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# A Healing Touch

**E**ven when pediatrician Amy (Rice '81) Young lays her hand on the hot forehead of a sick little girl or puts her comforting arm around a trying-to-be-tough little boy, some of her heart is at home.

Young, one of three doctors at Pediatric Care Associates in Warren, Ohio, started her medical education at Grove City College, where she also met her husband, Dave '81, a high school and junior high biology teacher in Farrell, Pa.

Now working part-time since becoming Dr. Mom to Colleen, 16, Ken, 12, and Daniel, 7, Young says she works hard at being a doctor, hard at being a mother and hardest of all to balance both. And those who know her as a pediatrician and a mom can see she takes that job seriously.

"I let my patients' families know up front that I'm not always at the office because I think being a good mom means being with my own kids," she says. "I encourage moms to make their kids a priority in quantity as well as quality of time."

With the cooperation of her partners at the practice and her husband, Young is able to work a few days a week making kids better physically and sets aside her equally important time to make sure her own children are raised to be better people.

Like Young, gynecologist Susan (Clark '83) Frantz balances her professional and family life the best she can. Her kids, Christopher, 12, and Kelly, 10, come first, right alongside husband Robert. But her practice gets lots of attention and time too, especially as she works to help women lead healthier lives.

Up until September 2003, Frantz was delivering babies day in and day out, introducing new little lives to excited

families – a favorite part of her job. But because of the increasing cost of malpractice insurance around the nation, Frantz, like many doctors, is finding her job changing along with the culture of medicine.

With a career so intense as that of a female doctor, Frantz says her "very supportive husband allows me time to recharge my batteries." She sets office hours and sticks with them, trying not to bring her work – both mentally and on paper – home with her.

Young, also the medical director at the Children's Rehabilitation Center in Warren, makes sure she recharges by starting every day reading the Bible and praying. She also walks early in the morning with her mother or a friend, spends a few hours with a good book and sets aside time for adult conversation with Dave.

When she and Dave were at Grove City, Amy remembers evenings spent at the home of Professor of Biology Dr. Arnold Sodergren and his wife, Mary, who works in the College library.

"There were many wonderful role models among the professors and staff," she says. "I think especially of the Sodergrens whose children were young at the time, going to their house and getting to know the whole family. Being welcomed into a home like that meant a lot to me."

Frantz acknowledges that her undergraduate education at Grove City College, before a degree at the Medical College of Ohio in Toledo and Michigan's William Beaumont Hospital, helped her to achieve this balance.

"The education was excellent," she says, and, "the spiritual, nurturing environment helps to keep priorities in order."

Dori (Buch '85) Thomas, a pediatrician at Growing Child Pediatrics in Raleigh, N.C., also remembers times at Grove City

that helped her become the person she is today.

"I believe that first and foremost my time at GCC enabled me to grow, mature, become self-reliant and to be able to take a step back when faced with problems and trust that God has a plan and realize that He will help me get through it," she says. "My education at Grove City also emphasized the importance of family and I feel that it is important to be able to have a reasonable balance between work and family."

Amazingly, all of these doctors find time for more than just "work and family."

The Youngs are active at Northmar Christian and Missionary Alliance Church, where Amy teaches kindergarten Sunday School and Vacation Bible School, leads a seventh-grade girls group and plays guitar and bass in a youth praise band. "They haven't noticed I'm out of high school," she quips.

Plus, in 2002, Young started home schooling her two oldest children. "It was mutually agreeable decision that, despite the challenges, has been rewarding for all of us."

Frantz is a self-professed "Soccer Mom," sings in her church choir, is active in Kelly's Girl Scout troop and loves to travel, bike, swim and garden. Thomas is active in her daughter's Girl Scout functions as well.

It's activities like these that actually keep Deanne Wilson-Costello '85 moving as a Case Western Reserve University associate professor of pediatrics and director of high-risk followup at Cleveland's Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital's Division of Neonatal Intensive Care.

"The job is exhausting sometimes," she says, and "staying in shape is important for the stamina. I wake up at 5 a.m. every day and bike 10 miles and run one mile before work. It is a diversion and good for stress management."

