CommonSpirit

Sacred Stories

As CommonSpirit Health, we make the healing presence of God known in our world by improving the health of the people we serve, especially those who are vulnerable, while we advance social justice for all.

Compassion Inclusion Integrity Excellence Collaboration

Sacred Stories convey ways our mission is being lived out by the gifted people in our ministry. We invite you to use these stories for inspiration, as a meeting reflection, or to encourage discussion with your team.

A Grandmother's Kiss

TEXT

"Let your father and mother be glad; let her who bore you rejoice."
– Proverbs 23:25

SACRED STORY

Birth is a universal story. Its glory rises above culture and language, connecting all people in the common beginning of a life. As a labor and delivery nurse, I experience birth from a cross-section of cultures: many mothers and fathers have immigrated from refugee populations and have relocated to our community.

I stepped into one family's life circle during the birth of their child in a way I'll never forget. I can still see an image of the mother, originally from a Middle Eastern country, holding her baby girl, only minutes old, in her arms. The mother was young, with rich, long dark hair that matched her deep and tender eyes. The baby was passed to her father's arms, which were both tender and awkward as he pulled the newborn to his chest. His new life in a new country now had true roots. There were no anxious grandparents, aunts or uncles in the waiting room because this family's relatives, like those of many other immigrant families, were a world away.

Since the baby was born before video calls were common, the father began the ritual of making telephone calls to loved ones. Speaking into the phone in his native tongue, his words danced around the world. The family in the Middle East heard the story of the birth of his daughter. I noticed tears in his eyes as he handed the phone to me. "My wife's mother wants to talk to the nurse," he said. I was taken aback, but I took the phone.

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A Grandmother's Kiss

"What does my daughter's baby girl look like?" she asked me. The new grandmother wanted every piece of information she could gather! Because I had recently become a grandmother myself, I understood completely. "She is beautiful," I said. "She has the eyes of her mother." A soft cry and laugh came from the phone. "And, she has the lips of her father," I said. There were more sounds of tears and joy. Then, the grandmother asked, "Will you kiss my daughter for her mother? And then, kiss the baby for me." I promised that I would.

I leaned over the bed and gave the beautiful young mother a kiss on the cheek and said "That is from your mother." She smiled, feeling her mother's love. Then I looked into the newborn's eyes and said, "This kiss is from your grandmother, who loves you very much." During that tender moment, this grandmother gave a gentle kiss on behalf of another grandmother in a faraway land.

From the Sacred Stories Archive

SACRED STORY CONTINUED

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

How do you see our mission and values reflected in this story?

Given the constraints of recent years, have you had to "stand in" for a remote family member? How was that experience for you?