

A Special Bond



On Sept. 8, 1992, Sheila Rea welcomed a beautiful, red-headed daughter into the world at Littleton Adventist Hospital's Birth Place. She named her baby girl Gina.

Shortly after the birth of little Gina, Maribeth Trujillo, a nurse at the Birth Place, entered Sheila's room, and found Sheila distraught with her eyes tightly closed shut. She was still in shock from the news her doctor had given her. Gina had Down syndrome. Maribeth felt ill-prepared for the situation. "I had just transferred from Porter Adventist Hospital to the nursery at Littleton, and I wasn't entirely certain of the implications for this new family," explains Maribeth, who is now the director of professional resources at Littleton.

After Gina's well-baby assessment, Maribeth went back to Sheila's room again to see how she and her baby were bonding. She found Sheila sobbing on her bed, holding Gina tightly. "I was confused and upset," says Sheila. "But Maribeth sat on my bed with me for over an hour comforting me. She

was incredibly compassionate and sympathetic to my situation. It was a truly wonderful experience during one of my hardest moments."

A year later Maribeth received a thank you card from Sheila. It contained a photo of Gina, and said how much she appreciated the care and compassion that had been shown to her during those difficult days in the hospital. "The proudest moments you have as a nurse are when you have that kind of connection with a patient. It is truly a privilege to be involved in such an intimate moment in a patient's life," says Maribeth.

In the meantime, Sheila raised a yellow lab named Wonder to become a guide dog for the blind. After Wonder's career as a guide dog was shortened by a medical issue, the dog came back to live with her family, and they decided to get Wonder involved in the pet visitation program at Littleton Adventist Hospital. Wonder inspired a nurse recruiter, Jenny Truax, to raise guide dogs too. When Jenny's first dog was heading to guide dog

school, she held a going-away party for him and invited Sheila and Maribeth, unbeknownst to each other, and they had not seen each other since Gina's birth.

When they saw each other at the party, it was a wonderful, tearful reunion. To this day they remain friends, a special bond fashioned in a tender moment that time only deepens.

Each of us can look for opportunities to share a bond with others in the moments when they need it most.

*"Rejoice with those who rejoice;
mourn with those who mourn."*

- Romans 12:15

- Jordan Deel

