

synova *Spotlight*

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1. Why do/did you choose to attend the PLF? And, what makes it different from other conferences?

A couple of my colleagues had attended the NICU LF the year prior and were raving about the conference. They informed me that there was a perinatal offering and I instantly started to do my research. The conference agenda had so much to offer a leader, specifically, a leader in the maternal child health field. Because of my membership through AWHONN, I met the criteria to apply for the new leader scholarship. I was ecstatic to find out that I had received it! The scholarship afforded me the opportunity to experience the best conference I have ever attended. Because of the networking opportunities, pertinent content, and fun-filled agenda, I am now hooked. In today's ever-changing healthcare arena, there is no other conference out there that meets the needs of the perinatal leader.

2. What do you gain out of attending (i.e. new networks, up to date info, time to rejuvenate, etc)?

I left the PLF feeling like my cup was well over half full. As a leader in healthcare, it is easy to feel deflated and defeated in times of rapid change. The PLF gave me the opportunity to awaken my passion for leadership and the population that I serve. I returned to my office feeling like I had a purpose and a mission. I gained so many tools and resources to implement quality improvement projects on our unit. In addition, I was able to network with other

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leaders that were dealing with the same issues that I found myself tackling each day. A PLF attendee can expect to take home an enormous database of contacts, a wealth of new knowledge and innovation, and a sense of comradery.

3. How does what you learn impact your work?

The ideas that I harnessed through networking, speakers, and activities helped me to become a more maternal child health you are required to be a content expert in the population that you care for and at the same time become clinically sound in your leadership competencies. This forum provided a platform to develop both of those pathways. I gained new knowledge about topics such as how to staff my unit all the way to how to capitalize upon the power of influence.

4. What are the top three things you should focus on as a new nurse leader?

- Connect with your staff. Take the time to get to know each one of them. Invite them into your office to discuss their goals, passions, and opportunities for professional development. By rounding on each one of your employees, in a methodical and purposeful way, you inadvertently gain trust and build their enthusiasm and commitment to the organization.
- Reward and Recognize. What gets rewarded will get repeated. As the department Director, I round on patients daily to ensure that the care we are providing is consistent, of high quality, and meeting the patient's expectations. When I have received positive comments, I make sure to relay that feedback to the nurse that was recognized for going above and beyond. It is important to ensure that the nurse's fellow colleagues are around during those times of recognition. This encourages the other staff members to



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repeat the recognized behavior. I am sure to send handwritten thank you letters to the homes of those nurses that consistently get acknowledged for outstanding patient care. This has proven to have a very powerful impact.

- Communicate often and connect to purpose. By communicating with staff in a very clear and understandable way, they will become more trusting and engaged. The biggest challenges when communicating with staff are finding the most effective way to connect and the necessary time. I am always mindful of the quote, "once is never enough" and there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to communication. When relaying information to your staff, whether it is rolling out a new policy or implementing a new practice, repetition is your best friend. Utilizing multiple venues such as emails, daily huddles, and one-on-one education will help to get your message across and provide the best sustainability. In addition to clearly communicating your message, you must also get your staff to understand why you are asking them to do something. When staff members are clearly informed, they are much more likely to make thoughtful decisions.

5. When you have a stressful day, what do you do to relax and rejuvenate?

We have a beautiful peninsula with lots of beaches in my hometown. In the summer months I enjoy walking those beaches with my kiddos and collecting beach glass. In the winter (which is nine months out of the year in Pennsylvania), there is plenty of time to craft ☺ I find that on particularly stressful days, a glass of wine does the trick!

6. Are there any new apps or other technology that you can recommend that help you do your job more effectively?

I haven't found anything exciting out there that is specific for leadership, but I would love to hear from anyone that has. I do have an exciting app that I recommend to pregnant moms. The BAM (Baby Arrival Monitor) application allows users to easily alert and update the significant people in their life, all at one time, during the labor and delivery of their baby. Users simply sign up, register their baby, and invite their guests into their "virtual waiting room." I really appreciate this application due to the fact that our facility, and many others, have very strict visitor policies in the labor and delivery suites. This app gives our patients an option to include anyone they would like in the birthing process by providing real time group updates.



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