



National Perinatal Task Force

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Perinatal Task Force Hosts Annual Event to Raise Awareness About Prematurity and Infant Mortality in the USA

November 1, 2016 – Orlando, Florida: Midwife and executive director of [Commonsense Childbirth Inc.](http://CommonsenseChildbirth.com), *Jennie Joseph*, is inspiring her patients, the Orlando community and people across the nation to support the annual “**Heads Up on Infant Prematurity**” campaign during the November Prematurity Awareness Month. By knitting or crocheting hats for newborn or premature infants which will be delivered to local Neonatal Intensive Care Units or hospital nurseries on Monday January 16, 2017 , **Martin Luther King Day, National Day of Service**, everyone can play a part.

Joseph founded the grassroots National Perinatal Task Force in the fall of 2014 as a means to draw attention to the number of American babies born before their 37th completed week of gestation. There is a need to educate the public on this issue as the numbers leave the US ranking poorly amongst other developed nations when it comes to premature births and subsequent infant deaths. According to the March of Dimes (www.marchofdimes.org) in 2015, the prematurity rate for Caucasians was 9.1%, 9.3% for Hispanics, 10.4% for Native Americans and 13.4% for African Americans, which underlines the continued racial disparities in outcomes for people of color. Around 500,000 babies are born too soon in the USA every year despite the high level of medical expenditures for maternity care, and leaving the annual costs in the billions for managing the repercussions of prematurity on infants that do survive.

The **National Perinatal Task Force** (www.perinataltaskforce.com), aims to show support for families of preemies or those at greater risk for preterm birth, low-birth weight babies or infant loss by identifying access points to early and consistent prenatal care; offering support from perinatal community health workers, doulas, mentors and community-based healthcare providers; by providing resources both locally and nationally to ensure that families have postpartum and breastfeeding support, and that all babies THRIVE beyond their first birthday. The Task Force has developed ‘**Perinatal Safe Spots**’ manned by volunteers, in areas of particular concern for poor birth outcomes.

To find out more about how to join the Task Force, start a Perinatal Safe Spot in your area, or knit or crochet baby hats for the national campaign, please contact us through the website www.perinataltaskforce.com or email perinataltaskforce@gmail.com

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