

# Fragile Times



## A VERY BUSY FALL FOR PICC!



Aside from caring for a larger than usual number of babies, we hosted two very special fundraising events!

Beginning in September, our first ever Stork Club Dinner and Auction was held. Organized by Board members Kim Ross and Sadie Herting, it was a huge success. The Coterie Room, which was graciously donated for our event, was the perfect venue. Beautifully decorated in white with Glassy Baby candles throughout, it provided an elegant backdrop to a gourmet

dinner prepared and donated by Seattle "Top Chef" winner Nina Vicente. Our auction-item donors were very generous, providing amazing one-of-kind items and events which help create a festive (and competitive) atmosphere! We wish to thank all who attended, contributed, and bid, with special thanks going to Kim and her helpers. It truly was, as you promised, an unforgettable evening.



## WALK FOR THE BABIES



On October 3rd, we had our 3rd Annual Walk for the Babies. Once again we were blessed with a beautiful autumn morning for our annual Walk for the Babies beginning at Kent Station. The sun peeked out just in time for the start of the 5K walk through downtown Kent to PICC and around the Interurban Trail,



ending back at Duke's in Kent Station for chowder and prizes. About 200 participants walked, ran, and pushed strollers for the walk-a-thon, raising a total of \$14,317 for PICC's babies. Taking home prizes for top fundraisers were Team Rohdy captained by Tom Rohdy, Team Pink and Blue We Walk for You captained by Donna Potter, Team Doris captained by Nancy Heck, Team Walk with Love captained by Elise Leonard-Demick, and Team Kase captained by Patty Flanagan. Winning honors for top team recruiters were Team Walk with Love captained by Elise Leonard-Demick and Team Muckleshoot captained by Marcie Elkins. Prizes were also awarded for runners finishing first and best costume. We send special thanks to our terrific Walk Chairperson, Patty Flanagan; to Kent Station for hosting the event, with Roadrunner Sports and Duke's Chowder House; to Mutual of Enumclaw Insurance, M & M Construction, and Commencement Bank for sponsoring the event; and to the Renton, Auburn, Federal Way and Puyallup Walmart Stores for donating prizes.



*Next year's Walk for the Babies will be Saturday, Oct. 1, 2016, and will again be hosted by Kent Station.*

PEDIATRIC INTERIM CARE CENTER

*If we are to reach real peace in the world, we shall have to begin with the children.*

*Mahatma Gandhi*

## THANK YOU

For the past 25 years, we have worked with many states trying to help them set up a program similar to PICC's. (see article, pg. 3) Sadly, many have not been able to have the success we did. It seems that either their Legislature wasn't involved or their Department of Social and Health Services wouldn't support them. And today, it is even more difficult due to the economy and the way the health care system needs to fill their beds.

When we started, our State Legislature took us under their wing because they knew the impact the drugs were having on babies. Here in our own state, cocaine had become an epidemic, and many babies affected by it were being born prematurely weighing as little as a pound and a half. At that time the hospitals were overwhelmed with the number of these fragile newborns and the cost of caring for them.

Today our legislature continues to protect the babies and Washington State taxpayers by partially funding PICC. This gives the hospitals a place to send the babies when they are ready to leave the hospital but not quite ready for home care while saving millions of dollars for their care.

We could not have done this without the legislature's support throughout the years. Nor could we have ever succeeded without each and every one of you who have supported the babies.

## QUILTING FOR PICC BABIES



Velna Steiner is an absolutely amazing centenarian. At 100 years old, she's still sewing quilts and bringing them to PICC's babies. Velna admits that she does get a little help with her quilting these days.

"I just piece together the tops, and the Quilters' Club at Des Moines Methodist Church add the backing," she explained. One thing we know for sure. Velna stitches a little love into every baby's quilt.



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## NURSE KELLY



I am so excited and honored to have been given this opportunity to

become the Nurse Manager at PICC. In the 9 years that I have been with PICC, I have had the privilege to have worked very closely with Barbara Drennen, the Executive Director and Founder, who has taught me so much about caring for this special population of babies. Taking over the nursery was a huge decision for me and one that I didn't take lightly. My goal and hopes for the future are to continue working together with our wonderful, dedicated staff to keep all of our babies safe and to continue to give them the best start in life that we can. Thank you so much Barb for entrusting me with this great responsibility - I am dedicated to continuing the legacy that you began!

