

Dannell Shu, BFA, MWS, is the mother of Levi, who was born with severe brain damage, the diagnosis of uncertainty, and a prognosis of hours to days. At three weeks Levi began receiving the “golden opportunity” of palliative care. Dannell led Levi’s palliative-focused in-home ICU while coordinating with extensive medical specialists, therapy and integrative providers, educational teams, and a staff of caregivers, until his death at the age of seven years old in February 2017. Levi received palliative care in most of his care settings for the majority of his life. Daily he taught her about attentive listening, intentional advocacy, living by one’s values, and quality of life. This immersive experience, combined with a knowledge of extensive gaps in access and education, has led her to become a passionate parent advocate in pediatric palliative and hospice care. She is regarded as an uplifting speaker, thought provoking writer and health care educator.

Dannell is an appointed member of the Minnesota Department of Health’s Palliative Care Advisory Council. She has served on the Pediatric Palliative Care Coalition of Minnesota since 2014. As a Parent Faculty and Co-Investigator with the University of Minnesota’s simulation and skills-based EOL workshop for pediatric learners she is engaging in cross-disciplinary education. Dannell has presented in numerous contexts, including the Minnesota Network of Hospice and Palliative Care Annual Conference, Crescent Cove’s Pediatric Palliative Care Symposium, the End-of-Life Nursing Educational Consortium (ELNEC), and fundraising galas for nonprofits. She is thankful to have been instrumental in helping establish Crescent Cove, Minnesota’s first pediatric palliative, hospice and respite home; currently one of three in the United States.

Dannell believes palliative care is key to building resilient families and care communities. A list of her nationally published writings can be found on MamaShu.org