

Fragile Times



PEDIATRIC INTERIM CARE CENTER

We worry
about
what a
child
will be
tomorrow,
yet
we forget
that
he is
someone
today.

Steven's Story

Within each newsletter we like to tell the story of one of the babies at PICC. This past month, I had the wonderful opportunity to meet and talk to Steven, a charming young man that was a newborn at PICC seventeen years ago.

Steven had called earlier in the fall and asked if it was possible for him to partner with us for his high school senior project. He said he wanted to give back to the center that had done so much for him when he was a baby. As we e-mailed back and forth, I became more curious about him and his family and, honestly, if his rough beginning as a drug exposed newborn had affected him. When I mentioned that I would like to interview him for the newsletter, he was very open to the idea. (continued on page 2)



Steven, June 1994

From the Director's Desk



As another year comes to a close, I find myself reflecting on many happy memories. Most, of which, involve our babies, who continue to amaze us. These little ones, who come into this world facing many challenges, never fail to prove to us how strong they actually are.

In May, we were blessed to have many of our friends share our 20th birthday celebration with us. Quite a few of our graduates also came to say hello and have their picture taken with Jodi Sweetin from the TV show, Full House. As Jodi knelt down to speak with the children, sharing her story of being born drug exposed and of being adopted, it was heartwarming to watch as the

children's eyes opened wide, realizing they had a friend who understood.

The economy, of course, has also had an impact on us, as with most non-profits, But, with your continued kindness in giving generous donations of diapers, clothes, baby items, blankets, hats and funds, you have helped us survive these difficult times. I can only hope that other non-profit organizations have such giving friends as we do.

Earlier this fall, we were thrilled to receive an "all clear" regarding the Howard Hansen Dam; allowing us to take down our flood wall. It is comforting to know that we won't have to worry about moving the babies every time we have a rainy day.

As we enter into the holiday season we are truly thankful for so many reasons; our beautiful babies, our staff who so tenderly care for them, the many friends who are always here for us and, last but not least, our treasured memories of the little ones who we were blessed to have shared the early hours of their lives with - these past 21 years.

Thank you and Happy Holidays!

Barbara Drennen

Steven's Story (continued)

Steven describes his childhood as perfect. He smirks when he tells me he was spoiled. Living with his father and his grandparents, he says he had everything he needed. Every other weekend he spent with his maternal grandmother who, on his birthday each year, gave him a horse!

However, what Steven did miss was not knowing his mother. He had never even met her. His family had always been open with him about her and her drug use and why she was not able to be in his life. But he wasn't content with that.

The Christmas when Steven was nine years old, his father asked him what he wanted from Santa. Steven's reply was to meet his mother. It was just a few weeks later, that Steven's father took him to San Francisco in hopes of giving Steven his Christmas wish.

Steven says he remembers that they did not know exactly where she was but, by asking people on the street if they knew her, they were able to find her. He remembers that it was at a run-down hotel, that his mother came down some stairs and gave him a big hug. He also remembers that she took him around to all of her friends and introduced him as "her son!" He says he was so happy...he was with his mother!

Sadly though, Steven's mom was still using drugs. He remembers sores on her arms and seeing her using, even though his dad tried his best to hide it from him.

A few weeks after he and his father returned to Washington, Steven's dad decided to return to San Francisco to see if he could convince Steven's mother to come home and get help. It would be later, when she was in a Washington hospital, battling kidney failure and infections, that Steven remembers hearing that, had his Dad waited even one more week, she would have probably been dead.

After she was released from the hospital, Steven's mother agreed to enter a treatment center in Tacoma. He remembers spending quite a bit of time there with her and has wonderful memories of those days. Steven also began to accompany his father when he took her to dialysis. It was one such time that Steven remembers coming to the treatment center to pick her up, only to be told that his

mother had left. He was scared and heartbroken.

Days later, it would be his father who would find her. She had started using drugs again and had not been to dialysis. She was very sick. It was on Steven's eleventh birthday that they received the call that she had died. Steven says he was very sad but still thankful to have been able to meet her. He looks at her dying on his birthday, as a gift; she was now out of pain and at peace. He will forever remember the special times they shared.

As I sat in Starbucks listening to this young man's story, I start to get the answers I was after. Did the drugs his mother took during her pregnancy with Steven affect him? No. Steven is intelligent, personable and outgoing. His dream of becoming a plastic surgeon one day is within his grasp. However, did his mother's drug use affect Steven when he was young? Just ask him his opinion of drugs and you will know how affected he was. There will never be a place in his life for drugs - ever!

So Many Babies Need Help!

"I so wish we had read & watched your training pack before we brought the baby into our home. I think we would have done things differently. Even the small things like swaying the baby & not bouncing would have been good to know."

-a Foster Mom in Scotland

We often think the U.S. is the only place that has a drug problem, but it is not uncommon for us to receive e-mails from across the globe, asking for help with a baby that has been prenatally exposed to drugs.

We are very proud (and still amazed!) that we continue to have numerous visitors travel to visit PICC from all across the U.S. and the world. They want to learn the care and management required to take their babies through the withdrawal period safely.

