



Perris News

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March of Dimes "2009 March for Babies" this Saturday

Perris City Councilwoman Rita Rogers knows the tragedies caused by premature birth.

As the Inland Empire Division Director of the March of Dimes, Rogers spends her working hours raising money so newborns and toddlers won't have to struggle as they begin life.

This Saturday, residents in Riverside, Barstow and Victorville will join forces in the March for Babies.

"This is really about giving the gift of life," Rogers said. "Every day in this country, 78 babies die before they reach the age of 1. Many of those were born prematurely. Premature birth is the leading cause of death in babies. And one in eight babies is born premature."

Hundreds of people are expected to March through Downtown Riverside, including Perris City employees. Kenneth Young, Riverside County superintendent of schools and 2009 March for Babies chairman, said healthy infants and children are vital for the region, the state and the nation.

"Our goal is that one day, all babies will be born healthy, but we're going to have to walk to get there," he said. Helping March of Dimes reach that goal is Sara Cowan, this year's March for Babies Ambassador. In April 2006, Sara was born prematurely and weighed just one pound, 15 ounces at birth. After spending 99 days in a neonatal intensive care unit she was able to go home with her family.

Thanks to research funded by March of Dimes and the care and support of her family, Sara is a healthy, active 3-year old, and has joined March of Dimes efforts to help prevent premature births.

The most urgent infant health problem in the U.S. today is premature birth.

It affects more than 500,000 babies each year, with the number growing every day. The March of Dimes issued a [Report Card](#) on Premature Birth. The U.S. received a D grade and California a C. Babies born too soon are more likely to die or have disabilities.

The March of Dimes is committed to reducing this toll by funding research to find the answers to premature birth and providing comfort and information to families who are affected.

Funds raised by March for Babies support prematurity prevention efforts and education, maternal-child care, NICU family support, and programs that help to improve the health of mothers and babies. Participation in March for

Babies will provide a memorable and rewarding day for the whole family. The event is always a fun-filled day with food, activities, and games for the thousands of March of Dimes supporters.

"In addition to the fun activities, the walk is an opportunity to teach children the value of volunteering—how their gifts of time, energy and money, no matter the size, can have a big impact when they're part of supporting a worthy cause," Young said. "And for families of all sizes and ages, supporting the cause of healthy babies is a perfect match!"

In 2009 national March for Babies sponsors are Kmart, the March of Dimes number one corporate supporter, CIGNA, Continental Airlines, Famous Footwear, Farmers Insurance Group of Companies, FedEx, First Response, Liberty Tax Services, Mead Johnson Nutrition and Ther-Rx.

The Inland Empire March for Babies event is sponsored by Farmers Insurance, Toyota, Big 5, Univision 34, Univision Radio, Charter, Telefutera 46, La Opinion, and Inland Empire Magazine.

To join in, visit marchforbabies.org, or call toll-free 1-888-4-BABIES to sign up as an individual, to start a corporate, family or friends team, or donate to help babies be born healthy. Participants can also pick up sponsor forms at Kmart.

The March of Dimes is the leading nonprofit organization for pregnancy and baby health. With chapters nationwide and its premier event, March for Babies, the March of Dimes works to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. For the latest resources and information, visit marchofdimes.com or nacersano.org.