

Fragile Times



Helping cut the ribbon at PICC's OPEN HOUSE

is: (Left to right)

PICC's Board President Ken Kilbreath,
Development Director Elaine Purchase,
PICC's Board Secretary Tom Leonard,
Executive Director Barbara Drennen,
Staff members Mary Hill and
Kris Plattenburg, RN

PICC'S MOVING DAY!

On a rainy morning in April, the sun peaked out long enough to keep a small parade of babies and firefighters dry as they made their way to PICC's new home. For nearly two and a half years we had dreamt of being in our new facility. After the cribs, furnishings and baby supplies were in place; it was time to move the babies. With the new building located just a few blocks away, the best way seemed to simply carry them. On the morning of April 15, 2006, each baby was bundled up and placed into the arms of fifteen of the nearly thirty firefighters who volunteered to move the babies to their new home. As they walked the three short blocks, they were met with a heart-warming sight; hundreds of friends and supporters of PICC, many holding pink and blue balloons, had lined the route to the new center to wish them well. In addition, Kent Police had closed the necessary streets, allowing the "parade" a safe and clear path. It will be a day that will be fondly remembered for years to come. As the last baby was snugly tucked into his new crib and the rain began to fall, it was clear PICC had come full circle and was to begin a new chapter in a new facility which would remain dedicated to newborns needing our help.



Firefighters carrying PICC babies to their new home.

Conference examines drug impact on children and families

Pediatric Interim Care Center has assembled an all-star lineup of speakers and panelists for a two-day conference examining the impacts of drug abuse on children and families. The Drugs Hit Home Conference is set for 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday, Jan. 16-17, at the Seattle Airport Hilton Conference Center.

Lt. Governor Brad Owen will moderate the educational conference for law enforcement, medical personnel, social service providers, educators, and others who work with children and families impacted by drugs. Featured speakers include Congressman and former King Co. Sheriff Dave Reichert, Washington State Attorney General Rob McKenna, and Washington State DSHS Secretary Robin Arnold-Williams.

Conference brochures and registration are available online through PICC's website (picc.net), by phone at 253-852-5253, or by mail at 328 4th Ave. S., Kent, WA 98032. The conference fee of \$325 includes all sessions and meals. Proceeds will benefit PICC's Infant Withdrawal Program for drug-exposed newborns.

DRUGS HIT 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

*When
I approach
a child
he inspires
in me
two sentiments:
-Tenderness
for what
he is,
-And respect
for what he
may
become.*

-Louis Pasteur

METHAMPHETAMINES, A Growing Concern

In a recent discussion on methamphetamine use, Rob McKenna, Washington State Attorney General, gave some interesting facts on this drug's

but devastating impact on families

Citing meth as the reason,

drug use has become the number one reason children are placed into foster care. The number of cases has risen over 62%, affecting nearly 9000 children in the last six years. Methamphetamine, a very destructive and addictive drug, can lead to long term emotional damage to children living

in an environment where this drug is present. Parents addicted to meth often times forget they have children, leading them to not feed, clothe or properly maintain a healthy and clean home. Many times these kids are left unsupervised. Because an addict can suffer from paranoia, the home may contain firearms and often times a child may witness acts of violence. Physical and sexual abuse of a child can be common as is the exposure to cancer causing, toxic poisons if the drug is being manufactured in the home. Asked how a mother can do this to their child, meth must be understood as a drug that captures the mind, it changes one's personality and causes people to do things they would never do in their "right mind." Meth use is the #2 source of admission to treatment centers, second only to alcohol. Treatment failure rate is very high, with most needing frequent attempts before finally succeeding. Meth also has a very high mortality rate.

The number of meth labs has declined dramatically in the last 5 years; from 2000 labs to only about 300 today. But reducing labs does not reduce the drug's use. Meth, though now more expensive and not so pure or available, is being brought in from other states and Mexico. Cocaine use is now on the rise by addicts as an alternative to meth.

According to Mr. McKenna, Washington State law now gives parents 12 to 24 months to succeed in their treatment plan or their rights are terminated as a parent. This gives the child a chance to be placed into a healthy environment and to avoid the dangers associated with meth. Many times this can be a motivator for a parent to succeed. It is estimated that in Washington State alone, 12,000 children are born each year affected by drugs.

Administrative Change

Ken Kilbreath, PICC's Board President will be stepping down at the end of this year. A local attorney, he has served on the Board for seven years; four of those as President.

Ken was instrumental in the success of the Capital Campaign which led to a new, larger building for PICC. Succeeding him will be Bob Lichtenhan. Other officers are Harry Hansen continuing as Vice President, Tom Leonard, Secretary and Ken Bussy, Treasurer.

