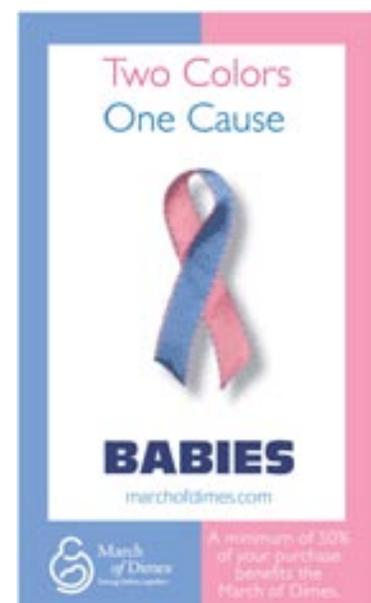
Links to each of the March of Dimes national youth partners are also on the Team Youth Web site.

Two Colors, One Cause Ribbon Pins

Raising funds for the March of Dimes is easy, especially with the popular pink and blue ribbon pins. Students can buy the pins and then sell them at their school – with appropriate permission from the school principal's office – or they can sell them in their communities, or as an activity of an after-school student group, religious group, or other youth organization.

To obtain pins, just look for the Ribbon image on the Team Youth Web site and download the order form there:

1. Go to: marchofdimes.com/youth
2. Click on "Get Awareness Ribbons"



Tye-Dye Wristbands for Awareness

Another fun and easy fund-raiser for youth of all ages is to sell March of Dimes Tye-Dye Wristbands for Awareness. To obtain the pink and blue bracelets – available in both YOUTH and ADULT sizes – go to the Team Youth Web site and download the order form:

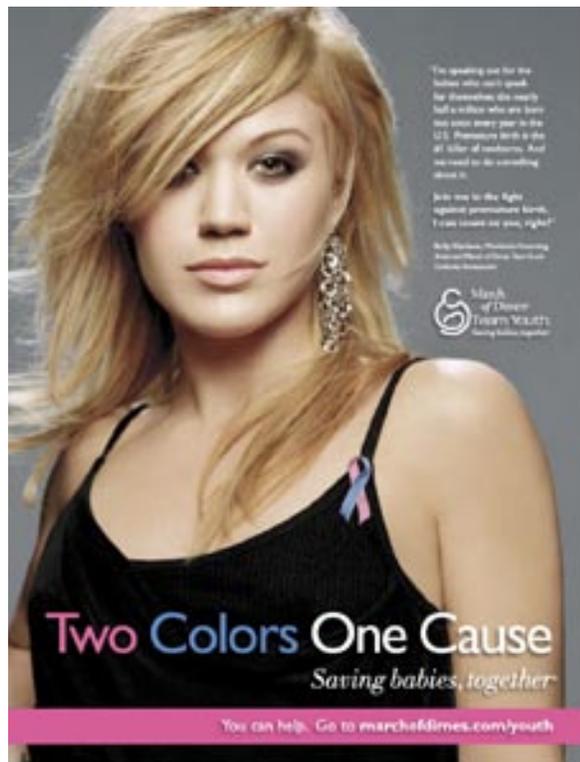


1. Go to: marchofdimes.com/youth
2. Click on “Activities” icon
3. Select the “Tye-Dye Wristbands for Awareness order form”

Virtual Bands

Anyone can create their own virtual hospital band as an online fund-raiser. To make a donation to a band requires the use of a credit or debit card so this activity may be better for college students. Kelly Clarkson, the March of Dimes Team Youth Celebrity Ambassador, has already raised more than \$15,000 for the foundation with her online band:

1. marchofdimes.com/youth
2. To see the band that Kelly Clarkson created, click on “Join Kelly and make a difference”
3. Contribute to Kelly’s band or make your own band
4. Or, go directly to the March of Dimes Prematurity Campaign site and click on “BandingTogether”
marchofdimes.com/prematurity





MISSION EDUCATION ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH

Help the Babies at Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICUs)

- Collect books to read to the babies, donate camera film, knit blankets or help staff with reunions.
- Prepare or enhance Parent Care Kits, which are gifts that are given to each NICU family filled with comforting and informative materials.
- Decorate the interior and/or halls of a NICU. Contact different preschools and elementary schools to partner on “Project Paintbrush.” Their art can be used as the decorations making a colorful and cheerful addition to the NICU.
- Decorate shoeboxes to hold the mementos of mothers of babies who died before going home.
- Make greeting cards for new parents, including information about newborn screening, immunizations and other topics your local March of Dimes suggests.



