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# Report From National

November 2003

# The Support Network for Multiple Birth Families

*Life's most persistent and urgent question is: what are you doing for others?*

— *Martin Luther King Jr.*

## Business...

Please note some changes in the board. If you have any questions please feel free to contact the Board of Directors at any time.

### Officers:

Chair, Carrie Johnston	chair@multiplebirthscanada.org
Vice-Chair, Kim Weatherall	vice-chair@multiplebirthscanada.org
Treasurer, Carrie Johnson	financial@multiplebirthscanada.org
Secretary, Lisa McInnes	secretary@multiplebirthscanada.org
Past President, Bonnie Schultz	pastpresident@multiplebirthscanada.org

### Board of Directors:

Director of Membership, Carrie Johnston	membership@multiplebirthscanada.org
Director of Finance, Carrie Johnston	financial@multiplebirthscanada.org
Director of Research, Cheryl Wadasinghe	research@multiplebirthscanada.org
Director of Volunteer Management, Kim Weatherall	volunteers@multiplebirthscanada.org
Director of Information Management, Lisa McInnes	information.management@multiplebirthscanada.org

Director-at-Large, Tracey Ruiz

**See page 4 for our various Committee volunteers!**

## Welcome...

We have another addition to the MBC Board of Directors. We are happy to welcome Tracey Ruiz on board. At this time, Tracey will be a Director-at-Large until the appropriate position is decided. Here is a little background on Tracey...

### Director-at-Large: Tracey Ruiz

My name is Tracey Ruiz. I am the mother of 2 singletons Nicholas(6) & Natassha (4 1/2). I am a certified birth doula and postpartum doula, as well as a Trainer for both types of doulas. I am also a certified childbirth educator. In all 3 of these occupations I have taken a special interest in multiple-births. Of the 105 families I have supported a good 20 of them have been with multiples. I am also creating a prenatal multiple-births class for families in my area (Brampton, Ontario). Some of my previous board positions have included Publicity and Promotion for Doula CARE where my position was to encourage membership and public view of Doula Care. After my term there, I became Director of Marketing for CAPP (Childbirth and Postpartum Professional Association) [www.cappa.net](http://www.cappa.net) where I still remain. My main responsibility is to secure exhibitors for our free international conference we offer annually. I plan to transition out of that position

during 2004. I also act as professional representation at medical conferences throughout North America for different companies. My business partner is a mother of monozygotic (identical) twin boys as is one of the other women I work, who was also the president of the chapter in our area. When previously employed by Fedex, I worked with 3 dads of twins, who daily told me their stresses and joys.

## News...

### Website Updates!

Although we have yet to receive funding for a newly redesigned website, many changes have been happening on our current site! Look for new postings about the exciting events and workshops that took place in Ottawa at the 2003 Conference and Annual General Meeting, including the winners of the 2002 Making A Difference Award! Also newly posted are past Making A Difference Award winners for the years 2001 and 2000 - be sure to check it out at <http://www.multiplebirthscanada.org/english/makingadiff.php>.

Make sure to visit the Conference 2004 page too! The registration form is now posted and can also be found in Multiple Moments quarterly issue 4, 2003. For more information please contact the Registration Chair, Lori MacEwen at [conference2004@multiplebirthscanada.org](mailto:conference2004@multiplebirthscanada.org).

### Funding

The MBC Directors and key volunteers have been working diligently over the past few months writing proposals for funding. The first proposal was sent on September 8th, and unfortunately has already been declined. The 2nd was sent on October 2nd and the 3rd was sent on October 15th. For specific details on these proposals, please feel free to contact any Director. We are very hopeful that these proposals will be successful and help MBC move through its Transitional Plan and successfully complete its Business Plan.

### Stroller Registry

In recent months, we have examined our relationships with MBC's networks and other affiliations including the Stroller Registry, and have concluded that since the Stroller Registry operates outside of the domain of Multiple Births Canada, we can no longer support the use of the [strollers@multiplebirthscanada.org](mailto:strollers@multiplebirthscanada.org) email address. We will therefore be discontinuing this email address effective immediately.

