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By Lauren Swain  
Up Close Reporter

## Life Leads the Way to a Nursing Career for Amy Vyhldal



Vyhldal

Not everyone has a clear cut moment in their life when they decide to become a nurse. For some, it is a culmination of life events that gradually directs them to nursing. **Amy Vyhldal**, 38, is a perfect example

of how life led her to pursue a career in nursing.

Amy attends Nebraska Methodist College in Omaha, Nebraska and plans to graduate in May 2010 with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. She has always had an interest in the medical field and enjoyed helping people. She has worked in telemarketing and banking in the past, but primarily has been a mother to her four sons, ages eight and eleven. When her triplet sons were born 11 years ago they had to be taken to the neonatal intensive-care unit (NICU) where they remained for several weeks. When Amy and her husband went to visit their sons at the hospital the nurses were always kind and caring. "They helped keep hope alive," she says. Her positive experience with the NICU nurses helped to influence her to become a nurse and has also caused her to have a special interest in pediatric nursing. Amy's children have also motivated her to attend nursing school in another way. "I didn't go to college out of high school and I wanted to show my kids that it is never too late. I wanted them to see me set a goal and achieve it and hopefully they will do the same."

For the past year and a half Amy has worked at a pediatric hospital in Omaha as a NICU Care Partner. There she assists the nurses by taking vital signs, stocking supplies, feeding the babies, and holding them. Amy is also able to interact with the families of the patients by offering comfort and support. This job has deepened her love for working with infants, and after graduation she hopes to work in the NICU.

Amy is very active in the Methodist Student Nurses' Association (MSNA). She was elected president in the spring of 2008. As president she helps to organize and coordinate community service events such as fundraising for breast cancer awareness, collecting donations for homeless shelters, and blood drives. MSNA also works to provide meals at The Rainbow House, a place that provides lodging to families of patients receiving care at Children's Hospital and Medical Center in Omaha. Soon, Amy and other members will be participating in the "Brush Up Nebraska" program designed to help families in need get their home repainted.

Being a full time student, wife, mother, and having a job has its challenges, but Amy receives a lot of support. About her husband of sixteen years she says, "Scott is so supportive and he helps me with whatever I need." Her husband assists her by cooking, cleaning, and helping to take care of the children. When Amy has an early clinical day her husband will go in to work late in

order to get the kids ready and take them to school. About her children she says, "The kids help by giving me encouragement to work hard and graduate." Another stabilizing force comes in the form of five other women in the same class with her. "Somehow we've been able to be in the same clinical. We rely on each other and study together. At times, they are a shoulder to cry on." Though their personal circumstances are widely varied, nursing school has united them and created a common goal among them of becoming registered nurses.

Along with family and close friends Amy also receives encouragement from her instructors. One particularly positive influence is Cathy Barnes, MSN, RN. "She makes everyone feel great no matter what. Every student has respect for her, and she is so supportive and gracious. She's the nurse everyone wants to be like."

As she enters her senior year of nursing school, Amy knows that this is only the beginning. She remains enthusiastic about her career choice and knows that nursing is more than just a job. "Nursing means being willing to work outside of your job description. You have to be willing to jump in and help. You have to do those extra little things to make your patients comfortable." ∞