

## BACKGROUND

### ABOUT MULTIPLE BIRTHS CANADA

Multiple Births Canada (MBC) was originally formed as Parents of Multiple Births Association {POMBA} Canada in 1978, and was restructured as Multiple Births Canada in 2001. It is the only national support organization for multiple-birth families and individuals. Our mission is to improve the quality of life for multiple-birth individuals and their families in Canada, which we do by providing support, education, research, and advocacy to individuals, families, chapters, and organizations with a personal or professional interest in multiple-birth issues.

Multiple Birth Canada's dedicated volunteers work on behalf of Canada's multiple-birth community by:

- Improving the support networks and services available to multiple-birth individuals and their families across the country.
- Producing educational and informative publications, including a quarterly magazine *Multiple Moments*, a quarterly newsletter *Report From National*, and a wide variety of relevant booklets, pamphlets, and fact sheets
- Promoting stronger relationships between parents of multiples and professionals involved or interested in multiple-births issues (e.g., doctors, nurses, midwives, doulas, educators, researchers). This ensures that professionals are aware of the unique needs and concerns of multiple-birth families.
- Representing the Canadian multiple-birth community at national and international conferences, and in research, health promotion, and other related initiatives. These activities help raise awareness of multiple-birth issues and help to ensure that the needs and concerns of Canadian multiple-birth families are taken into account by researchers, government officials, and other professionals.
- Networking with other national organizations (e.g., the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada, the Canadian Institute of Child Health, the Canadian Health Network, and Infertility Awareness Association of Canada) to promote multiple-birth issues within Canada. These organizations look to Multiple Births Canada to represent the Canadian multiple-birth community and provide input on key policies, programs, and proposals impacting multiple-birth families.
- Collaborating with international organizations such as the International Society for Twin Studies, the Council of Multiple Birth Organizations the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs), and the Twins and Multiples Births Association to promote multiple-birth issues on the international stage. Such collaboration resulted in the often-cited *Declaration of Rights and Statement of Needs of Twins and Higher Order Multiples*.
- Consulting professionals who support multiple-birth families (e.g., physicians, nurses, prenatal instructors, educators, bereavement counselors) to ensure that the best and most up-to-date care is provided to all multiple-birth families.
- Advising local and national media on multiple-birth issues to ensure that the interests and concerns of multiple-birth families are accurately conveyed.
- Working with government agencies to enhance services, supports, and opportunities for multiple-birth individuals and their families.
- Sharing information and research findings with members through publications, emailed information circulars, the MBC website, and at Multiple Birth Canada's Annual General Meeting and Conference.
- Supporting the work of MBC Chapters across Canada.



## ABOUT THE NATIONAL MULTIPLE BIRTHS AWARENESS DAY THEME FOR 2008

In choosing the 2008 theme, the MBC Board of Directors, in consultation with its Advisory Board, identified a need for Canada's fertility industry to be more actively involved in counseling and educating their patients on the risks and challenges involved with multiple pregnancies. This resulted in our theme for 2008 – *"Multiple Births Canada encourages all health care professionals providing fertility advice and/or treatments to fully disclose all risks associated with a multiple pregnancy and birth, including all negative and positive outcomes, to enable patients to make informed decisions."* The educational resources included in the National Multiple Births Awareness Day 2008 Media Kit provide a thorough overview of what can be expected.

The following biographies give a brief overview of the authors of these educational resources.

### **Linda Leonard, RN, MSN**

Professor Leonard is a multiple births' specialist. She developed and operates a Multiple Births Support Program with services for multiple birth families during pregnancy and parenthood, health professionals, and multiple birth organizations at the local, regional, and national levels. Support for multiple birth families includes networking assistance, information, education, consultation, referrals, breastfeeding support, counseling, and advocacy; help is provided via telephone, electronic mail, and face-to-face in community settings.

Professor Leonard's support to health professionals and multiple birth organizations includes consultation and education; she participates in the planning and delivery of health and parenting services for the multiple birth community. She has produced a variety of multiple birth publications, some of these resources include:

- *Twins, Triplets, & More! Resource Guide for Multiple Pregnancy & Parenthood,*
- *Preparation for parenting multiple birth children*
- *Breastfeeding multiples: Guidelines for perinatal care. Prepared for British Columbia Reproductive Care*
- *Depression and anxiety disorders in multiple pregnancy and parenthood.*

Professor Leonard has taken an early retirement from the University of British Columbia (UBC). She continues an association with the UBC School of Nursing through her Multiple Births Support Program. Professor Leonard is a member of the Advisory Board for Multiple Births Canada.

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### **Jane Denton, CBE, FRCN**

Jane Denton is a United Kingdom nurse and midwife who was awarded Fellowship of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) in 2006 for her outstanding contribution to fertility nursing and genetics, and promotion of the nursing voice in these ethical debates. She was Nursing Director at the Hallam Medical Centre and participated in the development of one of the UK's first in vitro fertilization (IVF) programs. As a founder member of the RCN Fertility Nurse Group, Jane contributed to debates and lobbied for regulation of IVF and embryo research which resulted in the current Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) Act.

In 1992 she became the first nurse appointed to the HFEA, which regulates and inspects all UK clinics providing IVF, donor insemination and the storage of eggs, sperm or embryos. In her current role as Director of the Multiple Births Foundation in the UK, she has contributed to significant change in public and professional perception and attitudes towards multiple births. She continues to support and inspire nurses to work as part of a multi-professional team and to give the very best care to couples going through assisted reproduction and multiple births, as well as raising awareness and educating professionals about their special needs. She also contributed to the World Health Organization's 2002 report on the scientific and ethical issues surrounding assisted reproductive techniques. Jane Denton is also a member of the Advisory Board for Multiple Births Canada.

### **Dr. Elizabeth Bryan**

Dr. Elizabeth Bryan was a consultant paediatrician at Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea Hospital from 1979 until her death in 2008. Dr. Bryan's interest in twins was sparked by the delivery of two boys with what is now known as twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome. Dr. Bryan went on to study the placenta in multiple pregnancies, and through her contact with over 100 parents of twins also learned about the practical, emotional and social difficulties experienced by so many parents of multiples.

Determined to help these families, Dr. Bryan co-founded the Twins and Multiple Births Association in 1978 as a support network for parents, but gradually came to realize that, in addition to this invaluable service, there was also urgent need for an organization directed specifically at increasing understanding and skills in the various educational, health and social care professionals involved in the care of these families. As a result, she established the Multiple Birth Foundation in 1988.

Through her clinical work and exceptional communication skills, Dr. Bryan became an internationally renowned expert on all aspects of multiple births, inspiring and encouraging multidisciplinary research. She wrote several books about multiple births and, with her husband Ronald Higgins, an ecologist and former diplomat, she wrote *Infertility: New Choices New Dilemmas* (1995).

Dr. Bryan was a trustee of the British Infertility Counselling Association; an inspector for the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority; and a member of the committee for the national study of triplets and higher order births. Until her death in 2008, she was also a member of the Advisory Board for Multiple Births Canada.

