

Nancy LeBuhn Pickhardt Bio

Born May 16, 1957, in Northfield, IL., I graduated from New Trier West high school in 1975. I attended Northwestern University for three years, then the Evanston Hospital School of Nursing for one year. Wanting a degree and not just a diploma, I headed west to Denver to attend the University of Colorado Health Sciences School of Nursing. While attending school and finishing prerequisite courses, I worked for three years at Craig Hospital, a rehabilitation center for spinal cord and head injured patients.

After graduation from nursing school and earning my R.N., I worked in the neurosurgery ICU at Denver General Hospital (now Denver Health). There I met my husband, Brad Pickhardt, who was in his surgery residency. When Brad completed residency, we moved to Missoula in July of 1990 and moved into our home on Beckwith Avenue with our new son, Jack. We had two more children, both girls, Anna and Betsy. We acquired an “extra” daughter, Christine Maedche, in 2010, a classmate of Betsy’s who needed a home. So, we are a family of six.

I stayed home with our children and had the pleasure of being quite involved with their pre-school, elementary and high school activities. I was a board member, room mother, PTA President, and was elected to the Missoula County Public School Board twice.

When the last of our children left for college, I went back to work as an R.N. doing hospice nursing for Partners in Home Care. After one year of work, my younger sister, Barbara, was diagnosed with a brain tumor. I quit work to return to the Chicago area to care for her (along with her husband and five-year-old son, my mother and brother).

After Barbara’s death, Brad and I took a weekend retreat to Chico Hot Springs. At dinner on our first night there, we sat down and the couple at the table next to ours said: “Hello, Brad and Nancy.” It was Ira Byock and his wife, Yvonne Corbeil. Ira Byock, M.D., wrote the book, *Dying Well*, about his experiences as a hospice physician working at Partners in Home Care in Missoula. He also conducted the Missoula Demonstration Project. When I saw Ira, I had moment of deep reckoning. I knew in that moment I needed to do the work necessary to build a hospice center in Missoula. This has been my life’s work for the past seven years.

The Partners Hope Foundation will build and sustain an end-of-life and hospice center on land generously donated by Patt and Terry Payne just west of Reserve Street. We plan to break ground in 2023.