

# Fragile Times



## Troy

*It was the baby's eyes. They looked wise – thinking; yet questioning. They made you feel like he already knew the answers but was asking you a question at the same time.*



Troy was already 2 weeks old when he came to the Pediatric Interim Care Center, The Newborn Nursery. A bit premature, he had been kept at the hospital until he

was a little stronger. For PICC's staff, he was a very easy baby. He didn't require much encouragement when feeding like so many cocaine exposed infants did. Sadly though, he had no family – no visitors – it felt like he didn't belong to anyone. PICC staff was his family; everyone doted on him. Volunteers loved holding him at every opportunity. But even then, with the best of care and attention, his eyes seemed to still ask "Doesn't anyone want me?"

Ready to be discharged from PICC after three weeks, DSHS was having a difficult time finding placement for him. His stay at PICC was nearing six weeks when it was discovered that little Troy had a sister! Within less than a day, DSHS found the couple that had adopted her and asked if they might be able to care for her brother also. They were ecstatic! They would love to have Troy join their family.

When his new family arrived at PICC, it was one of those moments that are so filled with joy. For them, it was love at first sight!

As we all said goodbye, you could not help but notice that his eyes now seemed to say that he knew he was going home - he was wanted!

## FIGHTING FOR OUR LIFE

Pediatric Interim Care Center is fighting for it's life – and, more importantly, for the lives of the drug-exposed and medically fragile infants we serve. DSHS has recommended that Pediatric Interim Care Center be eliminated as one of the department's ten percent reduction items for the state's 2011-13 budget. This ill-conceived action would actually cost the state taxpayers millions of dollars every year, while jeopardizing the health and safety of the vulnerable newborns cared for at our center. PICC is and always has been a budget line item supported by the legislature to fill an important gap between hospital and home for drug-exposed and medically fragile newborns who require an interim level of 24-hour medically supervised care. For DSHS to propose to eliminate us from *their budget*, makes no sense. PICC has never been funded by DSHS.

DSHS argues that the babies who come to PICC should be served "in their own homes" continued on page 2

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

*A baby  
is born  
with a  
need to be  
loved—  
and  
never  
outgrows  
it.*

*Frank A. Clark*

## FIGHTING FOR OUR LIFE (cont.)

and in foster care, which is ultimately better for children, and at a lower cost.” This statement is highly misleading and inaccurate. PICC serves drug-affected and medically fragile infants who require a greater level of 24-hour monitoring and care than would be possible in a home setting – babies who would otherwise be in the hospital. According to Dr. David C. Woodrum, Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Washington and one of the state’s leading experts on Narcotic Abstinence Syndrome, “It would be an understatement to say 85-90% of the babies sent to PICC would have had to remain in the hospital due to acuity of care.” These babies are not ready for foster care, and were it not for PICC, they would stay in the hospital much longer. Dr. Woodrum goes on to say:

*“...if the current activities of Pediatric Interim Care Center were reduced or eliminated, the quality of care of infants with Narcotic Abstinence Syndrome would be greatly diminished. Health providers would be forced to choose from two unsatisfactory options: Hospitalization in costly special care units where expertise and experi-*



*ence with this condition is limited and the environment is sub-optimal; or discharge to a home setting, an even less satisfactory and possibly unsafe setting for this fragile population”*

Over the years at PICC, we have seen the abuse, neglect, and accidents that can occur when babies are sent home to withdraw.

The elimination of PICC would be a step back 20 years and a tragic loss of the large and loving investment the people of Washington State have made in the welfare of drug-exposed and medically fragile infants. Half of money we need to care for the babies comes from the generosity of our citizens—people who simply give with their hearts. With their help and the long-standing wisdom and support of the Washington State Legislature, PICC has been here to protect these little ones for 20 years. Washington State has every right to be proud of the model program it has in PICC and of the 2,500 children who have had a safe and healthy start in life because so many people cared.



## Prescription Drug Abuse

Prescription drug abuse is quickly becoming one of the most common types of addiction. The drugs are easy to get and quite inexpensive.

Prescription drug addiction can start out innocently enough. Many people believe that all drugs prescribed by a doctor are safe. They are unaware of the highly addictive danger in some drugs, such as Oxycodone, Vicodin, and Percocet. Abuse of these drugs can progress to such a level that it leads the user to sideline with illegal opiates to maintain.

