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Preemies reunited with their doctors and nurses at Mt. Sinai - Preemies were reunited with their doctors and nurses at Mt. Sinai Medical Center during the hospital's annual party.

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When Michael Tintori spots Dr. Ignacio Zabaleta, a physician at Mt. Sinai Medical Center, his face lights up.

The healthy 14-month-old can recognize the doctor's face, but is too young to know that Zabaleta and his nurses helped save his life.

Michael's mom was only 24 weeks pregnant when she gave birth to her son, who was given only a 10 percent chance of survival.

Michael and his proud parents were reunited with his doctor and nurses at Mount Sinai's 16th annual "Preemie" party Dec. 2.

The party's theme was "Superhero" — a nod to the real-life heroes who work in the neonatal intensive care unit.

Veronica and Sergio Tintori moved to Miami Beach from Italy in 2007 and couldn't be more thankful for the care they received at the hospital. They even named Zabaleta as their son's godfather.

"We don't have any family here in Miami, the doctors and everyone here is our family now." Veronica Tintori said. "They really use a special medication here, love, love and more love."

Tintori had to remain in the hospital for six months after he was born. His parents visited twice a day.

"Valentine's day was the first time he came home, it was magical," Veronica Tintori said. "We put him in the bassinet and took so many pictures. Such an emotional day."

Dr. Tony Adams, chief of neonatology, said the close-knit atmosphere of Mount Sinai is what sets it apart.

"These preemie parties are more like a family reunion," he said as he momentarily choked up with tears during his speech. "My favorite part is seeing people I have not seen in a while and seeing how the children have developed personalities."

Frank Triana, 18, is now a healthy teenager thanks to Adams.

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“He weighed only a pound and a half when he was born,” said Maria Ipinza, Triana’s mother. “I was so scared, if it weren’t for our doctor, he probably wouldn’t be alive.”

Triana agrees.

“I’m going to say something cliché like ‘Thank you,’ but what else is there to say?” Triana said.

The party included a back-flipping Superman who created looks of awe on the children’s faces, most of which were painted by Wonder Woman.

Wonder Woman, or Nava Savaj, was coordinator of the party— and also a preemie patient 36 years ago.

She now uses her party planning company, The Fantastic Party Factory, to help reunite the babies with their doctors, and has been doing so for five years.

“Every year we choose a different theme,” Savaj said. “This year’s is really meaningful because all of the doctors and families here are truly spectacular.”

Zabaleta and Adams say their jobs are tough, but rewarding.

“The impact from this sort of work lasts for a whole lifespan,” said Adams. “ We choose to make an investment in a child who will become a productive citizen in society.”

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