

Thursday, December 19, 2002 --- Worcester, Massachusetts

Up from 1.5 pounds



June Carroll and her 3 ½-year-old son, Brendan Carroll, smile yesterday in the neonatal unit at the UMass Memorial Medical Center-Memorial Campus, where Brendan was born prematurely at 1.5 pounds.

Repaying the gift of life

Premie's Parents raise \$50K for baby center

By Kathleen A. Shaw
Telegram & Gazette Staff

Worcester – Brendan Carroll entered the world on July 10, 1999 much too early.

He weighed only 1.5 pounds. That's pretty small, said his father, Brian Carroll, of Worcester, who added the infant had multiple physical problems. Only a few years ago, the baby's chances of survival would have been zero or very slim.

So there he was yesterday, revisiting the neonatal unit at UMass Memorial Medical Center-Memorial Campus looking pretty fit and big for a 3 ½-year old. The tiny baby made it, and his father said proudly that Brendan has "outgrown" most of his medical problems and is expected to lead a normal life.

Brian and June Carroll, Brendan's proud parents, wanted to show their appreciation to UMass Memorial Medical Center in a very tangible way for saving their son's life. "Being a parent and seeing what they do here with the babies, I wanted to give something back," he said.

Mrs. Carroll volunteers on the neonatal unit weekly. Mr. Carroll, who is president of the Small Business Service Bureau, asked UMass Memorial staff what he could do to help them. He was advised they need new ventilators to help premature babies breathe.

"They get outdated pretty fast and cost \$25,000 each." He said. Not to worry, he told them.

He and his friends formed a group called "Brendan's Buddies" set out to raise \$50,000 to buy two new ventilators. They succeeded. The check was presented yesterday to UMass Memorial officials, including UMass Memorial President John O'Brien.

They literally ran to raise the money. Mr. Carroll, Dwight Porter of Worcester, who is also affiliated with the Small Business Service Bureau, and David Duncan of Pittsburgh, PA, who is CEO of Duncan Financial group LLC of Pennsylvania, received all kinds of pledges and ran the Boston Marathon last April as Brendan's Buddies. Rich Nolan ran the New York marathon for the cause.

UMass Memorial's neonatal intensive care unit is the region's only Level III unit, which is the highest level of care, and staff cares for hundreds of at-risk babies each year. Anyone interested in finding out more about the intensive care unit or who wants to make a donation can visit the Brendan's Buddies Web Site at www.brendansbuddies.com or call (800) 343-0939, Ext 234.

"This is just the beginning. We want to keep on raising money for the neonatal intensive care unit," Mr. Carroll said. He and his friends expect to be running in marathons next year.