



Brighter Tomorrows Story Contest Submission—Through a Parent's Eyes


Jennifer Pearce, RN, Shands Childrens Hospital, Gainesville, FL

I had been a NICU nurse for just over 5 years when the unexpected happened to me—I became the mommy of a 27-week-old baby boy named Noah. The experience greatly changed the way I practice nursing today, and I would like to share our story. I was having a great pregnancy until my water broke. I was admitted to the hospital, placed on bed rest and received two doses of steroids for the baby's lungs. Three days later, on August 16, 2006, the baby went into fetal distress, and I underwent an emergency Cesarean section. During my first trip into the unit to see my baby, I saw the unit through a parent's eyes. A NICU can be a very scary place with lots of high-tech equipment, unfamiliar faces, and doctors explaining the condition of my new baby, who was so incredibly tiny under everything that was put in place just to help him live.

I now understand what it is like to be a parent in the NICU. Even though I was a

nurse, I had problems understanding what the doctors were telling me. My mind was so full of questions and concerns that I couldn't seem to absorb what they were telling me. I know how hard it is to leave a baby and go home, especially the day I was discharged and had to walk into the house for the first time without my baby. I know what it is like to lose my third trimester and have to pump breast milk instead of breastfeed my baby. I know the extreme emotions felt by a parent with a baby in the NICU: guilt, sadness, envy, anger, and even happiness. I know how difficult it is to have my baby doing so well one minute and then be so sick the next. I also know the extreme joy I experienced the day I got to take my baby home and how surprised I was that the preemie issues didn't stop when we left the hospital.

Whether 1 day or many months, a stay in the NICU leaves an impression on a parent for the rest of his or her life. I had Noah 8 months ago, took him home 5

months ago, and went back to work 3 months ago. Every day it feels like it just happened yesterday. When I walk into the unit to go to work, I remember what it was like to walk into the unit as a parent for the first time and for the hundredth time. I treat parents with the same respect that I wanted. I give the time they need from me, even if it does put me behind schedule. I learned that being a nurse in the NICU doesn't mean that I only take care of the babies I am assigned, I also take care of the parents—and sometimes the parents actually need more care than the baby! I treat every baby the way I would want Noah to be treated, and I have learned that one person can make a difference, especially to the family in the NICU. 

Jennifer Pearce practices at Shands Childrens Hospital in Gainesville, FL. She submitted this story to NANN's 2007 Brighter Tomorrows Story Contest. You can read all story submissions on the Meetings page at www.NANN.org.

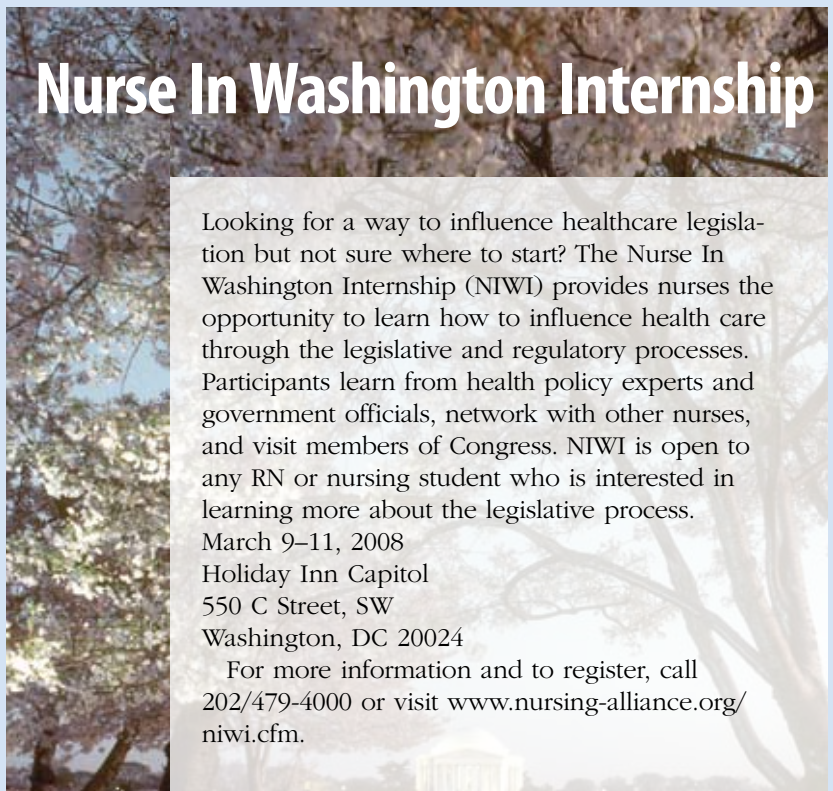
Chapter News

It's that time of year again—chapter reports are due. If your chapter has not yet turned in its annual report, please do so now!

