

**MEDIA RELEASE**

*For immediate publication*

**SECOND ANNUAL NATIONAL MULTIPLE BIRTHS AWARENESS DAY FOCUSES ON PREGNANCY RISKS AND POST-NATAL ISSUES**

**CHATHAM, ONTARIO** – *January 28, 2006.* The lead event for National Multiple Births Awareness Day takes place in Chatham this spring during the 2006 Multiple Births Canada (MBC) National Conference hosted by Chatham-Kent Multiple Births Association.

Held May 28<sup>th</sup>, the date when the famous Dionne Quints were born, National Multiple Births Awareness Day was initiated in 2005 to draw attention to the unique challenges and issues faced by Canada's multiple-birth community. Building upon last year's theme (A call to dialogue regarding the current provisions for maternity, parental and compassionate care leave under the federal Employment Insurance Program), the 2006 event will focus on *"Raising awareness of the unique risks of multiple-birth pregnancies and the post-natal issues faced by parents and multiples."* "Most Canadians are unaware of the danger involved in carrying twins, triplets and more, however 'high risk' is a phrase a mother of multiples will hear often during her pregnancy. We want to draw attention to what that really means," said Gail Moore, Director of Communications, MBC.

Over the past two decades the number of multiple-births has risen by 35 per cent in Canada. Although multiples represent 1 in 34 births, they account for 1 in 5 preterm births, 1 in 4 low birth weight births, and 1 in 3.5 very low birth weight births. Pregnancy complications include gestational hypertension, preeclampsia, anemia, gestational diabetes, premature rupture of membranes and postpartum hemorrhage. Multiple-birth infants have a disproportionately high risk of perinatal death and illness, which places enormous stress on families as well as health, social and education services. "Educating Canadians to these facts will hopefully lead to a better understanding of the challenges and an improved support system for these families," said Kim Weatherall, Chair, MBC.

MBC has supported multiple-birth families in Canada for over 28 years. It is the only national, non-profit, non-governmental organization solely committed to improving the quality of life for multiple-birth individuals and their families in Canada. MBC's mandate includes improving access to support, resources and informed care for multiples and their families, building stronger member chapters across Canada, and encouraging government and service providers to recognize the unique needs of multiples and their families and to provide appropriate services to them. For more information about MBC, call 1-866-228-8824 or visit the website at [www.multiplebirthscanada.org](http://www.multiplebirthscanada.org).

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