

In March of 2009, my twenty year old son, Nick, needed heart surgery. That would have been dramatic under any circumstance but this would be Nick's fifth heart surgery, one of which had been a heart transplant when he was a year old. Nick was not expected to live and he knew it. Having no memory of the earlier surgeries, he was scared, needing encouragement about what to expect. A major part of him being reassured was knowing that Mary Beth Norwood would be his nurse while he was in ICU. While at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Egleston, Mary Beth had been his nurse after each of his previous surgeries. Nick knew her and knew her well. He'd visited in her home, received Christmas presents from her and she had attended his birthday parties during his youth.

Mary Beth asked to have her scheduled workdays changed so she could be assigned to Nick. Changing her work schedule meant that she would have to make special arrangements for her own children to be seen about while she was taking care of Nick.

I asked Nick what was the first thing he remember after surgery. "I saw Mary Beth."

Afraid he was going to die, what better way to know you are alive than to see a loving "angelic" face. Anyone should be so lucky as to wake to Mary Beth Norwood's capable, caring, and companionate face when he come two after a life or death surgery.