

2007 NOTY Acceptance Speech

By Christy Ochs

This is truly one of the proudest moments of my life, to be recognized by others in the nanny industry for doing something I love and believe so much in is such an honor.

Growing up, I knew that I wanted to be a mom, and I always wanted to have a large family. I got my wish! As a mother of four, step mom of two and grandmother of five, long before I ever considered being a nanny I learned what a special honor it is to be a part of the lives of children.

My skills as a parent were challenged when, in 1982, I gave birth to my beautiful daughter Tara, who has Down's syndrome. With two small children already at home, I was thrust into a new world of heart defects, physical, speech and occupational therapies, and a real fear of what the future would hold for this special child. All parents are called upon to be advocates for their children, but with a disabled child there is the added awareness that they may never be able to speak for themselves. It is a lifetime commitment.

At the time of her birth I was working as a paralegal and had planned on going back to work after a short maternity leave. I was told by the doctors that Tara was born with two holes in her heart that needed to be repaired, and after her recovery from open heart surgery she would need to begin physical and speech therapy that would continue throughout her childhood. I was not going back to work anytime soon.

My son's birth followed 15 months later. Throughout the following years I ran an in-home daycare, volunteered in my kid's classrooms, was a cubscout den mother, and worked as a teacher's aid and clinic aid at their schools. I loved every minute of it. After raising the other kids, Tara was the last at home. She had graduated from high school and wanted so much to move into her own apartment, as her sisters and brothers had. Through many hours of research my husband and I discovered that she was actually going to be able to move out and live semi-independently. This was the first time I really thought about what I would like to do with the rest of my working life. The joy and satisfaction I found in my days working with kids, made it very clear to me that this would be the only kind of job I would ever love.

All of my kids, but Tara especially had given me the training for my future career.

I chose to be a nanny because the idea of doing for the parents what I would have loved to have had done for me as a young parent was very appealing. I loved the idea of not only providing a secure and loving environment for their children, but also taking some of the daily pressure off of their shoulders by doing their laundry, straightening up the house and helping the children with their next day's school assignment.

The only reservation I ever had about this decision was that the image I had of a nanny was of a young 20 something woman who probably went to school at night working for a degree that would serve her in a "real career" later on. I was 42 years old and I wanted THIS to be my real career. I wasn't sure anyone would want me. I went to ABC Nannies and was reassured that because I was very active, healthy and motivated, they should have no problem placing me. They were right, I was placed very quickly.

In 2001 I joined INA and I attended my first conference in 2003. Although I had met several nannies since I had begun working, until conference I had not seen this level of professionalism and dedication. I was inspired. When I returned to Colorado, I began networking. Through my participation at ABC Nannies personal development conferences and various published nanny get-togethers, I was proud to find myself part of a great group of local professional career nannies. In 2005 I decided to make it official and I started Denver Area Nanny Assoc. This wonderful group of dedicated nannies meets regularly for play dates, dinners and nanny coffee's and organizes and participates in CPR training. We also function as an e-group that provides a sounding board for all of our nannies to discuss issues related to our daily jobs.

I am sure that INA conferences have often inspired nannies to network with career nannies in their areas, and I am very grateful for that.

I am honored to have been chosen as NOTY by an organization that actively promotes the lifelong process of personal growth and professional development of nannies. I want to thank the INA and the Selection committee for this opportunity.

I also want to thank my incredibly supportive husband Bruce. For the past five years I have come home with spit-up and strained baby food on my clothes. Bruce seems to actually enjoy my daily re-cap of blow-out diapers, super hero adventures and the funny things that the kids say and do, even though usually you would have to "be there" to really see how cute they were. He tells me I have way too much fun on my job! Bruce, thank you for coming to conference with me, I'm so glad you're here!

Thank you to Ginger and all of ABC Nannies for always being there to answer any questions I have and for cheering me on through this whole process.

And I especially want to thank my amazing boss, Jill for so many things, not the least of which is that she took the time, when I know how busy she is, to nominate me for Nanny of the Year.

Jill is a physician with a thriving family practice. You need only be with her out in public to see how many lives she impacts on a daily basis. It seems that everywhere we go people know Dr. Jill. She greets everyone with a warm hug and a genuine interest about their lives. She spoke about women's health at an ABC conference and offered medical advice and free bone density screenings to the nannies that attended. Every one of them wanted Jill to be their doctor. Although in the last year her world was turned upside down when her husband of 12 years suddenly left the family to pursue a lifestyle of freedom and travel, Jill has maintained stability for her children and has always put their needs above all else.

Jill is the boss every nanny dreams of. She considers me a co-parent and treats me as a professional, while at the same time making me feel like a valued member of the family. I hope she knows how grateful I am. I have been with this amazing family since Hawk was six weeks old, and you can easily see why he has owned me heart and soul from day one. Hawk is Batman, Superman and all of the Power Rangers rolled into one. He's my favorite super hero.

When Hawk was two, his little brother Brooks was born. Big blue eyes, blond hair and all sweetness and love. He wakes up every morning with a silly smile and will throw his arms around you in a big squeeze, many times a day and sometimes for no reason other than that he just realized you were there. He is our little comic, and he adores his big brother and loves to imitate him. He makes me smile and laugh every day and most days I feel like I should be paying HIM.

Eighteen months later along came our sweet baby girl, Hope. And how could Jill have known when she named this little angel just how well her name would fit her and the effect that she has on everyone around her? Now this is the picture I was going to show you, such an angelic child. But over the last few weeks there has been a transformation ... This is a look that Jill and I are getting used to seeing. She has become very strong willed and opinionated and we no longer worry if she will be able to hold her own with two big brothers! She is a little sweetie. All three of these kids are shining stars, and I am privileged to be a part of their lives.

Thank you again for awarding me this honor. You know, one thing that has always stood out for me at INA conferences, is the level of professionalism and dedication in the nannies that attend. I think you are all nannies of the year, and I am proud to be here with you. I am really looking forward to getting more involved with INA in the coming year. Thank you!