

NICU Parent Support Group



ICU baby Volunteers (from left to right): Leah Jayanetti, Elizabeth Simonton, Ana Buraglia, and Sofia Holtzman.

The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) of South Miami Hospital provides some of the best neonatology care in the State of Florida. While the babies are well cared for by the physicians, nurses and specialists on their medical teams, time in the NICU for a family with a baby admitted is lonely, emotional and often frightening given the precarious state of their newborn.

There are many hurdles that families face when their newborn is in the NICU. Among those is the challenge of getting to the hospital to be at their baby's bedside. Parents often have other children at home to care for, have to work, emotionally struggle with the condition of their newborn, or financially cannot afford to travel to the NICU for visits very often. In SMH, parents with a baby in NICU, besides the excellent care provided by the staff, have the privilege to count, on the "tender loving care" delivered by a special group of volunteers from **ICU Baby**, which is a non-profit organization with the mission to support families with a baby receiving intensive care. To be able to come to this hospital and do this work, they also become SMH Volunteers.

Seeking to alleviate parents' hardships, the volunteers of **ICU baby** come to the NICU every Wednesday to visit and serve snacks, so that parents can have a moment of comfort. **ICU baby** also delivers its "Premie Pack" tote bags to parents of babies whose stay in the NICU will be greater than four (4) weeks. These "Packs" contain items parents will need during their NICU visits.

Once a month, **ICU baby** volunteers serve a full dinner on the same floor as the NICU so that parents can briefly leave their baby's bedside and grab a warm meal. The parents are able to eat alongside other parents who are having their own NICU experience and can, at their discretion, share their stories with others who relate.

Since the program's launch at South Miami Hospital in November of 2015, **ICU baby** has delivered over 125 Premie Packs, served 8 Suppers of Support, participated in the NICU special events, and provided bedside support to those parents fighting for the health of our community's littlest babies.

If you would like to learn more about the great work done by **ICU baby** volunteers, please contact elizabeth@icubaby.org.



Above: ICU baby Premie Pack Launch in 2015, with the support of NICU staff.

Left: contents of "Premie Pack" delivered to the parents of babies staying longer than 4 weeks in NICU. Once a month the volunteers serve a full dinner to all parents of babies admitted to South Miami Hospital NICU.