

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Mount Sinai Reunites Former Preemies With the Doctors and Nurses Who Saved Them**

*Annual Premie Party brings NICU graduates and their families back to the Abess NICU*

**MIAMI BEACH, FL, JULY 27, 2026:** Mount Sinai Medical Center will be hosting its Annual Premie Party, bringing together former premature babies, their parents, and the doctors and nurses who cared for them in the medical center's Abess Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). This year's event is themed "Tiny Boots to Bright Futures", and will celebrate the resilience of these tiny patients as they reunite with the healthcare professionals who cared for them during the early months of their lives.

For more than 26 years, the Abess NICU has been a trusted provider of specialized care for infants requiring advanced medical attention. Mount Sinai's expert neonatologists, including Dr. Jose A. Adams, Chief of the Division of Neonatology, and Dr. Ignacio A. Zabaleta, have a combined 67 years of experience, offering compassionate, state-of-the-art care for newborns. Both doctors will be in attendance to reunite with their not-so-tiny patients.

One of the stories featured at this year's Premie Party is that of Spencer Baxt, born at Mount Sinai on Valentine's Day 2023 at 25 weeks gestation, weighing 1 pound, 14 ounces. She spent 98 days in the Abess NICU, where she developed sepsis and recovered. Her parents, Lindsay and Jeffrey Baxt, spent those 98 days without a discharge date, measuring progress one milestone at a time.



Thirty days into her stay, after overcoming sepsis and reaching several milestones, Lindsay still had not been allowed to hold her daughter. A nurse found her crying in the hallway and went to get the approval himself. Minutes later, Lindsay held Spencer for the first time while the nurses played "Rock-a-bye Baby." Moments like that are why the family brought cake for the nurses on the day Spencer went home, and why every year since, the Baxts have returned to the Abess NICU with flowers.

"They have truly left a mark on our family in ways they will never understand," **Lindsay says.** "They made us feel like we had a village. They are our village. We consider them family."



Today, survival at 25 weeks is approximately 82 percent at the highest-level NICUs in the country, though fewer than half of those infants survive without severe complications. Spencer is now three years old and has caught up to every one of her peers.

"Survival at 25 weeks is no longer the question it once was," **Dr. Adams says.** "The question now is what kind of life follows. Spencer is not only caught up, she is thriving. That is the outcome we are all working toward."

The shift in outcomes for infants like Spencer comes down to a handful of advances Dr. Adams has watched take hold over his career: ventilatory support, surfactant therapy to develop premature lungs, and continuous oxygen monitoring. Mount Sinai pairs that neonatal care with technology supporting mothers and babies through high-risk pregnancies.

"Spencer is a very precocious 3-year-old. She loves art and music and exploring the world around her, and you would never know she was born at 25 weeks," **Lindsay says**. "To any parent sitting in that room right now, I would tell you what I had to learn: you cannot hold a hundred days in your head at once. You can only hold one at a time. Be there, hold their hand, and let the team be your village."

"We say goodbye to these babies when they are still small enough to fit in our hands," **Dr. Zabaleta says**. "Once a year they come back and show us who they turned into. That is the best day of our year."



The Annual Premie Party will take place on Friday, July 31, 2026, from 1 to 3 p.m., at Mount Sinai Medical Center's Founder's Conference Room in the Warner Pavilion (view campus map [HERE](#)).

For more information or to arrange an interview with Dr. Adams, Dr. Zabaleta, or one of the featured patients, please contact [Amanda.paz@msmc.com](mailto:Amanda.paz@msmc.com), 305-674-2309.

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**About Mount Sinai Medical Center**

Founded in 1949, [Mount Sinai Medical Center](#) is the largest independent, private, not-for-profit teaching hospital in South Florida. Mount Sinai's mission is to provide quality health care to a diverse community enhanced through teaching, research, charity care, and financial responsibility. Mount Sinai's Centers of Excellence combine technology, research, and academics to provide innovative and comprehensive care in cardiology, neuroscience, oncology, urology, and orthopedics. One of the original statutory teaching hospitals in the state of Florida, Mount Sinai is the hospital of choice for those who seek the level of expertise and care that only a teaching hospital can offer. Mount Sinai currently offers ten convenient locations in Miami-Dade County, including three emergency centers, and four specialty care offices in Monroe County.