



The Foundation for America's Blood Centers (FABC) is pairing up with the Preeclampsia Foundation to host *Saving Grace - A Night of Hope and Gratitude* at the Hilton Hotel Grand Ballroom in New York City on Nov. 12, 2011. The event will benefit the two foundations and their life-saving work on behalf of women who develop preeclampsia during their pregnancies, as well as their babies. Despite being one of the oldest diseases on record, preeclampsia remains the leading cause of maternal-fetal death around the world.

Women who develop preeclampsia and their babies often need blood transfusions to survive. In fact, new moms and their babies represent one of the major patient groups in need of lifesaving blood transfusions. *Saving Grace* then, is an opportunity for these two non-profit foundations to team up in their work to raise awareness of the disorder, as well as raise much-needed funding for their respective programs to help future patients.

Preeclampsia is a personal issue for many of the people involved in the event. FABC President and Chief Ambassador Lauren Larsen developed a sudden and life-threatening case of preeclampsia in the ninth month of her pregnancy. She spent more than a month in the intensive care unit, and she needed transfusions of more than 200 units of blood. The wife of Patrick Dignan, chair of the Board for the Preeclampsia Foundation, died four weeks into a case of preeclampsia that was of similar intensity to Larsen's. Together, they are co-chairing *Saving Grace*.

Their experiences underline the severity of preeclampsia as a threat to the health and the lives of women and their babies.

"There are very few health concerns that threaten the link between mother and unborn baby like preeclampsia," Preeclampsia Foundation Executive Director Eleni Tsigas said. "Blood products are often the life-saving ingredient in hypertensive disorders of pregnancy," both for the mother and the child. She said that makes this event "a very meaningful demonstration of how two organizations can work together to change the world for millions of mothers and babies every year."

Johnson & Johnson and Ortho Clinical Diagnostics (OCD) have signed on as presenting sponsors, and Larsen is encouraging other companies that care about transfusion medicine and maternal-fetal health to get on board as well.

For Johnson & Johnson, supporting the gala fits into the company's mission of caring for the health and well-being of people throughout the world, one person at a time. "Johnson & Johnson is a company where people are passionate about their work, because it matters," the company said in a statement. "During its 125 year history, Johnson & Johnson has supported initiatives that strive to meet healthcare needs and improve the lives of people worldwide. The Preeclampsia Foundation shares this passion, and we congratulate them on their 10-year anniversary. We are proud to support their commitment to improving the lives of families worldwide, and to support the Foundation for America's Blood Centers as it does the same."

Nick Valeriani, company group chairman for OCD, said his company "has a 70-year heritage in protecting the safety of the blood supply and ensuring safe blood transfusions, and we are proud to support the Foundation for America's Blood Centers and the Preeclampsia Foundation as they work to improve maternal-fetal health."

Tsigas applauded the two companies for lending their support, emphasizing that the event is a great chance for attendees and corporations to learn more about two relatively common health concerns and how their direct involvement can truly make a difference. She added, "We can't do this alone. It will take the resources of companies and friends the world over who believe as passionately as we do that mothers and their babies deserve a healthy start to life."

For more information, please contact Event Coordinator Carla Capone (212) 213-1166.

If you have a preeclampsia story that was impacted by blood transfusions, please contact [Dawn Detweiler](#)

Article excerpts provided by America's Blood Centers.