Many chapters have recently started their own Web sites. To view a specific NANN chapter's Web site, please visit the chapter page on www.NANN.org.

Jennifer Boyle, president of the **Southeastern Michigan Association of Neonatal Nurses (SMANN)** reported that the chapter awarded two \$2,000 scholarships this year to BSN students interested in NICU nursing! This is the first year the chapter offered the scholarships, and the recipients were announced on November 15, 2007. They are very excited about this new program.

The Chicago Area Association of Neonatal Nurses (CAANN) is sponsoring a cookie bake sale for the Ronald McDonald House at Loyola University Medical Center in Maywood, IL. They would also like to congratulate their nominee and winner of the Robyn Main Excellence in Clinical Practice Award, Jeanette Cronin, BSN RNC.



Nurse In Washington Internship

Looking for a way to influence healthcare legislation but not sure where to start? The Nurse In Washington Internship (NIWI) provides nurses the opportunity to learn how to influence health care through the legislative and regulatory processes. Participants learn from health policy experts and government officials, network with other nurses, and visit members of Congress. NIWI is open to any RN or nursing student who is interested in learning more about the legislative process.

March 9–11, 2008
Holiday Inn Capitol
550 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

For more information and to register, call 202/479-4000 or visit www.nursing-alliance.org/niwi.cfm.

Inspiring Stories from the NANN Listserv

Messages on the NANN Listservs® are usually informative, helpful, and often can be inspiring. *NANN Central* will publish some of the stories shared by nurses on the Listservs as a regular feature. The following message was sent to the Staff Nurse Listserv (SNSIGnet):

"I'm 56 years old and married with three grown daughters and four grandchildren. We have custody of two of the grandchildren, and it's a whole lot easier raising children when you're in your 20s than it is in your 50s!

"I've been a neonatal nurse for about 23 years. I kind of fell into it. I took my first job because the hospital I wanted to work at didn't have an opening in the labor and delivery department (I wanted to become a certified nurse midwife), but they told me if I took a job in the low birthweight nursery I could transfer as soon as there

was an opening. I decided to accept the job, then decided to stay until I got tired of it. Twenty-three years later, I'm *still* loving it.


"It took me 15 years to get my RN diploma and an additional 20 years to get my BSN, but I did it! It didn't help that I had to pretty much start over each time we moved. I attended eight different universities in four different states. I got my first RNC in the low-risk nursery in 1985 and then in the NICU in the mid-90s. As I remember it, the low-risk test was harder for me than the NICU one, possibly because I had more experience by the time I took the NICU test. I am also an NRP instructor.

"I have worked mainly in Level III-IV but have also done my time in Level I-II. I've worked in nine hospitals in eight cities in five states. Hurricane Katrina took my job, and even though the hospital that

I worked at has reopened, I don't feel I can return after the way they treated their nurses. I am currently what you might call "between jobs." Katrina forced me to do something that I had considered doing for some time—to become a traveling nurse. I did several contracts but am now exploring agency work in New Orleans. Hopefully, I'll be able to get enough work doing that to cover my needs.

"In my spare time, I'm a licensed tour guide in New Orleans and love doing that almost as much as I do taking care of the babies.

*"Les bons temps rouleront nouveau—*The good times will roll again."

To join a Listserv, visit the Members Only section on www.NANN.org and click "Join NANN's Listservs." Join as many as you'd like, and check future issues of *NANN Central* for more Listserv stories. 

NANN Board of Directors Succession Grid

The following grid illustrates the succession plan for the NANN Board of Directors. For more information, please see "From NANN's President" in the print version of the Winter 2008 issue of *NANN Central*.