# Special doctors give nurturing attention to their patients while exuding patience and love at home

At Case Western, Wilson-Costello not only helps train future doctors, but also is integral in the crucial first days of life for premature babies as well as infants with health problems who come into the world fighting to stay alive. After earning her medical degree at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, she completed a Pediatric Residency Care Fellowship in 1994 and a Neonatal Intensive Care Fellowship at Case Reserve in 1997.

Now, in her very emotional work, Wilson-Costello sees the extreme highs and lows experienced by her tiny patients' families. And she experiences those emotions right along with them.

"It is very difficult helping families cope with the loss of a child after spending months struggling through the neonatal intensive care stay," she says. "We all grow very attached to the children and their families, yet survival rates are only 60 to 70 percent for our smallest infants."

But then there are times of triumph too. One of the best parts of her job is "having the opportunity to share in the joy of seeing parents take home their child after months in the NICU."

And it's Wilson-Costello's faith and the support of her husband, Frank, also a doctor, that gets her through the tough days and helps her appreciate the joyful ones.

"Grove City gave me a very strong foundation in science (as well as) Christian principles," she says. "At Grove City, I learned that adversity builds character. I did not get into medical school after undergrad. This was a very sad and difficult time for me. But God used the time to teach me about faith. Now I depend on this faith to care for families. I was impatient, but God was wise and faithful."

Wilson-Costello, who also remembers the support of the Sodergrens as well as coach Chris Smith '72, depends daily on

Frank for support, both in their marriage and in medicine, since he understands the pressures of being a doctor. Together, they are also going down their own path of having children. Just this spring, the couple began the in-vitro fertilization process to welcome their own baby someday soon.

"We are praying God will bless us with a child," she said.

Like Wilson-Costello, and similar to Young and Frantz, Thomas works to balance all that home, kids, career and life throw at her.

Thomas and her doctor-husband Michael are the parents of fraternal twins who will turn 10 in June. After earning a Ph.D. at West Virginia University in 1989 and *while* working toward her medical degree at St. Louis University in 1996, Thomas gave birth to Alex and Annemarie. So she knew early that being a pediatrician and a mom would be integrated closely.

"The hardest part of taking care of other people's children is the concern that you are doing the best for your patient care without it taking over your own personal life," she says. "It also is important to be able to separate your personal life from your professional life and be able to leave work problems at work. That does not mean that I don't do work at home but I try not to let the day-to-day concerns influence my family issues."

Interestingly, Thomas says she gets some of this focus from her children, who have provided her with a "unique learning lab" even though sometimes she wishes that she was better at practicing what she preaches: "ignoring those temperamental times, being more patient ... and comforting them with the little things that come up when I see so much bigger stuff on a daily basis."

One of Thomas' biggest concerns currently – and something that sent her

into a different aspect of the doctor-patient relationship – was Annemarie's recent diagnosis of Gaucher Disease, a chronic medical problem discovered at a routine checkup. Doctors found that Annemarie's blood-clotting cells, or platelets, were abnormally low. This gave way to the diagnosis of the genetic metabolic disorder.

"Suddenly, I was thrown into the role of parent of a child with medical issues and found myself on the other side of the fence with all of the concern and uncertainty and the need to comfort my child," she says. "Both my husband and I searched high and low for information and ended up seeing a specialist at the University of Pittsburgh, where I grew up, and after discussions with them and our doctors in North Carolina, decided that the best course of action would be to treat our daughter with a medication that she now receives every other Wednesday by intravenous infusion."

Only about 1 in 50,000 people has Gaucher Disease and Annemarie's medication replaces the enzyme she is missing, preventing the progression of the disease that can result in bone pain and fractures, joint destruction, and spleen and liver problems.

But Dori and Michael feel fortunate for the early diagnosis that will allow Annemarie, a competitive swimmer and athlete, to experience only minimal problems.

"This has been a challenging year," Thomas says, "and I am sure that we still have a lot to face but we have a great chance of providing our daughter with a – for the most part – normal future. She would appear no different to anyone when standing next to any other almost 10-year-old."

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