

Fragile Times



Construction Begins on PICC's New Home

Construction is now underway on PICC's new building at Fourth Avenue South and Saar Street, just two blocks from our current location in Kent. Foundation work kept crews on the site busy during June and July. Now that framing has begun, it's great fun to see the beautiful new home for PICC's babies taking shape.

The new building will allow PICC to care for the growing number of drug-exposed and medically fragile babies who are referred for care. That number has been growing steadily by about 7% per year, and in the last two years the center has been on overload. The new building will nearly double our capacity, giving PICC "Room to Grow" for many years to come.



Because we have been able to design the new building around our babies' needs, it will provide a safer and more therapeutic environment for all of PICC's babies for decades to come. It will also save the money we now spend on rent (\$70,000 per year) and allow us to operate more cost effectively in the long run.

The homelike, two-story brick building will stand at one of the gateways to Kent. Its core is an Infant Care Center with nine nursery rooms clustered around nursing and social work offices. A training

(Continued on page 3)

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

*How far you
go in life
depends on
your being
tender with the
young
compassionate
with the aged,
sympathetic
with the
striving and
tolerant of the
weak and
strong.*

*Because
someday in life
you will have
been all of these.*

New Bill Gives a Voice to Methadone Exposed Infants



Antonio Sanchez (l) and the Lt. Governor, Brad Owen (r) presenting a copy of the bill to Barbara Drennen.

This April, we were thrilled to be invited to the Capital to witness as Governor Christine Gregoire signed into law a bill Barbara Drennen co-authored with Lt. Governor Brad Owen, regulating information given to women entering methadone treatment programs about the effects on unborn children. For years, PICC has voiced concerns over the effects such treatment has on unborn babies. The unwillingness to offer treatment to these little ones at risk and educate the women on the potential dangers has been a real concern and something that, although methadone is an effective treatment to other substance use treatments, its use by a pregnant mother can result in babies who may be born addicted and face the painful effects of withdrawal. This new legislation, in addition to ensuring high standards for approved treatment programs, mandated that all opiate substitution treatment programs which provide these services to pregnant women, will be required by law to provide up-to-date and accurate health information concerning the possible addiction and health risks these programs may have on their unborn child. With this new law in effect, unborn babies have been given a voice so they will be protected now and in the future.

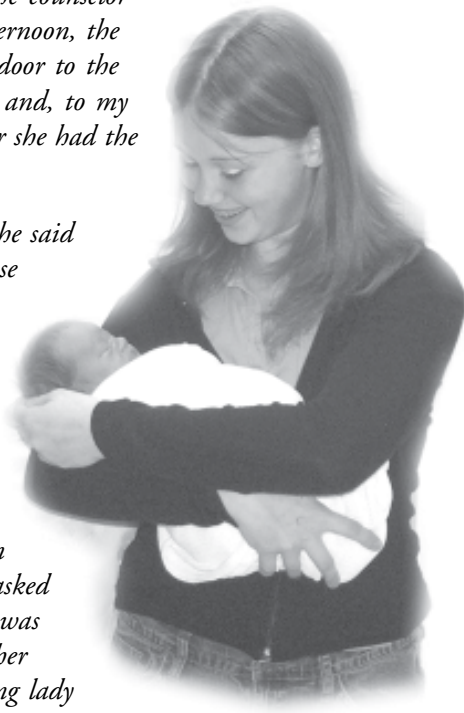
A Heartwarming Visit with Sarah

Fifteen years ago, the staff at PICC fell in love with a beautiful, little baby girl we called Sarah. She was the first newborn ever to be cared for at PICC. Through the years, I have often wondered what became to our little Sarah. What was she like? Was she still with her mom?

In the early spring of this year, out of the blue, I received a call from a counselor asking if I remembered a little girl we called Sarah who was placed at the center 15 years ago. Of course I did. The counselor told me how well Sarah was doing and what a beautiful young lady she had become. I was so happy to hear about the little girl we so loved and had worked so hard keeping comfortable through her withdrawals. She also asked if she could bring her down to PICC to see where her first home was. I could hardly wait to see her.

Months passed and Sarah never came. I couldn't understand what happened. Then the counselor called again and asked if they could come that very day. I was thrilled. Late that afternoon, the front office called to say I had a visitor, and her name was Sarah. As I opened the door to the lobby, I knew instantly which one was Sarah. She came toward me with open arms and, to my wonderful surprise, she hugged me! She asked how I knew who she was, and I told her she had the same beautiful face she had when she was a baby.

We talked a bit, and then I asked her if she would like to see the babies. Hesitantly, she said yes. I asked her if there was a problem and she replied that she had been told that these babies were in great pain and shook and cried all of the time. I asked if that is why she hadn't come down sooner. Was she afraid of what she might see? As she replied "yes", I put my arm around her, and I told her to come and see for herself how peaceful they were and, that with the proper care, they did not have to suffer. As we walked through the center, Sarah saw for herself how well each newborn was doing. Again, hesitantly, she asked if she could see her room and the crib that she had slept in. I took her to the low-stimulus room and when she saw her crib, there were tears in her eyes. She touched the bed and the stuffed animals as if they had been hers when she was here. As we continued our tour, twice she asked to go back to "her" room. I asked if she felt she better understood her beginnings at PICC, and she assured me that she was so happy that she had come. She shared with me that she is happy living with her father and her step-mom, but remains in contact with her mother. Sarah is a beautiful young lady and such a joy to have seen again. After all of these years at PICC, and the many happy memories I have had, I don't remember a time that I have felt more fulfilled.



Our first baby holding our most recent.

