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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

International Multiple Birth Awareness Week 2021: Collaboration: We're Better Together

Starting Monday, November 8th, 2021, and concluding on Sunday, November 14th with the closing ceremony of the International Society for Twin Studies Congress, multiple birth organisations worldwide will recognize the impact that collaboration and cooperation have on raising awareness of the challenges of twins and higher-order multiples.

Why Multiple Birth Awareness Weeks?

The core focus of the week is to educate communities and professionals about the unique challenges of the world of multiples and what we can learn from them. The International Council of Multiple Birth Organisations (ICOMBO) passionately drives change into the way multiple births are seen across the world, and its member organisations collaborate to educate and promote further research.

Worldwide, the perception is that twins are cute. The image of the sweet babies in matching outfits is how the general population thinks of twins and higher-order multiples. IMBAW is held annually to change the public perception of these unique births, and their families and shed light on the risks, the complications, and the issues faced in the multiple birth community.

IMBAW is also about showing the world the need for more research into multiples and also recognizing their unique contributions to research. It is also about highlighting the need to improve outcomes for twins, triplets, and higher-order multiples, and how a collaborative approach to this can make a positive impact. Monica Rankin, ICOMBO Chairperson explains.

"This year we're highlighting the unique role that twins and multiples play in research and the partnerships and collaborations that result from this. Twins are involved in research in many areas, including aging, cardiac conditions, cancer, smoking, and alcohol effects, just to name a few.

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Their contribution drives improvement in the health and well-being of multiples, and also in the wider community. Over the years, ICOMBO has established some important networks with scientists, researchers, and clinicians in many countries. The importance of our role is demonstrated by the fact that the ICOMBO chair sits on the board of the International Society for Twin Studies.

Later this week we will be hosting our 19th International Conference on Twin Studies. ISTS and ICOMBO have worked to bring together world leaders in research involving twins and multiples. I'm looking forward to the event, and the unique contribution that twins and multiples make to research, and ultimately to the improved lives of all of us. "

International Society For Twin Studies Congress

Tied in closely with IMBAW is the ISTS Congress, held between the 11th and 14th of November in a hybrid online/on-location setting. Hosted by the Hungarian Twin Register in Budapest, this event brings together researchers, specialists, clinicians, patient advocates, and the multiple birth community.

This special congress will cover new clinical trials and research, epigenetics, controversial topics in twin research, and various panels discussing relevant issues to multiples, research, and families.

"Building partnerships in research in twins and multiple births is essential, and this is best done by putting three groups of people together. The first group is twin researchers, who can assemble teams that include laboratory-based researchers, data scientists, and even ethicists, sociologists and lawyers.

The second group are clinicians, including obstetricians, gynaecologists, midwives, paediatricians and general practitioners.

The third group are twins and their advocates, for example, local, national and international multiple birth organisations. By getting together, the three groups can come up with a set of common research goals designed to benefit multiples and their families"

Professor Jeffrey Craig, President of the International Society for Twin Studies

IMBAW coinciding with Budapest 2021 - The 19th International Congress on Twin Studies provides an opportunity to highlight some of the research around the world driving improvements for multiples and their families.

Collaboration: We're Better Together

Through the coming week, ICOMBO will also highlight the importance of collaboration between the various organisations that make up their members and their participation in research and awareness campaigns.

A mutual passion for the rights of multiples has already led to them creating a document outlining the rights of multiples. Regularly they work together on awareness campaigns and strive to raise awareness of the challenges facing multiple birth families.

For more information on ICOMBO visit www.icombo.org

For more information on the ISTS Congress visit www.twins2021.org

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