PICC Offers Treats for Little Pumpkins



Photo by KP Impressions

Kent Mayor Suzette Cook with friends

On the Saturday afternoon before Halloween, PICC treated families throughout the community to the Little Pumpkins Safe Trick-or-Treat and Baby Gift Fair. The Trick-or-Treat event, co-sponsored by the Kent Downtown Partnership, offered Halloween photos and treats provided by participating downtown merchants. PICC's Baby Gift Fair, a sale of baby items at discount prices, was held concurrently. *Thank you* to the Kent merchants and the volunteers who helped with these events.

Note from the Director.....

This has been an extremely busy and memorable year for us; both with the babies and moving into our new center. Because we now have the room and due to the numbers being up, 2006 brought us more babies in a year's time than we had ever seen previously. In the past five years we admitted as many babies into the Nursery as we did our previous eleven years! Unfortunately, the increase in babies has not brought an increase in funding. When our count goes over thirteen infants, PICC must absorb the added expense of care and staffing for those babies. But, to say "no" and not take a baby in, would be extremely hard for me to do. Therefore, we are reaching out to the Legislature once again for help in this area.

As wonderful as it is to have a new home, it was hard to leave our first home where there were so many happy memories. It had been a place where so many little ones had come back to visit and to see where their first days of life were spent. The day we moved was an emotional time. There were tears of happiness mixed with tears of sadness. So many people showed their support on that special day, such as the fireman who carried our little ones to their new home. Waiting to greet and receive the babies into the new center was our very first PICC baby, nurses, doctors, aides, volunteers, board members and dignitaries. As the babies were placed into their beds, we knew they loved their new home. They were happy and peaceful; it seemed to be their way of letting us know everything was right and they were truly home...

Since our move we have cared for up to 18-19 babies a day, more than we have ever done at any one time. My wonderful staff truly stepped up to the plate and took charge. They did an unbelievable job but were exhausted. Five months later we finally had a break when our numbers dropped for a few days. I would like to say I truly have the most wonderful staff a director could ever ask for. Working with the babies can be exhausting, both physically and emotionally, but they continue to support the babies on a daily basis. Even in the snow that we just experienced, they didn't skip a beat and placed their own safety aside to be here to care for our little ones. For the last 16 years, other than being with my family, being at PICC with the babies is the best place in the world!



Trends

Again this year PICC has seen an increase in the number of babies needing our services. Three key contributing factors are: the size of our new building-allowing us to hold more newborns; the increase of our licensing capacity by DSHS; and the number of hospitals reporting newborns needing help. We have gone from 192 babies in 2005 to nearly 220 babies in 2006, a 12% increase. This past year has also seen some changes in the drugs affecting the newborns. Through the 2nd week in November, almost all babies had been exposed to opiates. Since then, the number of babies affected by methamphetamines and cocaine has greatly increased and has become the dominant drugs we are seeing. Cocaine/methamphetamine use causes babies to be born premature, weighing 2 to 3 pounds and much more likely to have medical problems such as underdeveloped lungs, eating difficulties and temperature instability. Interestingly, babies at PICC most often accurately reflect drug trends and what is being used on the streets.

A Special Guest!

In March, PICC was honored to be the location for a national level press conference with Mr. John Walters, Director, White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. Hosted by PICC and Congressman Dave Reichert, with Washington State Attorney General Rob McKenna, the focus of the press conference was on the impact methamphetamines are having on our country. Washington State is one of the most progressive in providing unique programs in the treatment and fight against this most addicting and damaging drug. PICC was cited for its support and treatment of newborns impacted by their mother's use of methamphetamines.



Mr. John Walters

PEDIATRIC INTERIM
CARE CENTER

328 4th Avenue South
Kent, WA 98032

To:

*Feeling gratitude
and not expressing it
is like wrapping a present
and not giving it.*

Thank You!

Each year we continue to be amazed and touched at the out pouring of support shown to PICC and it's babies. Civic groups, churches and philanthropic organizations alike continue to host baby showers or fund drives. Invitations come from schools across the state asking us to provide education on drugs and to inform young people about the impact we see these drugs have on newborns. Many times schools will continue to relay our message by hosting a community service event to benefit our little ones. Children of all ages have donated to the babies this year. From as young as the elementary school kids with their summer lemonade stand to high school classes organizing a baby item drive. Each and every little thing is so needed but even more, so appreciated!

This Holiday Season, all of us at PICC would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to all of you who have supported us over the past years. We are so grateful for friends like you.



*Auburn Girl Scout Troop 2240
with blankets they made for the babies.*

SERVICES

Medical care and training for drug exposed children.

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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.