

bottles or formula but I also didn't attend any breastfeeding classes or seek out breastfeeding information. I think I just assumed that I would try to breastfeed."

When Accalia was born, a friend who had given birth to her own first child a few months earlier gave her a copy of La Leche League's bible, *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding*, which helped Nelson navigate newborn care.

"I'm very grateful that I had an easy start to breastfeeding and never experienced any major problems," she said. "I'm not sure what I would have done if I ran into any roadblocks."

But there were times in the coming months when Nelson second-guessed herself. When Accalia was four months old, Nelson's friend invited her to a local LLL group in Vermillion. The mother-to-mother support she found there was so helpful that she rarely missed a monthly meeting after that.

"When I was pregnant, I remember reading that babies should eat every three hours. What a shock when my baby wanted to eat every hour, at times!" Nelson said. "I started to wonder what I was doing wrong. When I started attending LLL meetings, I found out that every baby has a different nursing personality—some babies are content to nurse every few hours and some are much more frequent eaters. And this wasn't necessarily a sign that I wasn't making enough milk for my baby. As my comfort level grew and I gained confidence, I found that I really knew my child best and that I needed to let her show me what she needed."

Through LLL, Nelson learned about infant care and human lactation, about growth spurts and the digestibility of breast milk, and so much more. Nelson also learned that there was more to breastfeeding than providing baby's first nutrition, that it's the blueprint for a par-

enting approach that follows a child's normal development without sacrificing either the child's budding independence and need for security nor the mother's sanity.

"I became passionate about breastfeeding and had a desire to support other breastfeeding mothers after I was successfully nursing my oldest and experienced breastfeeding not just as a way to feed my child but also as a way to bond with, comfort, and nurture her," Nelson said. "Early on, breastfeeding became an integral part of my mothering."



From Mother to Leader

An avid supporter of breastfeeding, Nelson was asked by the Vermillion LLL group leader to consider LLL leadership accreditation. Nelson didn't hesitate to put in her application.

"I thought this would be a wonderful opportunity to give back to an organization that had provided so much information and support to me during my first year of motherhood," she said.

LLL is an international nonprofit organization with local breast-

MOM continued on page 14

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