

refrigerator for 2 years! It took almost 3 years from the time we saw him and a case worker in Georgia that didn't know either us or this little guy, but in September of 2002, Dakota came home. While in Texas picking Dakota up from his foster home, Rick heard a noise from a back bedroom of the home and went to investigate, he came back into the room with our next son in his arms, Delarion. He came home in September 2003.

Our children have changed our lives in many ways. Our world consists of therapists, special education and doctors. Our van could find its own way to Salt Lake and Primary Children's Hospital. We are on a first-name basis with doctors and nurses there and in Idaho Falls at Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center. From February to November of last year, our children had 9 surgeries and countless procedures that enable them to function as best they can. We had 3 surgeries scheduled in September. Our days are filled with medications, tube feedings, diapers, bottles, wheel chairs, leg braces, glasses, hearing aids and, above all, miracles. It is so humbling to watch these children overcome the obstacles in their lives. Nothing seems to stop them; they have more determination than all of us put together. We remember a Monday night a few years back when, as Tina sat in a chair in our living room holding our 5 year old daughter Zoe, Zoe reached over to the end table and picked up her bottle put the nipple in her mouth and took a drink. We cried. This was a little girl who doctors told us to walk away from, a little girl born with only half a brain, that specialists said would only eat and sleep the rest of her life. At the age of 3, she started playing songs on the piano, by ear because she is blind, with her left hand because her right one doesn't work; a little girl who can scoot on her behind across the floor with amazing speed; a little girl who sings country music, says her ABC's, and counts to 22. These are the miracles in our lives—a little boy born weighing just one pound whose mother was found lying unconscious on the ground in a hospital parking lot, a little boy so tiny that he was thought to be a girl for the first month of his life, a little boy who at the age of 4 would never walk or talk, who now, at the age of eight, runs up to us, puts his little face to ours and says, I want to take a bath. These are some of the reasons why we do what we do . . .

Rick and Tina are more than deserving of the distinguished honor of 2007 Angels in Adoption. Their daily challenges are much more than most of us could imagine, let alone choose to experience at any time in our lives: they have chosen to become parents to children with disabilities including quadriplegic spastic cerebral palsy, blindness, vision impairedness, hearing loss, auditory neuropathy, traumatic brain injury, fetal alcohol syndrome, reactive attachment disorder, attention deficit disorder and genetic optic nerve atrophy. They are selfless examples of a loving commitment of time, energy and resources. Perhaps most difficult, but most rewarding as well, they have committed their hearts and emotions to children in need. The Betzers humble us with their actions they are the angels in their children's lives and examples to us all.●

CONGRATULATING THE UNITED STATES WOMEN'S GYMNASTICS TEAM

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, one of the great joys of my job as a Senator is the opportunity to recognize exceptional people. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize seven exceptional people: Ivana Hong, Nastia Liukin, Samantha Peszek, Alicia Sacramone, Bridget Sloan, Shayla Worley, and Shawn Johnson. These young ladies make up the U.S. women's gymnastics team.

In September of this year at the World Artistic Gymnastics Championship in Stuttgart, Germany, the U.S. women's team won a total of four gold, two silver, and one bronze medal, placing them first overall in the women's team competition. I congratulate the members of this team, their coaches, and families on their success and for their exemplary representation of our country.

As an Iowan, I would like to recognize a particular member of the U.S. women's team, Ms. Shawn Johnson of West Des Moines, IA. Ms. Johnson won the all-around women's gymnastics title at the 2007 World Artistic Gymnastics Championship. With this great achievement, she became just the fourth U.S. woman ever to win a world all-around title.

Receiving such a title takes incredible talent and athletic ability. But, without a doubt, it also takes a lot of hard work. At the age of 3, Ms. Johnson began her gymnastic training at Chow's Gymnastics in West Des Moines, IA, where she continues to train today. As a result of years of hard work and training, she has competed and won at progressively higher levels of competition. In 2006, she won the U.S. Junior National Championship; in 2007, the Visa National Championships and the Pan American Games, where she won four gold and one silver medal. Next, Ms. Johnson will be competing for a spot on the U.S. women's gymnastic team at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

I extend my sincere congratulations to the U.S. women's gymnastics team on their success and I wish them luck on their future endeavors.●

HONORING MIKE KURLE

● Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, today I want to pay tribute to Mike Kurle, who retired earlier this year as the longtime manager of the West River/Lyman-Jones Rural Water System. I have worked with Mike for nearly my entire congressional career and value his friendship, professionalism, and typical South Dakota steadfastness. I know that Mike and his wife Marlene are looking forward to being able to travel a little more and spend some time with their children who are scattered across the country. However, I want to take a few minutes and explain to the Senate the role Mike played in

bringing reliable supplies of drinking water to the towns and ranches of western South Dakota.

As manager of West River/Lyman-Jones, Mike guided one of the four local project sponsors that constitute the Mni Wiconi Rural Water System—one of the largest Federal drinking water projects constructed in the last 30 years. Mike managed the project practically from the beginning and over the past 16 years has always put first the interests of the communities, ranches, and farms served by the system. On Mike's watch, 2,200 rural customers now receive reliable drinking water piped hundreds of miles from the Missouri River. The towns of Philip, Presho, Kennebec, Murdo, White River and, very soon, Kadoka benefit from the Mni Wiconi project. Mike has overseen Federal transfers in excess of \$55 million and constantly delivered good value and on-time performance from contractors. Most importantly, Mike is someone that could be trusted and he worked well with the system's three other sponsors—the Oglala Sioux Tribe, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, and Rosebud Sioux Tribe. The project is a collaboration between the area's American Indian tribes, the Federal Government, and the western South Dakota communities in Lyman, Stanley, Jones, Mellette, Jackson, Haakon, and Pennington counties. Mike spent countless hours on the road traveling from one project sponsor meeting to another and on the phone and in Washington, DC, meeting with Bureau of Reclamation officials and the South Dakota congressional delegation to keep the project on track. Because of Mike's good work, the project is close to the finish line with about 70 percent of the system in the ground and delivering water to thousands of residents. These are all great goals and accomplishments.

So, in closing, I want to thank Mike Kurle for his service and professionalism and most of all friendship and guidance over these many years. I know that Mike can't stay away from the West River/Lyman-Jones office forever but hope that he can enjoy moving at a slower pace knowing that future generations will be well served by his efforts.●

HONORING PENOBSCOT BAY MEDIA, LLC

● Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to a small company in my home State of Maine, run by a female service-disabled veteran, that has made remarkable strides in the information technology industry, and particularly in robotics. Penobscot Bay Media, LLC—known to most as Pen Bay Media—is headquartered in Camden, on Maine's beautiful coast, where it specializes in the development of information visualization solutions by using geographic information systems, GIS, interactive distance learning, and other similar technologies. For example, Pen Bay has developed a type of