

**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **FIRST ANNUAL NATIONAL MULTIPLE BIRTHS AWARENESS DAY FOCUSES ON THE NEED TO REVIEW THE EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROGRAM**

**NORTH BAY** – May 28, 2005. The lead event for the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual National Multiple Births Awareness Day (NMBAD), a Multiple Births Canada (MBC) initiative, was held today at the Dionne Quints Museum in North Bay, Ontario.

In tandem with ten affiliate MBC chapters across Canada, from the West Coast to Central Ontario, the message ~ *A call to dialogue regarding the current provisions for maternity, parental and compassionate care leave under the federal Employment Insurance Program* ~ was delivered to those in attendance. “These parents are not recovered physically nor have they had an opportunity to bond with their babies to the same degree as parents of singletons when they are expected to return to work. It is time the *E.I. Program* recognizes this issue and makes provisions to address the disparity,” said Cheryl Wadasinghe, Director of Research, MBC. MBC has recommended extending maternity and parental leave for all incidents of multiple births to one year per additional multiple-birth newborn. As well, MBC proposed extending the leave for compassionate care available to needy mothers under the *E.I. Program* beyond the current six-week period, because of the propensity of pre-term and low birth weight situations.

The North Bay event included the presentation of a newly created *Adult Multiples Making a Difference Award*. The honour went to Cécile and Annette Dionne, who with their co-multiples enlightened Canadians to the challenges faced by multiple-birth children and their families. “In particular, they raised awareness of such issues as the importance of bonding with each other, with siblings, and with parents. They also brought focus to the need for individuality within the multiple-birth relationship,” said Kim Weatherall, Chair of MBC.

MBC has supported multiple-birth families in Canada for over 27 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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