

Fragile Times



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

My travels this year have been at the request of nurses and doctors from other states wanting help in learning the management of infants prenatally exposed to prescription drugs. This type of drug abuse has now hit their communities much like it hit ours three to five years ago. Now, they too, have a desperate need to learn the best treatment for their babies who have been exposed in utero.

I always enjoy sharing our knowledge and experience so that fewer babies will suffer. Many times, I find hospitals treating them like you would any healthy newborn; stimulating them with music, swings, bright lights, and even talking. At the beginning stage of withdrawal, babies cannot handle stimuli; it is something you need to take away, not offer. We understand that caring for these tiny little ones is very challenging and can put extreme pressure on the nurses who are also responsible for other sick babies in a nursery. During the early days of withdrawal, nurses have to work hard to keep the babies comfortable until they become stabilized on the required medications needed to wean them off the drugs received in utero. This can take up to two long weeks for a baby. It is not uncommon to hear of babies being over-medicating because of their constant crying. By sharing and teaching our proven techniques to keep newborns comfortable, helps to avoid that scenario.

Withdrawing an infant is definitely a craft you do not learn over night. It takes time and skill to recognize each child's specific needs and when it is safe to discharge them. Unfortunately, in my travels, I have seen babies that are still requiring narcotic medication for their withdrawal, being sent home; expecting parents to administer the drug. This practice is very concerning no matter how well the parents are doing with their own addictions.

I do enjoy working with nurses and doctors from across the country. These are wonderful people trying so desperately to help the smallest victims of drug abuse. But, I always leave with a heavy heart wishing I could have stayed and wondering if I truly made a difference. I know that what I personally witness at hospitals is happening in many more all across the country. From the numerous calls we receive on any given day, I know the skills needed for the management of these little ones needs to be shared as much as possible. It is our commitment to keeping these babies safe that make us continue to share our knowledge and experiences whenever we can.



Barbara Drennen
Executive Director

PEDIATRIC INTERIM CARE CENTER

In every person is hidden a child who wants to play.

~Harvey Ruben



MEET DR. HARRY HARRISON!

We are proud to welcome Dr. Harry Harrison to PICC. He will be providing back-up support to Dr. Gaunt, who has been with us for 23 years. Before his retirement, Dr. Harrison was with a neonatology group, Pediatrix Medical Group, associated with Valley and Auburn Medical Centers. During his years of practice, he had sent many babies to PICC and highly regarded the work we are doing. Dr. Harrison says he wanted to fill the void left from retiring but mostly wanted to give back to the community that had supported him. He feels strongly that the type of care PICC provides to these newborns, who are struggling through withdrawal, will improve the quality of their lives and those of the family. He would also like to encourage any retired physician, who would like to experience the joy and reward of volunteering their expertise, to be aware of the Washington State Retired Physician's Program that will provide free malpractice insurance to retired doctors who provide community service. Thank you Dr. Harrison. We are honored to have you partnering with us!



*Have a heart
that never hardens
a temper that
never tires
a touch
that never
hurts.*

Charles Dickens

THANK YOU!

We would like to publicly thank:

Frank Ascanio, a long time volunteer with PICC, for again this year volunteering to organize and round up the help needed to man the Kent Public Parking Garage during Kent Cornucopia Days.

The City of Kent who, for the past several years, has graciously allowed us to raise funds by selling spaces in their garage during the weekend of the Fair.

Thank you!

BARBARA DRENNEN FOR HOSPITAL COMMISSIONER



Barbara Drennen has been a tireless advocate for children and public health throughout her career. As the cofounder of PICC, she has experienced first hand, on a daily basis, the crying need for essential patient care services for the most vulnerable population. Her expertise is frequently called on by other states and countries working to replicate PICC's innovative model of safe, cost-effective pediatric interim care. From her perspective, none of the important and lifesaving work she and her staff perform could even be possible without the amazing support and contributions from her community. Though PICC's support comes from many sources, the early and important ones have been Valley Medical Center, who took the lead in providing hospital support for the new non-profit, and UW Medicine's neonatal experts who were her mentors while putting PICC's program together. She would like to repay that kindness by serving as a hospital commissioner. It is one small way she can give back to the community that has been so vital to her organization.

Walk for the Babies



Helping the littlest victims of drug abuse...one step at a time

Have fun, be healthy, and help PICC's babies all at the same by joining the Walk for Babies Saturday, September 7, at Three Friends Fishing Hole Park in Kent (10 a.m. start). The event is a walk-a-thon, with participants asking their friends and family to make pledges in support of their walk. You can choose walk, run, or stroll a 5K or 1-mile loop on the Green River Trail. Then join us for family food, family fun, and prizes in the park.

There is a registration fee of \$25 (\$15 for students and seniors), which includes your T-shirt, food, and water at the event. Kids 10 and under are free. Please use the form below or go to PICC's website (picc.net/walk) to register as soon as possible.

Can you go a step further and help us by being a team captain? Get a few friends together or suggest that your business, club, church, or school form a team. Give your team a name, and we'll get some friendly competition going – all in support of the babies, of course.

You can also help us by posting flyers for the Walk at your church, school, business, or office. Pick up flyers at PICC or call Elaine Purchase (253-852-5253) to have them sent to you.

With your help the Walk for the Babies will be off to a great start!

SIGN ME UP!

