

# Rockdale Citizen

## March of Dimes starts campaign

### Jay Jones

Staff Reporter

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CONYERS - March of Dimes organizers kicked off their annual March for Babies campaign in Rockdale and Newton counties this week to raise money for research, treatment and education efforts to prevent birth defects and other maladies affecting newborn babies.

Teams of fundraisers, made up of employees from area businesses, will start raising money in the community for the Rockdale-Newton March for Babies event to be held March 28.

The overall campaign goal this year is to raise \$350,000, said Patricia Waller, Director of Women Services at Rockdale Medical Center and a local March for Babies coordinator, during Friday's kickoff luncheon.

Last year, Acuity Brands employees led the effort by raising the most money raised, followed by BioLab, C.R. Bard, Rockdale Medical Center and Pactiv Corp.

Waller said participation and fundraising has been strong in recent years, but she hoped to bring on more local businesses in the campaign. Typically, a team is made up of a leader and several participants in an office. C.R. Bard, for example, had 60 employees walk in last year's March for Babies.

The organization's focus is on preventing premature births, which make children more susceptible to birth defects. March of Dimes-funded research is trying to find ways to prevent or find causes of heart defects, cleft palates and lips and other developmental conditions of newborns.

Waller said education programs funded by the March of Dimes have helped mothers have healthy babies. Waller credited an information campaign on folic acid by the March of Dimes with significantly reducing the number of reported babies born with neural tube birth defects, like spina bifida.

"Education is so important, and the effort to educate mothers on folic acid is a great example of that," Waller said. "Mothers normally become aware of good health when they find out they're pregnant. What we want to do is to emphasize good health before hand because of what know through research is that the good health of the mother does impact her child even before getting pregnant."

The March of Dimes also helps in training medical professionals in treating premature babies. The nonprofit organization helped fund a recent training for RMC nurses called "Preemie for a Day" that aimed to give caregivers a better understanding of the experience in the Neonatal ICU for preterm infants.

For more information on the March for Babies campaign, call Stephanie Moraille, community director for the March of Dimes, at 678-546-0023, ext. 222, or by e-mail at [smoraille@marchofdimes.com](mailto:smoraille@marchofdimes.com).

Jay Jones can be reached at [jay.jones@rockdalecitizen.com](mailto:jay.jones@rockdalecitizen.com).