Chapters are asked to remove the MBC formatted ad from their website, as well as other literature as appropriate.

Of course, we recognize the valuable service the Stroller Registry offers to our members and to the general public, and MBC will continue to refer any requests for information on strollers to the website - [www.strollerregistry.com](http://www.strollerregistry.com) or email [handmparker@cogeco.ca](mailto:handmparker@cogeco.ca).

# MBC Membership...

## Reminder on Membership Renewal & Dues

**NEW!!** The 2004 membership renewal package **will not** be mailed this fall, unless requested. Chapters have been sent renewal information and forms via email. All pertinent documents are now posted on the website. If you are experiencing problems with email, attachments or downloading from the website, please email or call the Business Office and request your renewal package by regular mail.

In order to keep your local membership informed and current, please have your Chapter Membership Coordinator or MBC Representative, collect all information for new and renewing members. Download the Affiliate Chapter Membership Application (Form D) from the Membership section of the national website. Affiliate Family Membership Application (Form A) is also available. We ask that Form A be filled out while members are filling out your local membership form. On Form A, the member can choose a membership option, and at that time the Membership Coordinator can ask for any additional monies as required (ie. Multiple Moments subscription), then compile all Form A's, calculate the total and send to the Business Office along with Form D, all Form A's and payment.

Note: The Business Office is able to query the database and send an update on past and expiring memberships for your Chapter. Please contact Vicki at the Business Office for this and other information.

We ask that you send the full membership list including addresses and email addresses where applicable. Chapter membership information can also be sent electronically. **A generic membership database** has been designed to cover this process and all chapters are invited to request a copy, not only for managing this renewal process, but for tracking your membership in an easy, user friendly manner. The database is designed in **MS Access and is NOW available**. Request your copy from the Business Office today!

We also ask that personal Multiple Moments subscriptions for your members be encouraged. It is only \$10 a year (4 issues) for affiliate members!!! Or only \$5 for an electronic version. A Multiple Moments Member Subscription Form is available on-line to download or purchase on-line directly- check out the Multiple Moments section.

## On-line Membership Purchasing Now Available

All membership types (except Affiliate Chapters) are now able to register on-line through the internationally trusted payment system of Pay Pal. Don't forget, you can also purchase publications, including subscriptions to *Multiple Moments*, through this on-line service. Be sure to log into the Members-Only portion of the site to access the ordering page that reflects your member discount. If you order through the regular publications page, you will not receive the 20% discount you are entitled to. If you are a member, please contact the Business Office to request your password.

# Sponsorships...

How can you help another chapter, member or family in both your own community and in other areas of Canada? Your Chapter might want to consider sponsoring an activity, the development of a new resource, the purchase of needed equipment or by assisting others to learn about Multiple Births Canada and its resources. Please see the list below for possible suggestions on how your chapter could help MBC either with existing funds or through holding a fundraising event locally in support of your national organization. For more details please feel free to contact the Business Office at [office@multiplebirthscanada.org](mailto:office@multiplebirthscanada.org). Your chapter will be recognized in Multiple Moments, on the website and at the AGM and Conference.

Available Sponsorships for MBC activities and equipment:

- Basic Website re-structure (if not approved with current funding proposal) - \$10,000.00 and more funds if translated to French.

- New Office Printer - \$700.00
- Translation to French of an MBC Fact Sheet (cost would need to be determined)
- Translation to French of an MBC Booklet (cost would need to be determined)
- Creation of a booklet designed especially for the grandparents of multiples. 75 booklets - \$100.00
- Mailing of the poster/pamphlets to infertility clinics across Canada so families hear about MBC (and the appropriate Chapter). (cost would need to be determined)
- Mailing of the poster/pamphlets to Children's Aid Societies across Canada to aid Social workers to find the materials that they need to support multiple birth families in need. (cost would need to be determined)
- Cover the cost of the registration and other expenses for the Business Office Manager to attend the 2004 Conference. (Please note: This person is the first point of contact for all potential members of MBC and its chapters, new chapters, non-member chapters, area contacts and other outside inquiries.) - \$500.00 or any part thereof
- Cover the cost of the registration and other expenses for the Chapter Liaison and a member of a Chapter that is just starting up—Big Sister approach— to attend the 2004 Conference. (Please note: The Chapter Liaison works for the Chapter/MBC relationship and assists new chapters form in areas that are not currently serviced). - \$500.00 or any part thereof
- Provide literature and information packages to the delegates and COMBO Representatives at the ISTS Conference in July 2004. (cost would need to be determined)
- Cover the costs of a sample of literature/fact sheets/booklets to be donated to future new chapters when starting up. (cost would need to be determined)

