

The original documents are located in Box 63, folder “1976/12/13 - March of Dimes Poster Child” of the James M. Cannon Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Jmic

THE WHITE HOUSE

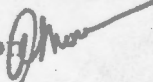
WASHINGTON

TO MEET WITH ROBBIE ZASTAVNY, THE
1977 MARCH OF DIMES POSTER CHILD

Monday, December 13, 1976

9:00 a.m. (10 minutes)

The Oval Office

From: Jim Cannon 

I. PURPOSE

To greet six year old Robbie Zastavny of Moorestown, New Jersey, the 1977 March of Dimes Poster Child and to present to the Foundation a Presidential Statement recognizing January 1977 as the March of Dimes Birth Defects Prevention Month.

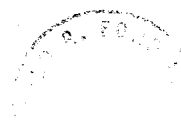
II. BACKGROUND, PARTICIPANTS AND PRESS PLAN

- A. Background: Robbie was born with an open spine and has to walk with leg braces. He is a very vivacious child. He attends the George C. Baker School in Moorestown.
- B. Participants: Attached at Tab A.
- C. Press Plan: White House Photographer



TALKING POINTS

1. Robbie, I am very pleased to welcome you and your parents and your brother here today, and Mr. Green and of course Miss Sills.
2. The March of Dimes is a fine organization and has done fine work, especially combatting birth defects.
3. I had the pleasure earlier this year of contributing remarks to a documentary on infant and maternal malnutrition that is now owned by the March of Dimes.
4. I hope you are making good use of this film and distributing it widely. The message that it conveys is so important.
5. Miss Sills, I am pleased that you can take time from your busy schedule of opera... and T.V. specials ... to give your time to the March of Dimes, and also to the Planning Council of the White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals. I know you are very interested in that work.
6. Mr. Green, I am happy to present this message to you recognizing January 1977 as the March of Dimes Birth Defects Prevention Month.



PARTICIPANTS

Robbie Zastavny, March of Dimes Poster Child

Mr. and Mrs. Al Zastavny, Robbie's parents

Norbert Zastavny, Robbie's brother

Beverly Sills, National Chairman, Mothers March on Birth Defects

Peter Greenough, Beverly Sills' husband and Member of The Board of Trustees of the National Foundation

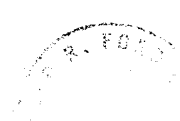
Harry E. Green, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of The National Foundation

Molly L. Green, Wife of Harry E. Green

Charles L. Massey, Executive Vice President of The National Foundation

Clyde E. Shorey, Jr., Vice President for Public Affairs of The National Foundation

Everett Thorner, Public Relations, The National Foundation



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 7, 1976

MARCH OF DIMES BIRTH DEFECTS PREVENTION MONTH
JANUARY 1977

Birth defects kill about 60 thousand Americans of all ages each year. One of every fourteen infants born alive in the United States will show evidence of a birth defect by the time of his or her first birthday. One in every three hundred will die of a birth defect before even reaching that first birthday. And for each afflicted child who dies in infancy, there will be several others who have to face long years of disability or the likelihood of an early death. We cannot even begin to estimate the cost to society of birth defects.

The ongoing tragedy of birth defects has called forth truly heroic efforts from concerned parents and professionals and, in many cases, from the handicapped individuals themselves. As a result, a number of defects which once were considered incurable can now be corrected and their harmful effects reduced. New modes of therapy are constantly being devised to help handicapped persons lead fulfilling and productive lives.

But our greatest hope for the future lies in the area of prevention. If we can prevent birth defects, we can eliminate a major source of death and suffering, and come closer to our national goal of equal opportunity for all Americans. This effort is happily going forward on many fronts. Scientists are attempting to gain a better understanding of the causes of birth defects, and are using this information to devise methods of prevention which can be applied before birth, or even before conception. Both voluntary and governmental agencies are involved in improving prenatal care for pregnant women.

In addition, the Federal Government has begun a major new initiative to reduce the incidence of low birthweight. About one in every thirteen infants is born too soon, or too small, to cope with the demands of life outside the womb. Along with birth defects, low birthweight represents a serious threat to the newborn child.

We can eliminate all of these threats to our children. But in order to do so we must have a national commitment to the prevention of birth defects and other causes of infant mortality. The traditional observance of March of Dimes Birth Defects Prevention Month is a positive step in this direction.

Let us all heed its message and ensure that a healthy start in life is truly the birthright of every child.

Herold R. Ford

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 9, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: JAMES CANNON

FROM: WILLIAM W. NICHOLSON *WWN*

SUBJECT: Approved Presidential Activity

Please take the necessary steps to implement the following and confirm with Mrs. Nell Yates, ext. 2699. The appropriate briefing paper should be submitted to Dr. David Hoopes by 4:00 p.m. of the preceding day.

Meeting: With March of Dimes Poster Child

Date: Mon., Dec. 13, '76 Time: 9:00 a.m. Duration: 5 mins.

Location: The Oval Office

Press Coverage:

Purpose: The National Chairman, Beverly Sills, and other representatives of the National Foundation of the March of Dimes will also be present.

cc: Mr. Cheney
Mr. Hartmann
Mr. Marsh
Dr. Connor
Dr. Hoopes
Mr. Nessen
Mr. Jones
Mr. Smith
Mr. O'Donnell
Mrs. Yates
Col. Riley
Mr. Orben
Mrs. Gemmell
Ms. Massengale
Mr. Mitler

