

March of Dimes Foundation  
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## **WORLD PREMATURETY DAY**

**WHAT:** Third annual World Prematurity Day to raise awareness about the issue of premature birth around the world.

**WHY:** Premature birth is a very serious health problem. Worldwide, 15 million babies are born preterm and more than a million die as a result. Babies who survive often have lifelong health problems such as cerebral palsy, vision and hearing loss, and intellectual disabilities.

**WHEN:** Sunday, November 17, 2013

**WHERE:** Families and volunteers can send their friends a “virtual hug” to show that they care about premature babies. The “Hugs” campaign helps dramatize benefits of Kangaroo care, which is when parents cuddle their premature skin-to-skin. Kangaroo care is one of the most comforting things parents can do for their child. It also can improve the baby’s health by keeping the baby warm, stabilizing the baby’s heart rate, helping the baby gain weight and reducing discomfort.

Anne Geddes, world-renowned photographer known for her pictures of infants, filmed a “virtual hug” for the March of Dimes campaign. She also donated a one of her photographs of international singer Celine Dion for us to use as a public service announcement. Through the PSA, Celine Dion asks the international community to join her for a second year in the fight to end premature birth.

Here’s a link to Anne Geddes’ virtual hug,

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wC6sdgJHnMU>

Visit <http://www.facebook.com/WorldPrematurityDay> to learn more and send “Virtual Hug”.

**WHO:** The March of Dimes is working with the World Health Organization, the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, and Save the Children, in support of the *Every Woman Every Child* movement, led by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The March of Dimes works with the World Prematurity Network, (WPN), a global coalition of consumer and parent groups working together to raise awareness and prevent premature birth in their countries. Through World Prematurity Day and other joint efforts, members call for action to prevent preterm birth and improve care for babies born too soon.

- March of Dimes Foundation, US, [www.marchofdimes.com](http://www.marchofdimes.com)
- LittleBigSouls International Foundation, Africa, [www.littlebigsouls.com/](http://www.littlebigsouls.com/)
- National Premmie Foundation, Australia, <http://www.prembaby.org.au/>
- European Foundation for the Care of Newborns and Infants, EFCNI, Europe, [www.efcni.org](http://www.efcni.org)
- Bliss, United Kingdom, [www.bliss.org.uk](http://www.bliss.org.uk)
- Home for Premature Babies, China
- Borngreat Foundation, Africa, [www.borngreatfoundation.org](http://www.borngreatfoundation.org)