Kelly DenHeyer, RN

## MIKE MELTON



Often we talk about all the wonderful people, organizations and families that have reached out to help the babies at PICC. But there is one person - though he shies from the limelight - we wish to recognize. Without this dear friend of ours, we absolutely would not be able to keep the center in the perfect condition it is in! Mike first came to PICC in the late 80's to help us get the center up and running. We had been given a time line of only thirty days to install new doors and windows, complete the laundry room, paint, install a new furnace, hire and train staff, etc. Mike was there to help us through it all and he has never left our side. For nearly 30 years Mike has come running at a moment's notice - 24 hours a day - *always* volunteering his time! Extremely talented, Mike has done it all for us, from setting up cribs & desks, repairing washers & dryers, and yes, even calming a baby! We cannot thank him enough for his caring ways and friendship.

## SHARING KNOWLEDGE

Recently, I was in Nevada where I was invited to speak at a conference concerning newborns with prenatal drug exposure. St. Mary's Hospital in Reno was seeing an increase in such babies and asked me to share what I have learned over the years. Sharing what we know, I believe, is important, but I also find it interesting to learn how other facilities manage their babies. I was fortunate to be able visit two of their hospital nurseries, where we saw many newborns including two one-pound infants. That is always very emotional for me; seeing how strong these tiny neonates are and what they are able to overcome! As with all of my engagements, I meet some of the most wonderful people. People who are committed to caring for the babies and who are striving to provide the best start possible for these little ones.



In addition to my travels teaching, we have groups visit us quite often. A few years ago, we had a group visit that was hoping to replicate a facility such as PICC in their hometown in West Virginia. I worked with them for a couple of years helping them design their program and, in late 2014, they opened their doors. Early this October, a nurse, who now works at the center in West Virginia, came to see where their nursery concept was developed.

A few weeks later, I had a visit from three ladies from Ohio. They had the same aspirations regarding opening a center such as ours. Still in the planning stages, they wanted to learn more about the care of the babies including financing and designing a program.

Earlier this year, to my amazement, I was contacted by a lovely lady from New Zealand who had read about PICC and felt her community would benefit from a program similar to ours. She is now planning a visit this coming year to learn about designing and operating such a center.

It is so heartwarming to know that by sharing our experiences and knowledge, we can help so many infants across the world, get the help and care they so deserve! That was all we ever wanted when we opened PICC 25 years ago - to help these smallest victims of drug abuse. And now, we are able to help more than we ever imagined!

Barbara Drennen, Executive Director

## DRUGS OF CHOICE

*Today, the majority of babies admitted to PICC have had prenatal exposure to heroin and methamphetamines. This equates to a larger percent of our babies needing to be withdrawn using morphine. Harry Hansen, a U.S. Marshall who is also on PICC's Board of Directors, is our authority on drug use in this area. We asked him why we tend to see the two drugs frequently used together? He said that it is common for users, who are coming down off a heroin high, to use methamphetamines (a stimulant) to pick them up. He said these two drugs are typically from Mexico and are arriving in force to the Northwest. Harry also pointed out another huge drug problem is the increase in auto accidents and deaths related to driving while under influence of both recreational and medicinal marijuana use.*

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.*

## IMAGINE THE HEARTBREAK...



Standing in the nursery at PICC, I am looking at a miracle of life - a beautiful baby girl. She is less than 48 hours old and weighs only 4 pounds. It is hard to imagine that this baby was still in her mother's body just hours ago. Earlier today, I arrived at the hospital to transport the baby back to PICC. Anticipating my arrival, I found the mother holding tightly to her baby with tears streaming down her face. We spoke for a few minutes while

the mother dressed her infant for the ride to the Center. I gave the mother a hug and made sure she understood she could come to the center and visit her baby as often as she wished. Frequently, as I leave a hospital room with a baby, I look back to find the mother sobbing with such heartbreak. I cannot describe how emotional it is to have any mother hand her baby over to me. Over the years I have tried to make it as easy as possible for any mom in this situation - I encourage them to carry their baby to the car for me; always making sure she kisses her little one goodbye. But as I drive off, looking in the rear view mirror, I usually see the same scene -- the mother is weeping. It's never easy for a mom.

Yes, we know that this has happened because the mother was using drugs. And yes, we know she is aware that she has caused her baby to have after-effects from the drugs she used and, of course, she knows that her baby needs our help to get through this. But, it is still heartbreaking. There is one thing I know for absolute certainty and that is: *I will never question a mother's love for her baby!* Is seeing her baby like this enough for her to get help to get clean and sober? Sadly, it often isn't. Do I want the baby to be returned to a mother that is still using? Of course not. But this doesn't mean we shouldn't have compassion for her loss and know that this baby's mother, like any of us would, is experiencing such great sadness.

