

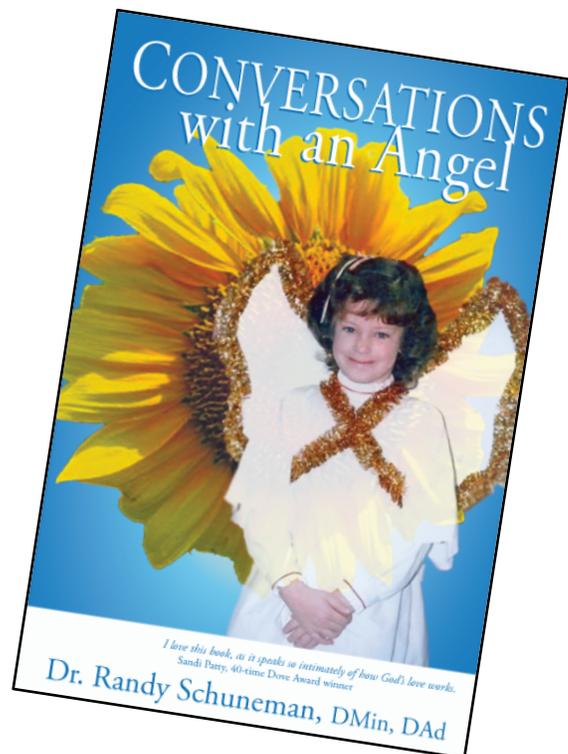
# THE SHOOTING GALLERY

a *Conversations with an Angel* “web extra”

by Randy Schuneman

Stays in the hospital can be boring, especially if you have to be there longer than two days. There is a limit to how many electronic games a person can play or DVDs to watch. Unless you like to read, reading is not even an option. Jennie knew hospital boredom first hand. The pediatric floor at St. Francis Hospital in Wichita, Kansas was never mistaken for Disney World. There was a play room, a VCR and four Video tapes. It was not much to work with if your stay was going to be three weeks. That was a normal stay for Jennie to have a full dose of antibiotics.

Jennie decided to add a little “*spice*” to her patients’ lives. She learned to juggle while working at a children’s educational store. I have already mentioned leading the parades for the completion of



chemotherapy. What do you do on an average day when there is not anything unusual to celebrate? *Water fights*, that's what!

Have you ever gone to a shooting gallery at a carnival or state fair? Do you remember the row of ducks you could shoot at? If you hit them often enough, you won a prize. Jennie had a patient named Jonah White. Every time Jonah had to be admitted to the hospital, he packed his pajamas, toothbrush and tooth paste...and his water pistol. He knew if Jennie was on duty, he would get to use it.

Jennie would come to Jonah's door and begin walking back and forth in the entrance. Jonah would pull out his trusted weapon and the games were on. If Jennie got "*hit*," she would react and turn around again. Why settle for an electronic version of a game when you can have the real thing?

By the way, Jonah White is an amazing young man. He had to have one of his legs amputated to keep his cancer from spreading. Jennie was always amazed at Jonah's joy in "*decorating*" his prosthesis. At one time, Jonah had an OU Sooners decoration. I remember meeting him after the last *Promise of Hope* performance. He proudly showed me his newest addition to his collection of "*legs*" as if it was a Mickey Mantle rookie card!

Jonah is an active fundraiser for cancer research. He just finished a race a few Saturdays ago and won a place in the Top 5 fundraisers for the race. Can I let you in on a little secret? Jennie helped. Bonnie and I gave

the remaining monies from her memorial fund to sponsor one of her favorite patients. Also, part of the proceeds from this book is going to go to CureSearch for cancer research. I cannot think of a better tribute.

Jennie also had a variation of the usual “*Shooting Gallery*” concept. Corrine was another of Jennie’s favorites. Jennie would fill a large needle-free syringe with water, let Corrine hide under her sheets, bring in an unsuspecting nurse so that Corrine could throw back the sheets and soak the nurse with water. I really doubt the nurses who fell victim to these attacks were that unsuspecting...just good sports!

If you are going to be a pediatric oncology nurse, you have to learn to laugh. Crying will come naturally. In order to describe life on a pediatric oncology nurse, Jennie wrote a poem entitled “The Twelve Days on 3G.” I will just quote the final verse.

*On my twelfth day on 3G my cancer patient needed  
 Twelve antibiotics (Kettia)  
 Eleven antiemetics (Blaire)  
 Ten warm blankets (Jen)  
 Nine forced feedings (Bobby)  
 Eight bottled of lotion (Amelia)  
 Seven biological response modifiers (Mindy)  
 Six antacids (Kettia)  
 Five wigs and scarves! (Jen)  
 Four blood transfusions (Bobby)  
 Three quiet rooms (Anisa)  
 Two organ transplants (Mindy)  
 One round of chemotherapy (Amelia)  
 To help with chemotherapy  
 Life on 3G or anywhere else Jennie served was anything but boring.*

Her greatest desire was to make each patient smile and make the best of

their circumstances. There were pictures taken of each patient with Jennie. Some of them included funny faces, big glasses or costumes of some sort. However, there was always one for sure to be taken...one with Jennie and her “kid” smiling. Even through the darkest of days, Jennie brightened each day with her perky personality and that angelic smile.