Dear Heather Russell:

We highly value the partnership between Inova Children’s Hospital and the NICU Family Support program. This annual report demonstrates the impact of this partnership.

The March of Dimes NICU Family Support® program provides information and comfort to families during the NICU hospitalization of their newborn, during the transition home, and in the event of a newborn death. The program also contributes to NICU staff professional development and promotes the philosophy of family-centered care throughout NICUs. NICU Family Support is currently active in more than 120 hospitals across the country in every state, Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico, and supports nearly 89,000 families annually.

The collaboration between the March of Dimes and Inova Children’s Hospital has supported families in the Newborn Intensive Care Unit during an extremely difficult period in their lives and provides significant long-term impact on infants and their families. Special thanks to your staff and graduate parent leaders listed on page 4 of this report who are active in the volunteer advisory committee. Their commitment and leadership to serving families and NICU staff has been outstanding.

We look forward to continuing our successful partnership to support families and staff in your neonatal intensive care unit.

Sincerely,

Christina Cavucci
State Director, March of Dimes
Maryland – National Capital Area Chapter

Joe Gordon
Board Chair, March of Dimes,
Maryland – National Capital Area Chapter
Serving Families

The March of Dimes is proud to be a part of the team serving families in your NICU. In 2013, we provided 921 NICU families with supportive educational materials which represents over 85% of NICU admissions at Inova Children’s Hospital. Our program provided 99 parent education hours and social activities attended by 729 parents and families.

Families have shared that our materials, education hours and activities have helped them feel “less alone”, “more informed” and “more confident” about caring for their baby while in the NICU and at home.

Providing Information and Comfort

Each month our program offers education and activities for families. Parent education hours provide information on a topic that is relevant to a baby’s stay in the NICU or the transition home. Parent hours are led by a NICU or hospital staff person or the March of Dimes Family Support Specialist. The content of the classes was developed based on input from our parent advisors in conjunction with the professional expertise of NICU staff and the March of Dimes. Topics for our parent education hours have included the following:

- Promoting the Development of your Baby
- Respiratory Care for your Baby
- Infection Prevention
- 10 Important Things to know before you Take Your Baby Home
- Skin to Skin Care
- Parenting in the NICU

Parents who attended these sessions rated them all as “excellent” or “good”. Parents report that the classes help them better understand their baby’s current medical concerns as well as feel more prepared to take their baby home.

As shared by a recent NICU graduate mother, “if it were not for the March of Dimes coordinator, I am not sure how I would’ve made it through. All of the activities and just being there for us, helped my husband and me more than you will ever know.”
The March of Dimes NICU Family Support®

Each month we also offer a range of parent activities designed to help families ‘normalize’ the parenting experience during their NICU stay. These activities help families connect with other NICU parents, acknowledge and celebrate holidays and milestones, and receive support and comfort. In 2013, the NICU Family Support program provided the following:

- Family Pizza Nights
- NICU Baby Showers (partnered with Preemies Today to give clothing and baby items to NICU families)
- Pie Day in the NICU (graduate families provide pie to current families and staff)
- Ice Cream Socials
- Holiday acknowledgements (Valentine’s Day, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, etc.)
- Mother’s Milk Socials (special gatherings for pumping mothers)
- Weekly Scrapbooking
- Decorating Preemie T-shirts for Prematurity Awareness Month

Promoting Family Centered Care

Each year, we work to provide high quality professional development to NICU staff. In 2013, the March of Dimes was proud to provide 95 NICU staff with 6 educational opportunities. March of Dimes partnered with the NICU education committee to identify training priorities and provide quality educational sessions. Topics included:

- Palliative Care in the NICU (2 sessions)
- Resolve Through Sharing: Bereavement Certification
- Communication Essentials for Patient and Family Centered Care
- Working with Families in Crisis for Nursing Fellows (2 sessions)

The feedback from these trainings was excellent with over 95% of staff rating them as “excellent”. The lunch and learn model of providing staff education was so successful that the March of Dimes is pleased to expand this to a monthly offering in 2014. In addition, as a benefit to NICU Family support sites, the March of Dimes is offering an online learning module on skin to skin care with free CEUs to all Inova staff.
Engaging volunteers

Your program’s advisory committee is a volunteer board of NICU staff, hospital administrators, and NICU graduate parents who provide guidance on the selection and implementation of NICU Family Support programs and activities.

We greatly appreciate and thank the following members of our committee who provide their invaluable expertise, time and input on behalf of NICU Family Support at your hospital:

- Robin Allan, NICU Parent
- Erin Curran, NICU Parent
- Mary Beth Hazelgrove, NICU Parent
- Georgellen and Greg Heard, NICU Parent
- Heather Kane, NICU Parent
- Julie Kipers, NICU Parent
- Nicole Monteforte, NICU Parent
- Lisa Aires McKinley, NICU Parent
- Melissa Meehan, NICU Parent
- Julie Anne Mutersbaugh, NICU Parent
- Daria Nashat, NICU Parent
- Mary Bennett Sharp, NICU Parent
- Ann Marie Ward, NICU Parent

Marie Pokraka, State Director of Program Services, March of Dimes

Claire Pagano, Patient Care Director, NICU

Philip Brooks, Hospital Chaplin
2013 NICU Family Support Highlights

- The NICU Parent Advisory Committee continued to provide valuable guidance regarding the implementation of NICU Family Support services as well as promote family centered care practices in the NICU. During 2013, we further expanded the role of parent advisors to include NICU graduate parent members who serve on the NICU Feeding Committee and the Infection Reduction Committee. The March of Dimes and the NICU continue to work toward the goal of integrating parent advisors into a broad range of quality improvement initiatives.

- March of Dimes was pleased to support comprehensive efforts to increase skin to skin care (kangaroo care) in the NICU. We hosted the first annual “kangaroo-athon” and new policy which expands the definition of babies medically ready to receive skin to skin care was implemented. As a result of feedback from parents, March of Dimes also provided stools and chair cushions to make skin to skin care more comfortable for parents.

- The March of Dimes NICU Family Support Specialist at Inova Children’s Hospital was honored to receive the 2013 east region award for leadership. It only through the strong partnership with Inova Children’s Hospital that the NFSS can be recognized as a leader in serving NICU families.