Plagiocephaly is the malformation of the head marked by an oblique slant to the main axis of the skull. Recently, due to the "back sleep campaign" which advocates placing children on their backs while sleeping, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of children with flattened and misshapened heads. The importance of rotating and varying the infant's position will allow the baby to develop normally. It is also very important not to place infants in car seats and infant carriers for extended periods of time.

So, as we all eagerly anticipate the move into our new home, it becomes somewhat difficult to face what must be left behind. Besides a building that has served us well for the last 15 years, we are leaving a home full of memories and the ability to walk our "graduates" to their crib, providing them with a connection to a small part of their history where they began their journey called life.

*Barbara Drennen,
Executive Director & Founder*

Dangers of Prescription Drugs



Mirroring what PICCC has seen as growing trends in drug use, the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute at the University of Washington recently issued a report concerning drug use and abuse in the Seattle/King County area. Though street drugs are still being used at relatively high levels, the report confirmed what PICCC has been experiencing: A marked increase in prescription and over-the-counter drug abuse. The percentage of babies we have admitted at PICCC showing high levels of prescription drugs has grown substantially in the last 2-1/2 years, now affecting 31%.

Other findings of the U.W. report noted that cocaine continues to be the most common illegal drug mentioned in emergency room reports. Sadly, overall drug-involved deaths increased by more than a third in 2004, with prescription opiate deaths up 40% in 2004 compared to 2003. Deaths involving prescription depressants, such as Valium and Benadryl were up 15%. Methadone, a prescription drug used for treatment of heroin addiction, has seen a rise in use due to more admissions to treatment, but remains a concern when used by pregnant women. (See story on front page). As in past years, the babies coming to PICCC have been an accurate predictor of drug trends. The increased use by pregnant women of prescription drugs is very distressing with this newest report confirming the misconception of the safety of certain prescription drugs being used during pregnancy.

The sale of prescription opiates to hospitals and pharmacies in King County has risen over 300% in the last six years.

Construction.. (cont.)

center for PICCC's educational programs will be on the second floor. The building will also include a Baby Gift Shop on the ground floor.

The total cost of the Capital Campaign is \$4 million. Through the wonderful generosity of PICCC's supporters, \$2.25 million has been raised to date. Donovan Brothers Commercial Construction, our general contractor, has scheduled the new building for completion in February 2006. Watch for news of our Grand Opening and plan to come and see PICCC's new home. In the meantime, you can watch the progress on our website, www.piccc.net.

2005 Lawman 1000 Charity Ride

The 2005 Lawman 1000 Charity Ride supporting PICCC was held on Saturday and Sunday, June 25 and 26th. The participants, which left from either the The Commons Mall in Federal Way or from the Albertson's in Wenatchee, rode the nearly 500 mile route to Kamloops, British Columbia. Door prizes were awarded and raffles were held for a refurbished motorcycle and two leather jackets. Two drawings were also held: One for a \$1,500.00 gift certificate courtesy of Che's Honda, and a fifty-fifty drawing, which netted \$1,023.00 and was split by the winner, Kevin Gorman and PICCC. (the Gormans donated half of their winnings as well!!) In addition, a special presentation was made to PICCC by friends of Mr. Rodney Svetich, who passed away earlier this year. Mr. Svetich had been a dedicated supporter of PICCC and the top pledge earner over the last four years. As a tribute, his fellow riders dedicated their ride and pooled their pledges to be able to honor Mr. Svetich's wife with the Rosario Resort vacation. This is the fifth year the Lawman 1000 Charity ride has sponsored PICCC. Over five years, they have raised over \$130,000 in support of the babies. We want to thank all of the riders who rode and gathered pledges this year.

Luncheon Raises \$90,000

PICCC's first "Building the Future" Luncheon on May 20th raised a total of \$90,000 to help construct PICCC's new building. More than 380 wonderful friends came to support the event at the Airport Hilton Hotel and Conference Center. Thank You.

Kathi Goertzen of KOMO 4 News presented the program, which focused on PICCC's babies and the positive outcomes they experience as they grow. Ken Schram, also of KOMO 4 News, State Senator Margarita Prentice and State Representative Dave Upthegrove were featured speakers. PICCC's Board of Directors sponsored the event, which will now become an annual PICCC tradition. If you are interested in being a table captain or attending next year's luncheon, give Development Director Elaine Purchase a call at 253-852-5253.

PEDIATRIC INTERIM
CARE CENTER

233 South 2nd Avenue
Kent, WA 98032

To:

*If we don't stand up
for children, then
we don't stand
for much.*

Sunrise Elementary Mustang March



Sunrise Elementary School in Kent was the sight of a recent 'fun'd-raiser for PICC. As they have done for the last three years, the students have

participated in the PTA sponsored "Mustang March" prior to their school carnival. The kids walked through the local neighborhood, all in matching t-shirts in support for the babies at PICC. This year they raised \$2,980, bringing their three year total to nearly \$7,500! Congratulations and thank you.

Legislature Boosts Campaign

PICC's Capital Campaign got a big boost from the Washington State Legislature. The state's Capital Budget included \$617,000 to help construct our new building.

This tremendous help from the state would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of our friends in the legislature who sponsored the bill. Please help us tell them how much we appreciate their efforts. Send a thank-you note or email to: Rep. Dave Uptegrove, Sen. Steve Johnson, Lt. Gov. Brad Owen, Sen. Margarita Prentice, Sen. Karen Keiser, Rep. Shay Schual-Berke, Rep. Geoff Simpson, Rep. Mary Lou Dickerson, and Rep. Pat Sullivan.

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.