Women with an addiction to prescribed drugs are, many times, trying to keep it a secret. Mothers with babies at PICC have a difficult time hiding the fact that their drug use has gotten out of hand. They are often frantic to get her baby home, so they can continue to live a life that appears normal.

The withdrawal process for the baby is equal to heroin withdrawal. It can be dangerous and painful. In most cases, morphine is needed to withdraw the infant once it is born. The process can take weeks, making it even more difficult for the mother to keep anyone from knowing of her addiction.

A precaution that we can all take is to destroy all left-over prescription drugs that are no longer needed and to hide ones being used. It is very common for illegal drug users to go through other people’s medicine cabinets with intent to steal.

*When You Plan for Your Own Family - Remember Our Babies, Too.  
A Planned Giving Gift to PICC is an investment in the future of babies born in Washington.  
Visit our web site for more information ([www.picc.net](http://www.picc.net)) or call and ask for Elaine.*

## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK...



In the late 80's, with my many years of experience caring for newborns, I was approached by local hospitals, doctors, nurses and social workers to design a program that would be able to care for drug exposed infants and to keep them safe until they were ready for a regular foster home.

On October 1, 1990, we opened the doors to the Pediatric Interim Care Center. With many of the same staff members I have today, we have continued the passion each of us shared in keeping the babies healthy and safe. Over the years the program has grown and we not only have kept the babies safe but we have proved to be extremely cost effective. To date, we have saved taxpayers more than \$78 million.

Our program has become known worldwide. We have had many visitors from around the world interested in PICC. One was an RN from Yorkshire, England who won a magazine contest to visit the United States and bring a program back to replicate in her country. She chose us as one of her destinations! Recently we had visitors from Kent's sister city from Norway who gained some new ideas about how they can assist others in their home town. Denmark, France, England, Japan and Chile are others who have been PICC's guests over the years.

With this far-reaching recognition of our program, I am constantly confused as to why we always have to battle Children and Family Services in Olympia (our state capital) when it comes to protecting the babies. If doctors, nurses, local DSHS

social workers, community members, other states and countries recognize the value of PICC and want to replicate our program, why can't our own state leaders - who are assigned to keep the babies safe - realize it?

We are proud of what we do and of the hundreds of little lives on which we have had a positive effect. Twenty years ago babies needed PICC, and today the need is even greater.

To receive updates and future newsletters by e-mail, go to our website at [www.picc.net/subscribe1.htm](http://www.picc.net/subscribe1.htm)

## MechaWear.com is raising funds for PICC

One Cause / 10 Bracelets / One Color

*MechaWear's colorful Bicycle Chain Bracelet  
has been called*

*"The ultimate expression of cycling culture."*

MechWear producing a limited run of bracelets in a special color and 100% of the proceeds will go to PICC!

**Go to MechaWear.com for all of the details**



*Yes, I would like to support the*

Pediatric Interim Care Center, The Newborn Nursery  
328 4th Avenue South, Kent, WA 98032

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed please find my donation in the amount of:

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*Please contact me about Planned Giving*

*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



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To:

*While we try to teach  
Our children all about life,  
Our children teach us what life  
is all about.*

*- Angela Schwandt*

*Save the Date*

Please save the date for PICC's Building the Future Luncheon, our major annual fund-raiser. Next year's luncheon date has been set for Friday, May 20, 2011, at ShoWare Center in Kent.

The luncheon is complimentary, but guests are requested to make a donation (\$50 suggested minimum) to help support PICC's mission of caring for the littlest victims of child abuse. Last year's luncheon was attended by 500 guests and raised \$66,000.

You can sign up on our website ([picc.net](http://picc.net)) or contact Development Director Elaine Purchase (253-852-5253 or [elainep@picc.net](mailto:elainep@picc.net)) to reserve your place. Elaine is also looking for Table Captains for the luncheon.

"Table Captains are the key to the luncheon's success," Elaine said. "Table Captains invite guests to fill their table, and then they host the table on the day of the luncheon. There's no financial obligation, and it's a wonderful way to spread PICC's mission."

*Thank You!*

*We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our PICC friends, family and supporters who have never forgotten these most innocent victims of drug abuse. Without your continued belief in our mission, we could not continue to provide the care so necessary for their success.*

*Special Request*

The Center is experiencing a shortage of:  
*Newborn and 8-12 lb. size diapers & Johnson's Baby Shampoo.*  
Can you help??

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.