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## **Meet a Scientologist—One Mother's Battle with the Unexpected Consequences of Premature Birth**

*November is Prematurity Awareness Month. Scientologist Cindy Gainsforth knew nothing about the issue until she had to live with the consequences herself, following the premature birth of her son Orion in 2009.*

Scientologist Cindy Gainsforth learned about the problems of premature birth the hard way.

"It was Saturday, September 5, 2009, at 6:05 p.m.," she recalls.

"When my water broke, I was 35 1/2 weeks along. My hospital bags were not even packed—nothing was prepared."

To make matters worse, the bridge was closed between her home and her hospital on the other side of San Francisco Bay. Trying not to panic, she called her husband, who threw what she needed into a suitcase, and prevailed on a friend to drive her all the way around the Bay, braving heavy Saturday night traffic on, ironically, Labor Day weekend.

Less than six hours after she was admitted, her son Orion was born. Gainsforth was ecstatic. But she was not prepared for what happened next.

“I hardly had five minutes with him before he was whisked off for observation. The next thing I knew he was admitted to the NICU—the Neonatal (Newborn) Intensive Care Unit,” she says. “Although only 10 days shy of full term, he was diagnosed with Respiratory Distress Syndrome from immature lung development.”

Gainsforth learned that this syndrome can cause damage to the brain and other organs due to insufficient oxygen. She was shocked to learn that complications from prematurity can result in lifelong disabilities and prematurity is the number one cause of newborn infant deaths in America, where 500,000 infants are born premature each year.

“Orion spent 10 days in the NICU, the first three of which were the most heartbreaking. He had wires and tubes everywhere. He was on morphine and other drugs,” she says.

Finally able to bring Orion home, Gainsforth hoped to resume a normal life. But not so. For months she couldn’t sleep. And not because of Orion’s crying. The opposite.

“I would wake up every time it got quiet, terrified Orion had stopped breathing. Silence was my greatest fear. I was flooded with irrational waves of guilt, haunted by the question ‘Why?’—I don’t smoke, I don’t drink, I don’t take drugs, I ate well, I took care of myself for me and the baby. So, why did it happen to me?”

A [Scientology auditing program](#) helped Gainsforth quiet these questions and come to grips with what had occurred.

“The program included Dianetics techniques to address every aspect of my emotional suffering and irrational behavior, the fears, the grief, the anger, the reactions and especially the illogical things I felt compelled to do,” says the 33-year-old mother. “All that haunted me I voiced, analyzed and deconstructed. Through the Scientology auditing program, I was able to separate out the pain from the memory and remove its negative influence over me. I removed the hidden mechanisms in my mind that were driving me crazy. [With Dianetics I was able to regain my sanity](#) and overcome these unfounded fears. I finally slept through the night for the first time since delivery. I started to enjoy each moment with Orion rather than worry. I found peace.”

Orion turned 2 in September 2011. He is doing so well, no one ever suspects he had such a rough beginning, says Gainsforth. And because of this experience, she has become an advocate of [prematurity prevention](#), urging expectant mothers to seek medical care early and aim for a healthy pregnancy through 39 weeks.

A Scientologist for more than 16 years, Gainsforth juggles family and two careers: She is executive vice president of a California-based

software firm and a staff member at the Church of Scientology of San Francisco.

Watch the Cindy Gainsforth "Meet a Scientologist" video at [www.Scientology.org](http://www.Scientology.org).

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*The popular "Meet a Scientologist" profiles on the Church of Scientology International Video Channel at [Scientology.org](http://Scientology.org) now total more than 200 broadcast-quality documentary videos featuring Scientologists from diverse locations and walks of life. The personal stories are told by Scientologists who are educators, teenagers, skydivers, a golf instructor, a hip-hop dancer, IT manager, stunt pilot, mothers, fathers, dentists, photographers, actors, musicians, fashion designers, engineers, students, business owners and more.*

*A digital pioneer and leader in the online religious community, in April 2008 the Church of Scientology became the first major religion to launch its own YouTube Video Channel. The [Official Scientology YouTube Channel](#) has now been viewed by millions of visitors.*



Scientist Cindy Gainsforth



Cindy, Zack and Orion Gainsforth at age 1



Orion Gainsforth, age 2