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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Local Mother Hosting 5k Event in Honor of Twin Daughters

Charlotte, NC. — A local family, with the support of many organizations, is organizing the first annual TTTS Race for Hope (part of a national series) on November 18th, 2006 at Freedom Park. The event will consist of a 5K run/walk, kids fun run, kids festival and sponsor expo.

Imagine the excitement of planning for a family and finding out the wonderful news: you are expecting your first child. Imagine even more excitement when weeks later you learn you are not having one baby, but twins. Nothing compares to the day when a mother and father learn they will soon bring a tiny, fragile being into the world and will become the forever protectors. Yet, unlike so many pregnancies, in the 14th week, things started looking terribly wrong for the McGuinness'.

"I just remember going in for what should have been a normal ultrasound, watching the doctor turn off the machine, and listening as he described a disease that was affecting my babies," said TTTS Race for Hope Charlotte Event Director, Talitha McGuinness.

In fact, thousands of pregnancies each year are affected by the disease known as Twin-to-Twin Transfusion Syndrome or TTTS. It is a disease of the placenta that affects multiple pregnancy births, and results in 15 deaths per day. Sadly, some identical twins and even in rare cases, triplets, share blood vessels across the placenta from which they draw their blood flow and nutrition. As a result, one baby receives very little blood flow and can die from severe anemia, while the other baby receives too much blood flow and can die from heart failure.

In her 17th week of pregnancy, McGuinness underwent in utero surgery at St. Joseph's Women's Hospital in Tampa, Florida with world-renowned Dr. Ruben Quintero. Dr. Quintero specializes in performing what is known as photocoagulation of communicating vessels where he finds shared vessels and lasers them shut. This procedure has an 85% chance of one baby surviving, and a 50% chance of both babies' survival. However, it is currently the only procedure that gives both babies a chance.

After surgery and months of bedrest, McGuinness finally went through all the routine labor and delivery stages and delivered two healthy baby girls. It is because of these toddlers that McGuinness decided to join the Fetal Hope Foundation, a non-profit organization that provides support to families affected by TTTS and other fetal syndromes. This November, she among her family and friends, will host the 1st Annual TTTS Race for Hope in Freedom Park, Charlotte, North Carolina. The event will take place on Saturday, November 18, 2006, and McGuinness is anticipating over 500 runners, walkers and others affected by TTTS.

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“I just feel so blessed to have my girls and want to share that hope with others affected by such a detrimental disease,” said McGuinness.

The event will be held at Charlotte’s Freedom Park where participants will enjoy the race, along with one of the largest post-race expos and family friendly festivals. Sponsors such as Carolinas Healthcare System’s The Women’s Institute, Pethel’s Used Cars, Charlotte Mothers of Multiples and many more will participate at the sponsor expo. For more information, please contact Talitha McGuinness at (980) 721-5799.

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The McGuinness family, along with their miracle daughters will be available for interviews before and during the event.