

Volume 1, Issue 15

Spring 2015

Fragile Times



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS!

When talking about our 25th Anniversary, it seems only natural for us to share the changes and differences we have seen and experienced from our beginning to the present. Quite a few topics come up that are significant and many you might find interesting.

Regarding babies and their families; we have seen a few changes. When we first opened the center, there was more extended family involvement, both with the mother and baby, while at PICC. Families rallied around, providing support in any way they could. Different from today, rarely was a baby sent home with the mother. Instead the large majority of them were placed with extended family, which was the next best thing.

The drug most frequently seen in the late 1980's was cocaine. It was the drug of choice and very popular. However, by the time we opened our doors in 1990, we were seeing the use of heroin as the primary drug. But, it wasn't the same drug we see now. It was "black tar" heroin – deadly and extremely difficult on our newborns. Babies were requiring longer stays at PICC and higher levels of morphine to safely get them through the agonizing effects from their mother's heroin addiction. By the late 1990's multiple drugs, (methamphetamines, cocaine, psychotropic drugs, heroin, etc.) were becoming readily available. Babies started coming to us with as many as five to six different drugs in their system. These combinations of drugs many times neutralized each other and masked symptoms, making identifying very difficult. In early 2006, the abuse of prescription drugs was becoming very common. For us, the learning curve on how to help these particular babies was steep. In addition to understanding different withdrawal signs, many of these drugs were "time-release" and caused a whole new set of problems. Also, the mothers changed. Where they had previously been more of a "down & out" type, we were now seeing upper middle class professionals. The majority of these little ones were sent home with mom. Today, it feels like we have come full circle. Heroin is back in a big way. Though the drug itself is different, it has replaced prescription narcotics. New laws have made prescribed drugs harder to get and in turn, they have become more expensive than heroin!

One change we recognize and cannot overlook has been society's attitude about drugs. When PICC first opened, newborns affected by the drugs their mother used while pregnant was described as "shocking". Society was "appalled and outraged". Numerous times we would hear that this was a "throw-a-way" generation. "Special schools and institutions will need to be built to handle these "crack babies!" Looking back, that may simply been due to ignorance. But today, sadly, the subject of drugs and its effects is common knowledge. We have gotten immune and hardened to the horrors of drugs. Stories of abuse and

(continued on page 5)



PICC's First Home

P E D I A T R I C I N T E R I M C A R E C E N T E R

*If
you don't
believe
in miracles
perhaps
you have
forgotten
that
you
are one!*

PICC'S ANNUAL LUNCHEON

Please join us for PICC's Silver Celebration Luncheon
at 11:30 a.m. Friday, May 15, at ShoWare Center.

This year's luncheon will mark a major milestone for PICC—the 25th Anniversary of our founding.



Marah & Penny LeGate

Penny Legate, former KIRO News Anchor and KING Evening Magazine host, will be Keynote Speaker. Penny lost her 19-year-old daughter Marah to a heroin overdose, and she will share her insights for families coping with the tragedy of addiction.



Michelle Estaban

KOMO News Anchor Michelle Estaban will return as host, and the program will honor PICC Medical Director and Pediatrician Dr. Peyton Gaunt for his 25 years of tireless dedication to PICC's babies.



Dr. Peyton Gaunt

There is no charge for attending the luncheon, but registration is required, either with one of our Table Captains or on PICC's website: www.picc.net. For table reservations or information about luncheon sponsorships, please contact Elaine Purchase by email at: elainep@picc.net or by phone: 253-852-5253. Thanks to the generosity of our luncheon sponsors, every penny raised at the event will go directly to the care of drug-affected and medically fragile babies in PICC's Newborn Nursery.

TITLE SPONSORS ARE: Muckleshoot Charity Fund, Oakpointe Communities, Moneytree, Specialty Warehouse, Tecton Corporation. PATRONS ARE: Coatings Plus, Commencement Bank, Dr. & Mrs. Peyton Gaunt. TABLE SPONSORS INCLUDE: Auto Warehousing Co., Nancy Elop, Hooked on Hydronics, MultiCare Health System, Dennis O'Block, Re/Max Performance Plus, Taylor-Thomason Insurance Brokers, The Birth Center at Valley Medical Center.

THANK YOUR CITY

Could you help us thank the local cities that have generously provided grants to help PICC care for drug-exposed newborns from their communities?

