

NICU FAMILIES IN NEED HAVE A FRIEND INDEED

Hailey's Hope Foundation's First Annual Cocktail Reception Fundraiser, held on April 25 at Whitby Castle in Rye, was a huge success. Attended by nearly 100 guests, the event raised over \$34,000.00 to help NICU families in need.

The Foundation provides financial support and resources to families in need with premature and seriously ill babies hospitalized in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the Regional Neonatal Center at Maria Fareri Children's Hospital (Westchester Medical Center) in Valhalla. This Hospital is the area's only Level IV NICU (highest level), treating the most critical babies, and serves 8 counties in New York, including Westchester.

The NICU is a frightening place for parents; it is a place filled with machines, alarms, and tubes that hook up to almost every part of a baby's body in their struggle to survive. It is an even scarier place when families are unsure how they are going to pay for basic expenses



The Zion family

that accumulate quickly during a hospital stay. Since its inception in December 2007, Hailey's Hope Foundation has helped over 120 families pay for essential non-medical

expenses, such as hotel lodging, transportation, food and hospital parking, making it a little less frightening for the families of these tiny miracles during their NICU stay. "It's a

beautiful thing they're doing for these families. They really understand what these families are going through and want to offer a hand of friendship and compassion," said Jami Shickler, one of the guests in attendance.

Hailey's Hope Foundation was established in memory of Hailey Zion, the daughter of Rye residents Isaac and Donna Zion, who was born prematurely at 21 weeks and passed away shortly after birth. Its members are parents and grandparents who suffered through eight frightening NICU experiences (out of nine births), and the loss of Hailey. They know the emotional and financial toll of a NICU stay and are giving back for the kindness and support they received to help other NICU families get through

these difficult times.

Their next fundraiser is planned for July 25 in Goshen, New York. For more information, to donate or to volunteer, please visit www.haileyshopefoundation.org or call (845) 837-1182.