



## Thanking the Universe— Kelly Damron Receives Public Service Award

by Traci Baker

*You can never guess what life has in store or what will change your course. A moment in time, a conversation with a teacher, an unexpected event or even a book can inspire or even change the future. Such is the case with the recipient of the 2010 ASCPA Public Service Award, Kelly Damron. Kelly had no way of knowing that a medical condition would lead her down a path of selfless public service, one that would allow her to use her head, heart and energy to help countless numbers of women, children and families in ways she could never have imagined. Kelly Damron is, in her own words, simply just thanking the universe.*

*TB: Kelly, thank you for sharing your story with me. One of the charities you work with is the March of Dimes. How did you decide to get involved with them?*

*KD: About six months after my twin daughters were born, my husband and I participated in the March of Dimes Walk America event (now called March for Babies). I didn't know much about the March of Dimes except that the organization is dedicated to prematurity awareness and research; a cause that hits home since my twins were born 10 weeks too early. After being asked to volunteer, I felt a sense of belonging and immediate camaraderie, and I have been a volunteer ever since.*

*TB: You have also been involved in RESOLVE, the national infertility association. Can you tell us about that organization?*

*KD: When my husband and I were diagnosed with infertility, I sought individual counseling to deal with the emotional crisis of this medical issue. My counselor recommended a group called RESOLVE, but at the time I wasn't interested in group support meetings. After our infertility journey was over, I realized how helpful it would have been to have support from women who were in my same situation.*

*TB: What is your favorite part about volunteering for RESOLVE?*

*KD: The best aspect of volunteering for an organization like RESOLVE is also the most challenging aspect—awareness. Infertility is one of those topics that most people don't talk about because it is considered a private matter. On the other hand, there is huge potential to bring the topic of infertility to the forefront, along with other medical conditions.*

*TB: You are very courageous for sharing your personal story to help others. It is a true inspiration. You also work with Better BedRest. Tell me about this organization.*

*KD: Better BedRest is a small nonprofit organization based in Maryland that offers support to women on bed rest due to pregnancy. They offer financial*



*Kelly Damron, CPA,  
with her twin daughters*

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grants for women who lost wages due to bed rest and provides phone support. When I was on pregnancy bed rest, I would have loved someone calling me once a week to check on my status, offer support, or even help me determine what questions I should have been asking my doctors.

*TB: You also work with the Banner Desert Medical Center/Banner Cardons Children's Hospital. This sounds like a special organization that makes an impact on people's lives. Tell me a little more about this group and the impact it made on you.*

KD: I spent 32 days in the Banner Desert Medical Center (BDMC) Ante Partum unit (where you go when you are pregnant, but need to delay delivery). Then my daughters spent seven weeks in the BDMC, now Cardon Children's Medical Center, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). One of my daughters, Kaley, had a rare disease associated with prematurity called Necrotizing Enterocolitis (NEC). My husband and I credit the NICU medical staff for saving Kaley's life, as many babies who are diagnosed with NEC do not survive. Truly, we owe her life to the Banner medical system.

For the past two years, I have been a guest speaker in nurse training to discuss my perspective of the patient experience. My message has reached more than 300 nurses. In addition, I've been asked to participate on the newly formed NICU Parent Advisory Board. This group will provide advice and support to the NICU with the goal of making the parent NICU experience better. As someone with a lot of advice and opinions about the patient experience, this is a perfect fit for me.

*TB: Kelly, you are amazing. What motivates you?*

KD: To some extent I think my professional career as a CPA has created a desire to help others. But it also gives me an outlet to escape from the business world. It makes me feel good to volunteer. By volunteering, I am able to thank the universe for helping me become the person that I am today.

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Here are some comments from people who have benefited from Damron's volunteerism:

"Kelly became involved with the March of Dimes as a way to give back to an organization that helped save the lives of her premature daughters. She has been instrumental in organizing, speaking out as an advocate for maternal and infant health, and fundraising in support of healthy babies. She is the ideal volunteer—passionate, eager and committed. Simply put, the March of Dimes is better because of Kelly."

*Angie McMahon*

*Director of March for Babies,  
March of Dimes*

"I am honored to say that Kelly Damron was our first out-of-state phone volunteer and she is committed to our mission of supporting moms on bed rest due to high-risk pregnancies. She brings compassion to the many women she talks to on our helpline. We are very lucky to have Kelly on board with Better BedRest, Inc."

*Joanie Reisfeld*

*Founder, Better BedRest, Inc.*

**AZ CPA**

*Traci Baker is director of communications for the Society.*

*Join members of the ASCPA in honoring  
Kelly Damron and Ed Zollars at the Annual  
Meeting on May 19 at the Arizona Biltmore Resort.  
Watch for your invitation coming in April.*