If you live in one of the following cities, please take a moment to write a note or make a call thanking your City Council and Human Services Commission for awarding funds for the 2015-16 biennium to Pediatric Interim Care Center:

City of Tacoma,
Mental Health/Substance Use Disorder grant
City of Kent, Human Services grant
City of Auburn, Human Services grant
City of Renton, Human Services grant
City of Covington, Human Services grant
City of Issaquah, Human Services grant

THANKS!


Duke's
C H O W D E R H O U S E

February 19th was our second Dinner at Duke's event! PICC friends came to have a lovely dinner, chat and catch up at Duke's Chowder House at Kent Station. Just by dining with your friends and family that evening, you helped PICC receive a check for \$991! Special thanks to Dukes Chowder House and to all who came and showed your love for PICC and the babies. We so appreciate your continued support!

LARRY



When we asked Larry if we could photograph him with his newborn daughter, he happily agreed. At PICC, it isn't very often that we have only the father spending time with his baby. The photographs were beautiful and touching. They conveyed the love and pride he was feeling for his new daughter. As we were talking, Larry started to tell me about himself. He told me that this little one had come at a time when he was questioning his purpose in life. Now 46 years old, he already had seven other children living in other states. He also has grandchildren. Larry had lost a good job at a prestigious University due to a back injury - a job he loved. Times had been tough. But now, this baby he was carefully holding in his arms, was "his miracle". He told me of his plans to raise this child. He was going to spoil her with love. While teaching her all that is important in life. Larry

is confident he will be a good father to her. One thing he is very sure of is that he doesn't want her to go through the hard times like he did.

Larry shared with me the story of the baby's birth. Because she surprised them by coming two weeks early, Larry had to deliver her himself...in the Denny's parking lot! Born feet first, he was proud that he knew what to do to safely bring her into the world while helping the mother and keeping her calm. He said he will never forget helping his baby take her first breath and being the first one to hold her.

I asked about the mother. He hasn't seen her since the day the baby was born. She had left the hospital without a word. It was there that it was determined that the baby had been pre-natally exposed to heroin and cocaine. Larry told me he had no idea the mother was using drugs. But, he admitted he had been in prison for robbery and other offenses during much of the pregnancy. He hoped that I would, through this story, advise others to make sure to take off the "love blinders" so you can see who and what your partner really is.

Larry has spent every day with his daughter since she came to PICC. He is adamant that he "does not want her go through this alone." He also shared that he is anxiously preparing for the day she can come home with him. ... once the results of the paternity test confirm if he is her father.



SAVE THE DATE!

Friday, September 18th, PICC will be hosting it's first Gala and Auction. This formal evening will be held at the Coterie Room in Seattle and will feature the talents of Top Chef contestant Nina Vicente. Imagine dinner, dancing, live music, wine sampling and celebrating PICC while raising funds to continue our one of a kind care for the little ones we serve.

We are still looking for items to be donated for our auction, if you would like to procure or donate an auction item yourself, please contact Sarah Strode at sarah@picc.net. More information will be coming soon!



After nearly 25 years of caring for our babies at PICC, we will be saying goodbye to Kris Plantenberg, RN, as she begins a new chapter of her life in retirement. We want to wish her well and acknowledge the many wonderful contributions that she brought to the center over the years. Having begun her career at Children's Hospital, her life has centered on caring for children – something she admits she is having difficulty leaving. Kris has always had a special insight into caring for babies and the compassion she felt for each one of them was always evident. In her hands, our newborns received the best care possible. In addition to her dedication to PICC and “her” babies, Kris’s skills and generously shared knowledge provided many nurses, aides and caregivers with the best possible hands-on training. We will

miss you Kris. We and the babies have been blessed to have had you in our lives.

DEAR PICC...

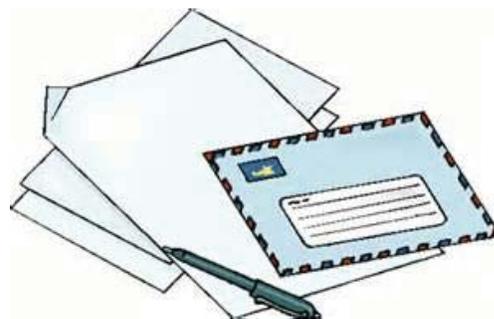
We want to share with you an excerpt of a letter we received recently from a Registered Nurse from the State of Wisconsin. She shares with us problems common to hospital nurseries that can prevent the necessary level of care needed by babies prenatally affected by their mothers drug use.