# Appreciation...

MBC would like to recognize one of many valuable volunteers. Without the help and support of numerous volunteers, Multiple Births Canada (MBC) would be hard pressed to reach its goal of providing literature, research, professional input, Multiple Moments, the Website and more as support to families across Canada.

MBC is very fortunate to have enlisted the creative experience of a young Website Designer and his team. Since early 2003, John and Denisa Withnall of [webcanvas.ca](http://webcanvas.ca) have been the driving force behind MBC's virtual needs by providing updates free of charge. Webcanvas.ca has been selected by the Board of Directors to redevelop our website as soon as funding can be secured. Recently MBC applied for funding to support these plans and hope to announce the launch of our new and innovative website early in the new year.

We are pleased and excited to have the expertise of [Webcanvas.ca](http://Webcanvas.ca) to rely on in putting together a "new, improved and more user-friendly and appealing" website for your exploration and use. We would like to thank this very generous team for their on-going support while we wait for a source of funding to be available.

As well, MBC would like to acknowledge the generous donation of hi-speed internet access for the business office. This service is currently being donated by the Riley family. Thank you!!

A special thank you is also sent to the individuals who spent numerous hours writing the last two grant proposals for MBC. Thank you Kim Weatherall, Diane Myers and Cathy Barr.

## Sustaining Members of Multiple Births Canada

*Jennifer Brasch of Waterdown, Ontario*

*Paula & Ron Clark of Newcastle, Ontario*

*Isilda & Abilio Dos Santos of Toronto, Ontario*

# 2004 Conference...

## Multiples in Balance - Temiskaming, Ontario

Have you started planning your trip to the 2004 Conference and Annual General Meeting? Check out the MBC website for the 2004 Conference information and view your personal invitation to New Liskeard, Ontario. Temiskaming Multiple Births conference planning committee are busy planning a program focussing on relationship building with our partners, with our children and with ourselves! The theme is Multiples in Balance. The registration form is now posted on the website and is also enclosed in Multiple Moments quarterly issue 4, 2003. You deserve this weekend-register today! For more information please contact the Registration Chair, Lori MacEwen at [conference2004@multiplebirthscanada.org](mailto:conference2004@multiplebirthscanada.org) or Kim Weatherall, Conference 2004 Board Liaison at [confereceliaison@multiplebirthscanada.org](mailto:confereceliaison@multiplebirthscanada.org)

*Start fundraising now! Be sure to get at least one member of your executive to the Conference in 2004! Why not make it a goal to fill a car and take off on a road trip to Northern Ontario, to learn, to share, to have fun, make new friends and bring back to your chapter, fresh ideas and energy for the year to come! The MBC Board of Directors, Volunteers and the Temiskaming Multiple Births Conference committee are looking forward to spending a very rewarding weekend with you!*

# Chapter News...

## MSN Chapter Community

Looking to connect with other MBC chapter members across Canada? Discuss the day-to-day running of chapters, share newsletter tidbits, guest speaker ideas, or just make some new friends. Everyone is welcome to join. Check it out and click join! <http://groups.msn.com/MBCChaptersCommunity/home.htm>

Anyone looking to start their own Multiple Births Canada Chapter, can contact the business office or myself directly at [chapterliaison@multiplebirthscanada.org](mailto:chapterliaison@multiplebirthscanada.org).

