



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Elvis Presley Enterprises partners with the March of Dimes  
for its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary & Memphis March for Babies**

(1955 National March of Dimes Poster Child and Memphis Native, Mary Kosloski will be in attendance) See attached Photo & more information below)

**NOTE: The Memphis March for Babies will take place on Saturday, April 27, 2013 at Shelby Farms at 8 a.m (expecting close to 4,000 people). Mary Kosloski will be in Memphis from Friday, April 26 through April 29 (when we will recreate the attached picture with her & Elvis on the Steps of Graceland). She will be available for interviews on any of those days.**

**MEMPHIS, TN, April 5, 2013** -- The March of Dimes is the leading nonprofit organization for pregnancy and baby health. Its mission is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth, and infant mortality.

In 2013, the March of Dimes celebrates its 75th Anniversary. The March of Dimes was founded in 1938 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to end polio in the United States and it succeeded. Babies born today continue to receive the



Salk and Sabin polio vaccines and benefit from many March of Dimes supported breakthroughs, such as treatments for premature infants and for children with birth defects.

Elvis Presley actively supported the March of Dimes in the 1950s to promote polio vaccination among teen-agers after the Salk polio vaccine was licensed for use in 1955. A key March of Dimes photo depicts Elvis Presley receiving his own polio vaccination from Dr. Harold Fuerst on October 28, 1956 with New York City Health Commissioner Leona Baumgartner attending. Elvis agreed to this photo opportunity to support the March of Dimes Teens Against Polio (TAP) publicity efforts. The date is significant as the second occasion in which Elvis made an appearance performing rock and roll (an outrageous musical development at the time!) on television's Ed Sullivan Show. The March of Dimes distributed the photo to over 600 Elvis fan clubs across the nation to encourage teen-age polio immunization, calling Elvis Presley "the Pied Piper of modern youth." Though the photo pre-dates March of Dimes involvement in the problem of prematurity, Leona Baumgartner, as New York City Commissioner of Health, had earlier helped to establish a network of premature infant centers and local transport for premature infants in New York City in the 1940s. The photo thus bridges the evolution of the March of Dimes mission "*from polio to prematurity*" in an unforeseen but powerful way.

The March of Dimes relationship with Elvis Presley himself was cordial and significant. The photo (56-2588) of Presley, Fuerst, and Baumgartner is one of the truly iconic publicity shots in the photography collection of the March of Dimes Archives. That it was taken on October 28, 1956, the date of Elvis Presley's second appearance on the Ed Sullivan Show, is especially remarkable. Elvis Presley's appearances on this show were enormously important in the explosive popularity of rock and roll in the 1950s. The photo was used successfully to encourage teen-agers to get their polio vaccinations during the period of intensive public education about the polio vaccine from 1955 to 1962. A related March of Dimes polio vaccine brochure was titled "You Can't Rock 'n Roll with Polio," used in the Teens Against Polio program.

**There are at least 20 other photos of Elvis Presley in the March of Dimes Archives photography collection, many of them interesting and attractive. These include photos of Elvis with national poster child Mary Kosloski and other polio sufferers, both children and adults. Kosloski, who now lives in South Carolina, will be attending the 2013 Memphis March for Babies with many of these photos in the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Tent. She will also be**



**recreating one of the photos from 1957 from the steps of Graceland on Monday, April 29.**

In 2004, a German author, Andreas Roth, licensed eight of these photos taken on December 9, 1958 for *The Ultimate Elvis in Munich Book*, which has been called one of the finest intensive pictorial studies of Elvis Presley. The author used the March of Dimes photographs of Elvis and Robert Marquette, a six-year-old American boy disabled by polio as evidence of his strong commitment to the mission of the March of Dimes. These photos will be on display at the March for Babies Event inside the special 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Tent.

The March of Dimes is the leading nonprofit organization for pregnancy and baby health. With chapters nationwide and its premier event, March for Babies®, the March of Dimes works to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. For the latest resources and information, visit [marchofdimes.com/tennessee](http://marchofdimes.com/tennessee) or [nacersano.org](http://nacersano.org). Find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.

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