I have been caring for newborns now for close to fifty years. I have witnessed the horrible devastation drugs have had on individuals, families and society, but most especially on babies. Drugs have hit every family in America, either directly or indirectly. This is an insidious disease and we need to be vigilant to protect our families and communities. BUT we must also remember that, in addition to the babies directly affected, these parents are our children also.

## GIVING THANKS

*As we enter the season of Thanksgiving, we want you to know that all of us at PICC are grateful to you--our friends, donors, and volunteers--for 25 years of caring and support.*

During the fall, many companies encourage their employees to support community causes through workplace giving campaigns and events. We're grateful to all the companies and hardworking employees who include PICC in their workplace giving. The money we receive through employee giving provides a continuous and important source of funding for our daily operations.

### FOUNDATIONS

Please join us in thanking the following foundations that have provided support to PICC in 2015:

Northwest Children's Fund, Nordstrom Corporate Contributions, Muckleshoot Charity Fund, Norman Archibald Charitable Foundation, L.T. Murray Family Foundation, Moneytree, Schiff Foundation, Anderson Foundation, Norcliffe Foundation, The Cobb Foundation, RealNetworks Foundation, Charles See Foundation

### LOCAL CITIES

We greatly appreciate the local cities that support the care of drug-exposed infants from their communities by providing funding to PICC:

City of Tacoma MHSUD Program, City of Auburn, City of Kent, City of Renton, City of Federal Way, City of Covington, City of Issaquah. If you live in one of these cities, please let your City Council know that you appreciate them, too!

## IMMUNIZATIONS SAVE LIVES



Dr. Peyton Gaunt

Immunizations save millions of lives of all ages each year—including those most vulnerable to influenza—individuals with underlying disease, children under five and, especially the elderly over 65. For adults, a flu shot in the fall or early winter gives protection against three to four of the family strains of “influenza” (not the “stomach flu” but respiratory types A and B). Influenza is a disease that peaks in January and kills thousands - from 3,000 to a high of 49,000 - in the USA every year, as well as causing significant illnesses in millions more.

There are several ways to receive vaccines. For those reluctant to get shots, a nasal spray is approved for ages 2-49. or, for those age 18-64 years old, there is the option of using a much smaller needle to inject under the skin instead of into a muscle. For those allergic to eggs, an egg-free trivalent shot is available. For those over 65, a high dose quadrivalent shot is recommended.

But it must be realized that immunizations are not as effective for those over 65 and the flu shot isn't recommended for children under six months of age. That is why it is so important to reduce the added risk by immunizing all family members who may come in contact with these fragile populations.

If you haven't gotten your flu vaccine this year, please do it NOW to protect yourself and the ones you love. As an additional precaution for those older adults going in for their flu vaccines...why not also get immunized against shingles, pneumonia (2 different vaccines), and get a tetanus booster if needed. The tetanus should be combined with pertussis (whooping cough) once to protect babies less than six months of age who can die from the disease.

## HOLIDAY GIFT IDEA



*This year send the Christmas card that makes a difference and give a heartwarming gift at the same time.*

During the holiday season, when you make a donation (minimum \$10) to PICC in a recipient's name, we'll send you our 2015 Christmas gift card to personally sign and send. The card's inside message says: "As a special gift to you, a donation has been made in your name to Pediatric Interim Care Center. This contribution will provide special care for babies recovering from prenatal drug exposures in PICC's Newborn Nursery this holiday season." Order cards on PICC's website ([picc.net](http://picc.net)), by mail (328 4th Ave S, Kent WA 98032), or by calling 253-852-5253.

## LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE



For the past several years, PICC has been happy to host the Leadership Institute of South Puget Sound for one of their annual sessions. Each team attending the institute takes on a community project, and PICC has been blessed to be chosen for three team projects. One team organized a walk-a-thon for PICC, and a team last year built a new ramp for ambulance deliveries. This year's leadership team has taken on repairing the glide rockers we use in the nursery. After a decade of constant use, the glide mechanisms are failing on all of them. The babies will surely be happy to have them back in working order thanks to these caring leaders.



PEDIATRIC INTERIM  
CARE CENTER

328 4th Avenue South  
Kent, WA 98032

*"There can be  
no keener revelation  
of a society's soul  
than the way  
in which it  
treat its children."*

*Nelson Mandela*

HONORED VISITOR



*Washington's First Lady Trudi Inslee  
takes a personal interest in helping protect PICC's babies.*

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

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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.