*Sheri Lockyer, Chapter Liaison*

# International News...

## International connection pays off....big time!

MBC is delighted to share the news that the newly developed **Apex Australia Twin Loss Awareness Kit** for healthcare professionals, has won the *2003 South Australia Premier's Community Service Encourage Ward*. This Award of \$3,000 Australian dollars will fund another 70 Kits which will then be distributed amongst the Apex Clubs in South Australia and the Northern Territory for distribution to medical centres, funeral parlours and Flinder's University to be used by their midwives.

The development of their Loss Awareness Kit came about as a result of reviewing Multiple Births Canada's Bereavement Support Kit. The Australian organization was very impressed by our Kit and created their own to meet their own needs. MBC has received acknowledgement in their Kit for being a catalyst in its creation.

Multiple Births Canada heartily congratulates Australia on the receipt of this prestigious award and is delighted to have played a very small part in its creation. This collaboration between our two countries is additionally impressive when you consider how, in sharing our strengths, both Australia and Canada have made a positive difference for bereaved multiple birth families. How wonderful is that!

*Submitted by Lynda P. Haddon, Chair, Loss of Multiples Support Network*

# Information Circulars...

## Parents please be aware - with Fall comes the beginning of the RSV season!

Dear members & colleagues - we received the following News Release and feel it is very important to distribute. Please pass this information along to your friends and clients. Chapters, we suggest posting on your website or in your newsletter as appropriate.

### News Release

Parents please be aware!

With fall comes the beginning of the RSV season

**Toronto, Ontario, October 21, 2003** - Everyday, especially during the winter months, a Canadian child is hospitalized because of Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), the leading cause of lower respiratory tract infections in infants.

What makes this virus a threat in some high-risk babies is that it misleads parents into believing their baby just has the common cold. Unfortunately, it can progress quite rapidly, causing an acute lower respiratory tract infection in infants who are premature (less than or equal to 32 weeks gestation) or who have other serious underlying medical disorders.

"I was convinced that my baby just had a cold and I regret not taking it more seriously," says Melissa Mathes, a young mother from Toronto, Ontario, whose premature son Nathan contracted RSV. "I urge all parents with premature infants to recognize and take prompt action when they notice persistent cold-like symptoms," she continues.

#### Who is at risk?

In most babies, RSV leads to a mild cold. However, in some high-risk babies, such as those born prematurely and infants with chronic lung disease (less than or equal to two years of age), RSV can cause a severe infection in the lungs that may require hospitalization. Approximately two-thirds of infants are infected with RSV during the first year of life, and virtually all children will have been infected by the age of two years.

"As a parent, it's important to remember that RSV outbreaks occur at certain times of the year. The RSV season typically peaks in the fall and winter months. Therefore, parents need to take the necessary steps to reduce the risk, especially with children who are premature or suffer from chronic lung diseases," says Pat Gillie, a neonatal nurse from Hamilton Health Sciences Corporation, in Hamilton, Ontario.

#### How can parents reduce the risk?

"Because RSV mimics the common cold, it is imperative that parents consider any persistent cold-like symptoms seriously. RSV is very contagious and can be spread by coughing, sneezing and direct contact with someone exposed to the virus. The virus has also been found to survive for hours on surfaces such as toys, utensils, countertops and paper tissues. It can be passed between children at school or in daycare and then carried home infecting others in the household," says Dr. Tony Barozzino, chief of pediatrics and an assistant professor of pediatrics, at the University of Toronto in Toronto, Ontario.

According to Dr. Barozzino, some steps that can be taken by parents to reduce the risk of RSV include:

- wash hands with soap and water before touching the baby
- be aware that hugging and kissing the baby can spread the virus
- keep other children with a cold or fever away from the baby
- keep the baby away from crowded places
- do not smoke around the baby

"Although there is no vaccine, parents of children who are at high risk for developing serious RSV infection can also call their physician to find out more ways to protect their child against the virus," says Dr. Barozzino.

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For more information, please contact Karisma Communications: Alanna Fox, ext. 225 or Sandra Grilo, ext. 223

# Health...

## BBC News world edition - IVF multiples 'strain marriages'

Extracted from IAAC's October 24, 2003 Broadcast Message  
IAAC (Infertility Awareness Association of Canada)

Newborn twins quite a handful - Some women who end up with twins, triplets or more after IVF say they regret ever going for treatment, say US researchers.