When it comes to helping these tiny little ones, it is a sad finding to realize that there is such a limited amount of therapeutic knowledge that is known and shared in the majority of countries of the world



“My son is my guardian angel. He is the reason I am clean and sober and have the strength to fight this disease of addiction. It is amazing how much strength a 9 month old can bring and how many relationships he has mended in the short time he has been in our lives. I will always be grateful for the love and care you gave my son. I can't thank you enough for what you did for him and, ultimately, for me too.

God Bless you all!”

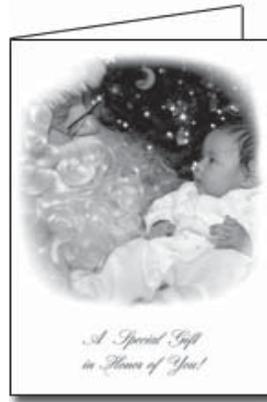
-A PICC Mother

for Big Hearted Santas

Is there a big-hearted Santa on your gift list this year? Someone who would rather give than receive?

We have the perfect gift for every one of them. You can make a donation to PICC's babies this holiday season and designate it as your gift to them.

We will then send the recipient(s) a beautiful, personal Christmas card making them an honorary Santa for PICC's babies and telling them that you have made a donation in their honor to Pediatric Interim Care Center.



No special forms are necessary. Just send your donation with a note telling us who you like to honor with your gift and where you would like the card(s) sent.

Now isn't that a much better idea than a gift card that would sit in a drawer all year?



Follow us on Facebook

Yes, I would like to support the Pediatric Interim Care Center, The Newborn Nursery

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Special Instructions _____

Enclosed please find my donation in the amount of:

\$ _____

Check enclosed

Please charge my credit card..... Visa

..... MasterCard

Number _____

Expiration Date _____

Name on Card _____

Donations are tax deductible within the guidelines of the law. Please check with your financial advisor.

Wow!

For his Eagle Scout project, David Kelley organized quilt-making and a collection of items from PICC's wish list at his church and other community groups. Yesterday he brought us the results -- a mountain of beautiful quilts and blankets, 74 boxes/bags of disposable diapers, and lots and lots of shampoo and latex gloves. Join us in thanking this generous Scout for his incredible effort.



*All of us at the
Pediatric Interim
Care Center
would like to wish you
and your family
the best of the
Holiday Season.*



"Angels in Adoption"

Congressman Dave Reichert came to PICC November 7th to celebrate National Adoption Month with "Angels in Adoption," honorees of an award sponsored annually by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute. For 13 years, the Angels in Adoption award has honored more than 1,800 selfless individuals, couples and organizations who have made extraordinary contributions on behalf of children in need of loving families. Awardees are chosen by members of Congress.



"Angels in Adoption" honorees attending the reception included PICC Executive Director Barbara Drennen, Mike and Debby Jansen and family, and Paul Johnson and Terry Pottmeyer from Friends of Youth. Also attending were Congressman Reichert's wife Julie, daughter Tabitha and grandchildren Briar and Emma.

In Memorium



PICC lost a dear friend recently. A long-time volunteer and supporter of PICC, Patti Mathewson was one of those special people that gave her heart to help those in need. She was not one to just focus on the babies at PICC, her generosity also extended to assisting staff members and their families. It was not uncommon to find her, as this picture proves, doing repairs and maintenance when there wasn't a baby to hold! Patti, you will be so missed. We love you.

Honored



PICC was honored to be recognized by Governor Christine Gregoire in her recent speech to Washington State Philanthropists. She was quoted as saying, "...my heart swells at the pure kindness and goodness there." She also recognized the efficiency of

our center and it's overall cost savings to the state budget which is nearly 2.5 million annually.

Your Lucky Day

St. Patrick's Day is sure to be lucky this year. Saturday, March 17, is the date set for PICC's Baby Gift Faire at the Kent Senior Center, 600 E. Smith St.

The Faire will offer a broad array of beautiful baby items for sale, with all the proceeds going to the care of babies recovering from prenatal drug exposure at PICC.

Support a great cause, save some green, and stock up on lovely things for your little leprechaun at PICC's Baby Gift Faire.



Volunteer Tours

To assure the health of our little ones during the cold and flu season we will not be hosting tours until the spring.

Please watch the web site for future dates and times.

Save the Date!



Mark your calendar now for PICC's annual *Building the Future Luncheon* Friday, May 18, 2012, at Showare Center in Kent.

This wonderful event is like a family reunion – a chance for the extended PICC family to come together in support of the babies. We do not charge for tickets, but ask that everyone give what they can. A minimum of \$50.00 is suggested, but not required. Last year's luncheon raised over \$100,000 for the care of drug-affected and medically infants in PICC's Newborn Nursery.

Registration is required to attend. Cards will go out in the mail next spring or you can always sign-up on PICC's web site. Go to www.picc.net and look for the luncheon under News and Events. Even better, sign-up to be a Table Captain and help make this year's luncheon bigger and better than ever. Table Captains take charge of a table and invite their friends to fill it. Again, you can sign-up on PICC's web site or get more information by calling Elaine Purchase, 253-852-5253. Also let Elaine know of any companies or groups who might be interested in sponsoring the luncheon.