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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**LOCAL MOM HONORS SON BY HOSTING ATLANTIC BEACH FETAL HOPE 5K EVENT
TO RAISE AWARENESS OF FETAL SYNDROMES**

October 29, 2008 – Atlantic Beach – On Saturday, November 8, 2008, local mom Georgi Wick will host the 1st annual Fetal Hope 5k to help raise awareness about fetal distress and syndromes such as Twin-to-Twin Transfusion (TTTS) and the syndrome by which her own son was effected , Lower Urinary Tract Obstruction (LUTO). The event has been organized to celebrate family and as a way to serve as a satellite event to the TTTS Race for Hope, part of a National Race Series in Denver, CO taking place the same weekend. The event will feature music and entertainment, but will not be timed or scored.

“The response thus far has been great, and we look forward to growing the event in the future. People are excited and want to be a part of helping save babies lives,” said Georgi, Fetal Hope 5k Director.

At 38 years old, Georgi learned she was pregnant with her son, Elijah, and though she and her family were ecstatic at the news, they also knew the risks involved. However, what they were not prepared for was learning that at 13 weeks gestation, Elijah had Lower Urinary Tract Obstruction, or LUTO, a birth defect that causes a blockage of fetal urination. The kidneys work seemingly fine, but because the body cannot expel the fluid, the bladder continues to grow in size, and thus decreases the amount of amniotic fluid surrounding the baby. Given a 1 in 10 chance of survival for Elijah, the Wick’s were informed of the option of fetal surgery and Dr. Ruben Quintero, the country’s leading fetal surgeon for LUTO. They had several obstacles to overcome, mainly ensuring that Elijah’s kidneys did function in addition to no genetic diseases and his surviving to 16 weeks gestation, the earliest stage in the pregnancy at which the surgery could be performed.

In order to assess kidney function, Dr. Quintero performed a fetal vesicocentesis to extract urine from Elijah’s bladder. More than 190cc’s of urine were withdrawn from his bladder. Via sonogram, it was obvious that Elijah’s bladder was larger than he was. Dr. Quintero discussed the many risks involved with performing the surgery, and suggested they wait another week to see what, if anything happened.

“He indicated that my amniotic fluid was already decreasing so in my understanding, if surgery was not performed it would still be a death sentence,” said Georgi. “He didn’t disagree with my view and understanding.”

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After much discussion, Dr. Quintero performed the fetal surgery known as fetal cystoscopy and laser ablation to remove the blockage and allow passage of the urine, in addition to placing a vesico-amniotic shunt as a fail-safe measure. The Wick's saw immediate results, as Elijah's bladder was less than half of its original size. The surgery was a success.

At 36 weeks, Elijah John Wick was born to a family who knew the power of miracles. After birth, he was diagnosed with Prune Belly Syndrome, a rare genetic disorder that affects 1 in 40,000 live births. Elijah has since undergone several surgeries and procedures to help him live life as a normal little boy.

"The purpose of this event is to introduce the Fetal Hope Foundation to the First Coast and to let families dealing with rare fetal syndromes know they are not alone and there is hope. When our son was diagnosed with LUTO, there were no resources available to us," said Georgi. "More than anything we want families to not feel alone and hopeless as they walk through the challenge of dealing with a rare fetal syndrome."

The Fetal Hope 5k event is aimed at raising awareness of rare fetal syndromes and distresses. Though the event is free of charge, donations will be accepted and all proceeds will benefit the Fetal Hope Foundation, a totally patient supported non-profit organization whose mission is to provide support, provide information, fund research, increase awareness, and be an outlet for leading medical information pertaining to fetal distresses and syndromes. For more information, please visit the family's YouTube page at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sC4KWwZ65fE>, or contact Talitha McGuinness at 980-721-5799.

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The Wick's and their miracle son, Elijah will be available for interviews prior to and during the event.