There are calls to restrict the number of embryos put back during treatments in order to limit multiple births. A fertility conference in San Antonio, US, heard how parents of IVF twins and triplets were much more likely to report marriage problems. Between 20% and 40% of all IVF births involve more than one baby. It is already well known that carrying twins, triplets or more substantially increases the risks to both mother and babies. "Multiples" are far more likely to be born early and suffer a wide range of complications such as low birth weight, defects and disability.

Quality of life - Marcia Ellison, from Harvard Medical School in Boston, who led the study, told the American Society for Reproductive Medicine conference that the psychological impact of coping with more than one newborn was significant. This was despite the fact a high proportion of those seeking IVF treatment were well-educated and wealthy, and able to call on a wide support network following the birth.

Women are designed to carry only one baby Spokesman, HFEA - She said: "Multiple births resulted in significant increases in unmet family needs, social stigma and higher maternal depression scores. "In addition, multiple births resulted in significant decreases in maternal quality of life, health and functioning, satisfaction with their marriage and their husband, and lower overall quality of life scores."

Some of the women involved actually regretted ever seeking IVF treatment after having to cope with more than one baby. In the UK, the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, which regulates fertility clinics, said that it was keen to clamp down on those which put more than two embryos back into a woman during IVF treatment. Studies have suggested that putting more embryos back does not increase the chances of a successful pregnancy, but simply raises the chances of multiple births. Some experts favour putting only one embryo back - claiming success rates comparable with clinics that transfer two embryos. An HFEA spokesman said: "There is general concern about multiple births because of the harm that they do to the actual babies, and the potential harm they do to the mother. "This research makes it clear that it is not just physical damage. Women are designed to carry only one baby."

For further info: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/3196850.stm> and [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory\\_14343.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory_14343.html)

# Updates...

## Commissions and Reward Points Update

MBC has received their first commission cheque from Travelodge. Thank you to all who used the special ID#. REMEMBER, this is also a 20% off the rack discount for members. You will also



receive valuable HBC and Travelodge points each time you stay. In order to obtain the Travelodge discount you MUST call 1-800-578-7878 and provide them the Corporate ID # 68265, which will be required when making your reservations through the Toll Free Number. The discount is only valid if reservations are made prior to arriving at the hotel through this Toll Free Number. If you regularly book your boss or partner in a hotel room, be sure to follow these instructions!

Thanks to all of you using the Staples Dividends Reward card # 800108420-4, the Business Office now has a CD burner and a new keyboard! Keep it up - your help is truly appreciated.

# Thanks Volunteers...

Thanks for your hard work and dedication to the volunteers below, and many, many more!!

## Committee Chairpersons:

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Webmaster, John Withnall

# Volunteer Corner...

## Volunteers Needed - You could be part of the team!

Wouldn't you like to be part of the decision making body of our organization? While that task alone may seem ominous, there is nothing more rewarding than knowing that the time spent understanding an issue and making a decision benefiting all our members and the future of multiples is time well spent. There is no mistaking that there is work involved in sitting on the Board, but with a major project like Mapping the Future wrapped up, ideas are flowing for another project in order to start implementing and developing needed resources. This is an exciting time to be involved!

The main qualifications needed to sit as a Director are a keen interest in MBC, experience or knowledge of the portfolio for any given position, and preferably past experience at the regional Chapter level. Easy access to e-mail and comfort using technology to conduct business are also important.

What are you waiting for? Step up to the challenge!

Current volunteer opportunities within Multiple Births Canada include:

**Director of Publications**

**Director of Fund Development**

**Director of Communications**

**Breastfeeding Support Network Liaison**

**Special Needs Support Network Liaison**

**Production Editor, Multiple Moments**

Contact the Chair, or any members of the Board of Directors for more information! If you do not see something above that catches your interest but you have time and skills to share, be sure to contact Kim Weatherall and let her know what areas you might be interested in. She can be reached at [volunteers@multiplebirthscanada.org](mailto:volunteers@multiplebirthscanada.org)