	January 2007	January 2008	July 2008	Fall 2008	Summer 2009	Fall 2009	Summer 2010	Fall 2010	Summer 2011	Fall 2011	Summer 2012
Immediate Past President	Vacant	Vacant		Vacant		Vacant		Lori Armstrong serves 1 year 2010–2011		Vacant	
President	Peggy Gordin 2007–Fall 2008			President-Elect Lori Armstrong assumes presidency Fall 2008–Fall 2010			President-Elect assumes presidency 2010–2012				
President-Elect	Lori Armstrong 2007–2008		Elected for 2 years	2008–2010				Vacant	Elected for 1 year	Serves 1 year 2011–2012	
Secretary/Treasurer	Cyndi Weiss 2007–2008		Elected for 2 years	2008–2010			Elected for 2 years	2010–2012			Elected for 2 years
Director	Moni Snell 2007–2008		Extended for 1 year, second term	2008–2009	Elected for 2 years	2009–2011			Elected for 2 years	2011–2013	
Director	Cheryl Carlson 2007–2008		Extended for 1 year, second term	2008–2009	Elected for 2 years	2009–2011			Elected for 2 years	2011–2013	
Director	Angela Ryan 2007–2008		Extended for 1 year, second term	2008–2009	Elected for 2 years	2009–2011			Elected for 2 years	2011–2013	
Director-NANNP Council Chair	Robin Bissinger 2007–2008		Extended for 1 year, second term	2008–2009	Elected for 2 years	2009–2011			Elected for 2 years	2011–2013	
Director	Susan Reinarz 2007–2008		Elected for 2 years	2008–2010			Elected for 2 years	2010–2012			Elected for 2 years
Director	Diane Durkin 2007–2008		Elected for 2 years	2008–2010			Elected for 2 years	2010–2012			Elected for 2 years
Director-SIG	Beverly Jorgenson 2007–2008		Elected for 2 years	2008–2010			Elected for 2 years	2010–2012			Elected for 2 years

Call for Applications: 2008 Neonatal Resuscitation Program Research Grant and Young Investigator Award

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP) Steering Committee and the Section on Perinatal Pediatrics are pleased to announce the availability of the 2008 NRP Research Grant and the NRP Young Investigator Award. The awards are designed to support basic science, clinical, or epidemiological research pertaining to the broad area of neonatal resuscitation.

Physicians-in-training or individuals within 4 years of completing fellowship training are eligible to apply for up to \$10,000 through the NRP Young Investigator Award. Any healthcare professional with an interest in neonatal resuscitation can submit a proposal for up to \$25,000 through the NRP Research Grant program. Researchers

from Canadian and U.S. institutions are invited to apply.

Potential applicants should submit an intent for application to the NRP Steering Committee by Friday, May 2, 2008. All intents will be reviewed and the committee will ask a select group to submit full proposals. Those selected to submit full proposals will receive the formal application by Friday, June 27, 2008. Completed applications will be due Friday, August 29, 2008.

To obtain the NRP Research Grant or NRP Young Investigator Award program guidelines and the intent for application, please contact the AAP Division of Life Support Programs at 800/433-9016 ext. 4798 or visit www.aap.org/nrp and select the science tab.

NANN Store at CafePress.com

NANN is pleased to be able to offer a variety of logo items for sale online including T-shirts, note cards, magnets, wall clocks, and even dog shirts! Check out the variety of items at www.cafepress.com/NANN. The NANN shop at CafePress has quality items for you, your friends, coworkers, family, and more. If you have a request for an item that you don't see, let us know by sending an e-mail to info@NANN.org.



Membership Dues Increase

NANN has undertaken several new initiatives that impact the value of your membership. During 2007, NANN focused on the creation of an ambitious series of publications devoted to neonatal care. Our plans for 2008 include an updated Web site, the development of an advanced competency in developmental care, and the initiation of advocacy efforts by sending two representatives to the Nurse In Washington Internship program and by participation with the American Nurses Association as an organizational affiliate.

In addition, NANN strives to provide the additional educational programming, products, and services you require while managing ongoing increases in programming and administrative costs. In order to continue providing relevant educational opportunities at reasonable, member-reduced rates, the NANN Board of Directors determined that a nominal increase in dues was the most feasible method to offset these expenses. It has been 7 years since our last dues increase.

The following increases are effective January 1, 2008:

- Active Membership: The dues for active members increase by \$4 to \$99 per year.
- International Membership: The dues for international members increase by \$4 to \$135 per year.

This increase also will provide seed money for funding new activities arising from the strategic planning initiatives. NANN is becoming a stronger, more viable association in order to serve you in the best ways possible.

With careful planning and a consistent, focused set of priorities, NANN will continue to be *the* advocate and leading change agent for the neonatal nursing profession to optimize care for neonates and their families. Thank you for your continued support.