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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pinwheels adorn Martin Medical Center for Prematurity Awareness Month

Stuart, FL – For many people, the sight of a pinwheel ignites a feeling of nostalgia, remembering carefree and cheerful times from one’s childhood. Unfortunately, for some children, especially those who are born premature, their younger years are not such easy, breezy times.

During the last week of November, visitors to Martin Medical Center in Stuart were greeted with 142 colorful pinwheels scattered throughout the grassy portion of the hospital’s main entrance. The pinwheels project is part of Prematurity Awareness Month -- a campaign launched by Martin County Healthy Start Coalition, March of Dimes and Martin Health System to increase awareness about the prevalence of premature births in Martin County.

Each pinwheel represented a premature baby that was born in Martin County in the last year. The Martin County Healthy Start Coalition is working hard to assist and educate expectant mothers about the steps they can take to ensure that their babies will be born at healthy birth weights.

“We all want to see babies born healthy. When a baby is born after a 39 week pregnancy the newborn has an increased chance of living a life with fewer health problems,” says Martin County Healthy Start Coalition Executive Director, Scott Berry.

Research has shown that babies that are born prematurely are more at risk for developing serious health issues including respiratory and digestive problems, congenital heart defects, vision impairment, and learning disabilities.

“Through education and support services, our goal is to decrease the number of premature babies born in Martin County,” Berry added.

“With nearly 12 percent of babies born prematurely in our community, we certainly have something to improve upon. Healthy Start, Martin Health Systems, the March of Dimes and many other organizations and individuals are all working to decrease this number. This is one small way of getting the message out to our community,” added Berry.

About Martin County Healthy Start Coalition

Martin County Healthy Start Coalition is a community-based 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization that offers support and education to pregnant women and infants. Prenatal and infant health screenings, childbirth education, counseling services, and parenting education classes are available to families to ensure that all babies are born healthy. All information provided to Healthy Start is kept confidential. Eligibility for services is based on the presence of risk to the health of the mother or infant, not on income level.

Connect with Martin County Healthy Start on Facebook at www.facebook.com/MCHHealthyStart. For more information, call 772-463-2888 or visit <http://www.mchealthystart.org>.

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Suggested Photo Caption: Each pinwheel represents a baby that was born prematurely in Martin County over the past year.