Educate Your School and Your Community about Important Health Messages

School Activity

- Work with your school newspaper to get mission information out to the students. An article, a free ad or a letter to the editor – it’s a fantastic vehicle to get the word out! Call your local March of Dimes chapter for copies of repro ad sheets.

Community Activity

- Folic Acid education is a top priority for girls and women ages 14 to 44. Taking folic acid before pregnancy can reduce the chance of a certain type of birth defects, neural tube defects, by up to 75 percent. All women of childbearing age should take 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid each day, as part of a healthy diet. Pick a day and pass out orange juice and green ribbons while informing students about the importance of folic acid. For more information, see the Healthy Lifestyles “Eat Right” segment of the Teen-2-Teen curriculum.

There are many opportunities for you to get involved. Work with your local March of Dimes office to find out how you can help.

Your March of Dimes Resources:

- Your local March of Dimes chapter: enter your zip code at marchofdimes.com/youth
- Online: marchofdimes.com/youth and marchofdimes.com
- Click on “National Youth Council” at marchofdimes.com/youth
- National Youth Program staff at teamyouth@marchofdimes.com



PRE-TEST/POST-TEST

Instructions:

Presenter distributes to participants before session begins and then provides correct answers at the end. The test is not collected and not graded – it is a self-assessment for participants.

1. What have youth accomplished for the March of Dimes?

2. How many youth are involved in the March of Dimes nationwide?

- less than 500
- approximately 1,000
- more than 1 million
- 1 billion
- Not sure

3. What are some of the opportunities the March of Dimes offers youth? (check all that apply)

- Build leadership skills and develop public speaking skills.
- Advocate for policies that benefit children and their families.
- Earn community service credits and enhance resume.
- Give back to their communities and to make a difference locally.
- All of the above
- Not sure

4. How do youth volunteers help achieve the March of Dimes mission? (check all that apply)

- Increasing awareness about the growing problem of premature birth
- Lobbying for policies that benefit women and children
- Organizing fundraising events to further the mission
- Participating on state and local advisory boards
- All of the above
- Not sure

5. What I hope to learn (pre-test) or what I did learn (post-test) from the session:



PRE-TEST/POST-TEST ANSWERS

1. Open response
2. More than 1 million
3. All of the above
4. All of the above
5. Open response



HANDOUT

Key Messages

The March of Dimes offers teens the opportunity to:

- Build and develop leadership and public speaking skills
- Network among like-minded student leaders nationwide
- Advocate for policies that benefit children and families
- Earn community service credits and enhance their resume
- Learn about a healthy lifestyle today and for the future
- Give back to their communities and make a difference

Teens help the March of Dimes achieve its mission by:

- Increasing awareness about the problem of premature birth
- Promoting daily folic acid consumption
- Supporting anti-smoking activities
- Lobbying for policies that benefit women and children
- Participating in WalkAmerica and other fundraising events
- Serving on state and local advisory boards

Take Away

I want to make a difference in the lives of others. I will:

- Volunteer my time to help with a community project.
- Raise funds to support a cause.
- Educate my peers about important health issues.
- Seek opportunities to help others.
- Advocate for policies that benefit others.

Want More Information?

Volunteer Opportunities

March of Dimes Team Youth

marchofdimes.com/youth

March of Dimes (for parents and professionals)

marchofdimes.com/prematurity

Nacersano (Spanish)

nacersano.org