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

_____ Adult @ \$25.00 _____ Student/Senior (over 65) @\$15.00

Amount enclosed \$ _____

*Payment of walk fee includes a free T-shirt. **select size(s):***

Adult ___ S ___ M ___ L ___ XL ___ XXL

Sorry, I can't participate, but I want to donate! Enclosed is my check for \$ _____

NURSE KELLY

Eight years ago, I moved with my family to Seattle from Orange County, California. One evening I was watching the news and they were speaking to a woman who ran a center for drug exposed babies. I told my husband, "I want to work there!" called to see if they were hiring and was told to come in and put in an application. I had decided if I was going to work, I needed to do something I would enjoy. After interviewing with Barbara Drennen, I was offered the job.



Coming from a background of pediatric nursing in a children's hospital in Southern California, I had worked on the medical/surgery and neuro unit taking care of children of all ages with all types of illness and recovering from surgeries. But, honestly, I don't remember caring for drug-exposed infants. I am sure we must have had them but it is possible that they were placed in the NICU. So, needless to say, I had to learn a whole new area of nursing care. Like so many people, I also thought that drug exposed babies had a lot of health issues. And, while they do have a rough start at birth, I was relieved to learn that these are healthy babies and, given the opportunity and good parenting, they will grow to be normal, thriving children. The care for these little ones is an ongoing and always changing process. I ask a lot of questions and listen at every opportunity when Barbara and the doctors are talking and explaining the care needed for the babies. Learning about when to increase or decrease the meds, swaddling, handling, and methods of feeding, are all part of the care specific to this population.

People say that it must be hard to work at PICC. And, yes there are times that it is. Knowing that a baby is in pain and uncomfortable breaks your heart. But, when we do our jobs and apply all that we know to keep our little ones as comfortable as possible and knowing that they are sleeping, eating, growing and healing in a very loving and safe place; that isn't hard, that is rewarding!

I have worked at PICC now for 7 1/2 years. I have learned so much on how to care for these babies. My job has expanded to training caregivers, nurses, pharmacy students and even medical residents! I have presented at conferences and been on TV, (my family asks for autographs!) I give tours and talk to visiting groups. I am so appreciative of the experiences and knowledge I have received while working here.

When asked what has been the best memory or can I remember a particular baby that touched me more than any other; the truth is that there hasn't been just one story or baby that stands out. Every baby touches me in some way. I want to take them all home! (They won't let me!) One minute my heart hurts knowing that they are in pain and I want to do anything I can to ease their discomfort. Then, later, you see that they have turned that corner and are feeling better. Next minute you may have a baby smiling up at you or hear a soft cooing coming from her crib. Nothing can bring a smile or brighten your day like a happy baby! That is when I heal a bit.

The tough days are when all of the special people who work at PICC have to say goodbye to one of our little ones. While we hope that their lives will be rich and full of happiness, we are content in knowing we have done everything we can to give these beautiful babies a safe and loving beginning to the start of their lives. Everyday I am thankful knowing that we at PICC are available for these precious newborns that need us.

Kelly DenHeyer, RN

LUNCHEON 2013

Thank you to all the guests, speakers, Table Captains and sponsors who made this year's Building the Future Luncheon such a success. A record-breaking 780 supporters filled ShoWare Center for the festive event May 10 and raised more than \$106,000 for the babies. All proceeds from the luncheon help pay for infant care in PICC's Newborn Nursery.

A special treat for football fans this year was the chance to meet and be inspired by keynote speaker and former Seahawk Mack Strong. Some lucky bidders even took home NFL footballs and other Seahawk memorabilia autographed by the popular All-Pro and champion of children's causes.



Keynote Speaker, Mack Strong



Representative
Dave Upthegrove

News Anchor/Reporter Michelle Esteban hosted the program, which featured honors for retiring Rep. Dave Upthegrove for his tireless advocacy for PICC in the state legislature. Dave is leaving the legislature to run for King County Council. Also taking part in the program were U.S. Rep. Dave Reichert and Lt. Gov. Brad Owen.

The story of PICC graduate LaKenya Townsend and her parents, Pastor Sam and Gwendolyn Townsend of Tukwila, was featured in this year's video. Barbara Drennen presented LaKenya with a scholarship in honor of the late Rep. June Leonard, an early legislative champion for PICC.

Special thanks for a successful luncheon go to auctioneer Larry Snyder, vocalist Desiree Olson, parent/speaker Sarah Strode, the band Woodrush, and the following sponsors: Mucklshoot Charity Fund, Tecton Corporation, Moneytree, Mutual of Enumclaw, Commencement Bank, Specialty Warehouse Ltd., Holland America, Dr. Peyton Gaunt, the Dental Office of Dr. Robert Odegard, UW Medicine/Valley Medical Center, Auto Warehousing, Coatings Plus LLC, and Board Member Nancy Elop.

SAVE THE DATE FOR NEXT YEAR'S LUNCHEON:

Friday, May 16, 2014, at ShoWare Center.

For information on being a sponsor or table captain, contact Elaine Purchase (253-852-5253, elainep@picc.net).



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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

LAKENYA TOWNSEND



Pictured above:

Pediatric Interim Care Center, The Newborn Nursery's Executive Director, Barbara Drennen and Miss LaKenya Townsend, a graduate of the Pediatric Interim Care Center and the 2013 recipient of the late Representative June Leonard Scholarship.

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

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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.