

A Clinical Narrative

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 Published in THE SHRINE VINE



Shriners Hospitals
 for Children™

It was one of my first nights as a new nurse on the ACU, and one of our critical patients had been transferred to MGH. At around 2 in the morning we received a phone call that the patient was quickly deteriorating and her guardian, who was her grandmother, should come over quickly.

While I did not know the grandmother well, we did have one thing in common: she spoke only Spanish and I

speak enough Spanish to communicate the basics. I was the only one on that night who spoke any Spanish at all, and so I was asked to let the grandmother know what was going on. I was happy to utilize my skill and when

the charge nurse suggested that I could walk her over if I wanted to, I jumped at the chance because I knew she would need a friendly face, someone who understood her language, and probably a shoulder to cry on.

We walked over together, and when we arrived the team was desperately trying to save her little granddaughter. They continued for hours, while the grandmother and I sat watching. I tried to offer all the supportive words I could, but soon I realized that I didn't have to talk. My hand in hers was all

she needed from me at that moment. So I stayed until the end, when she finally made the decision to allow them to stop their quest of saving their patient. Then, a pastor came at her request who prayed (but only in English), and I had the honor to translate the prayer into something she could understand.

Now was the time for her to say her last good-byes to her beloved, and I was faced with the debate of should I leave her alone to grieve in privacy, or would my continued presence be helpful? Since I have never been in any sort of situation like she was facing now, I knew I could not make this decision on my own and so I asked her if she would like me to step out, making sure she understood that I was only trying to respect her privacy and I would be more than happy to stay if she so desired. She then pulled me closer and emphatically asked me to stay until it was time to walk back to Shriners. I gladly agreed, and we went to her granddaughter's bedside together and she spoke to her and sang to her. We cried together and she told me stories of what an amazing little girl she was. The grandmother took out pictures and showed me how beautiful she was-something I never knew because she

was burned and bandaged head to toe. We laughed through our tears when she recounted many humorous stories of her granddaughter's childhood. I didn't understand much of what she was saying due to the language barrier, but I tried, and when I didn't get it I shook my head and smiled.

Finally around 7 in the morning, after an emotionally exhausting night, we headed back to Shriners. When I left that day I was quite overwhelmed of the sadness of seeing my first child die. I was comforted by the fact that that night was one where I had the opportunity to utilize some of a nurses most prized skills -- compassion and love. I know that I made a difference for that grandmother that night, no matter how small. I am proud to be able to say that and I look forward to more of these opportunities throughout the rest of my career.



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The Hillbilly Clan #126 Corncob Party Is Coming, Y'all!



Aleppo's very own Hillbilly Shrine Club Clan #126 is planning a corn cob party on Wednesday, August 13, 2008, from 6:30 to 9:30 pm in the Fez Room. There will be sandwiches and a cash bar, at a donation of only \$10 per person.

We will definitely be using our corn cob machine, so remember to bring your dried corn-on-the-cobs for processing!!!

Men should dress in jeans, with either a Hillbilly or straw hat; and the Ladies can dress in whatever is most comfortable for them.

There is also a special ceremony being planned for joining the Shriners or the Hillbillies!

A donation will be made to the Aleppo Shriners Children's Transportation Fund that night.

Everyone is welcome!!! Bring a friend, or two or three!

Please call **Curt Nitzsche** at (781) 944-3669 for reservations.



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