



From left: Philip Brilliant, CHMM, PSRP, board member, Michael's Feat; Dana Puharic, co-founder, Michael's Feat; Patrick Ahearn, Chief Executive Officer, CMC; Lisa Schlesinger, MSN, RN, Administrative Director, Nursing, CMC; and Jennifer Shufan, Vice President, CMC Foundation, toured the Michael's Feat resource room during its construction.

A FAMILY ROOM AWAY FROM HOME

A NEW SPACE HELPS PARENTS OF SERIOUSLY ILL NEWBORNS RELAX, RECHARGE AND CONNECT.

Every year, up to 200 babies are admitted to Community Medical Center's Level II Special Care Nursery. These infants are born early or have health problems, and they may spend weeks or months at the hospital. Until recently, "there was nowhere for parents to go to relax," says Alexander Feldman, MD, Director of Neonatology at CMC and assistant professor of pediatrics at Rutgers Robert Wood



ALEXANDER FELDMAN, MD

Johnson Medical School. Now families can recharge in a family room away from home, thanks to a generous gift from Michael's Feat, a non-profit organization

dedicated to helping families of seriously ill newborns in Ocean and Monmouth counties. "When your baby is in the hospital, your whole family is disrupted," says Adam Puharic, co-founder of the organization. His son, Michael, was born with a chromosome disorder in 2000 and passed away.

Over the past 20 years, Michael's Feat has raised more than \$2 million to help local families of ill newborns. The organization has provided parents with gas cards and food vouchers and has donated funds to hospitals for special equipment.

A COMFORTABLE SPACE

CMC's new family room, which is located near the Special Care Nursery, has couches, tables, magazines, children's toys, a refrigerator, outlets

for recharging computers, a TV and lockers for belongings. There are also books about babies who need special care. Pictures of NICU babies are featured on the walls, and there's a butterfly mural. "Yellow butterflies had a significant meaning because they would show up at random times and remind us of our son," says Dana Puharic, Michael's mom. Parents can now take a break, have a meal and regroup in the family room and still be within earshot of their baby.

The family room was finished in the fall of 2020. "It's a great community area for families of babies in the Special Care Nursery," says Dr. Feldman. "It's important for them to be able to share their experiences so they can get through this difficult time together."

For more information about the Community Medical Center Foundation, call 732.557.8131 or visit www.cmcgiving.org.