“The NAS (neonatal abstinence syndrome) babies were often roomed in with other babies with various concerns and issues. So a quiet, darkened, peaceful environment was not often what [the NAS infants] were exposed to.” in addition, “Nurses were charged with caring for up to 3 babies at a time, which means the NAS infant may not receive the appropriate amount of time needed to help him settle after a feed or when woken up” and “When mainstreaming NAS infants with other infants in the NICU, an unseen barrier was created where parents did not feel comfortable learning the necessary cares involved with an NAS baby... What I saw was parents who did not visit their infants in the NICU nor did they take part in many cares. “

She goes on to say,

“I would love to propose a facility much like yours to be created here in our city. We have a large number of NAS babies going through the NICU experience and I feel a facility where they can receive care geared more appropriately to their specific issues would be a blessing. Coupled with the high rate of NAS infants we are seeing that our city also has a shockingly high infant mortality rate. I can safely say that many of the infants who died in 2014 in unsafe sleeping situations, the problem was compounded by a mother or a father who either used drugs or alcohol prior to co-sleeping or placing the infant in an unsafe situation.”

This is one of many letters we have received reaching out for help and guidance from us in both the care of these little ones and advice in opening a center such as PICC. In every state across the country, the medical community has realized; as we already know; that drug affected babies need a special environment with caregivers who know the craft of caring for them. As Washington State citizens, we should be proud to know our NAS babies have access to PICC where they receive the specialized care they so deserve!



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS (CONT.)

its devastation has diminished our reactions and possibly our concern. We need to remember that babies still suffer the same pain, families continue to be torn apart and drug use is now more prevalent than ever.

Looking back over PICC newsletters from the past 20+ years, we realized some things have not changed. We have been and will continue to remain so very thankful to our donors who, either through a financial donation or gifts for the babies, generosity has never ceased. We are sincerely so grateful and appreciative of every one of you. In addition, it seems that we have been discussing our state funding since our first newsletter! Even now, 25 years later, we still continue to fight for the funding so necessary for our continued existence.

As we celebrate our 25th anniversary of helping babies from across Washington State, we recognize the many changes and challenges we have faced. We have continued to grow and to learn something everyday. But, most importantly, we remain honored and proud to be dedicated to caring for these little ones entrusted to our care and are excited for what the next 25 years will bring!

quilts and blankets to PICC, please recognize the importance that your quilt/blanket donation may one day provide to one of our little ones. We also wish to thank you for giving us the opportunity to support the babies by selling the extra blankets and quilts at our annual luncheon. We are proud to be able to share your gifts with the community while raising funds to continue to care for the smallest victims of drug abuse.

QUILTS AND BLANKETS!

For as long as we have been helping babies through the effects of pre-natal drug exposure, many members of our community have been helping us by providing handmade quilts and blankets for us to use in our nursery. What you may not know is that each baby is given one of these special quilts when they leave PICC.



Recently, one of our PICC graduates shared with us the story of the quilt she received nearly 18 years ago! She said that even though the quilt had been around for as long as she could remember, and had always provided her a sense of security and comfort; that once she learned where it had come from and why she had been at PICC, it made it even more special to her. The quilt became a reminder to her of the care and loving place where she spent the first weeks of her life. We, like you, probably had no idea the impact of our small gift! It seems warmth wasn't all blankets provide!

To all of you who have shared your talents and donated



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.



PEDIATRIC INTERIM
CARE CENTER

328 4th Avenue South
Kent, WA 98032

WALK FOR THE BABIES



Mark your calendar now for PICC's Walk for the Babies Saturday, October 3, at Kent Station. The 5K walk-a-thon is great fun for the whole family, as well as being a wonderful opportunity to help raise critically needed funds for PICC's babies. Registration will be at 9:30 a.m. in front of Dukes, and the walk will start at 10:30. The 5K route will go past PICC on 4th Avenue and then complete a loop on the Interurban Trail, ending back at Duke's for a chowder feed, snacks, family fun, and prizes for top fund-raising teams and individuals. Register or find more information on the Events page of PICC's website (www.picc.net).

SERVICES

Providing immediate, short-term medical care for medically fragile infants suffering from prenatal drug exposure, in addition to providing educational and support services to the community in the recognition and management of substance abused children.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Barbara J. Drennen

PHONE NUMBERS & ADDRESSES

Phone (253) 852-5253
Fax (253) 852-5728
Email: picc@picc.net
328 4th Avenue S.
Kent, WA 98032
www.picc.net

FRAGILE TIMES

This newsletter is published as a community service by Pediatric Interim Care Center (PICC). Its contents are intended to be informative and offer insight into the problems facing many of our children born today.