

SPRING 2009

THE pulse MAGAZINE

SPECIAL FEATURE Creating Healthy Communities

*A look at community health
at Oakland University*

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Preparing for disaster

Learning life lessons

From coal mines to computers



SCHOOL OF NURSING | OAKLAND UNIVERSITY | ROCHESTER, MICHIGAN

Reaching out to the community



The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, put forth by the United Nations in 1948, states that “all people have the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of a person and of one’s family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond one’s control.”

Nurses hold a similar oath, a variation on the Hippocratic Oath that physicians use, which states in part, “I will do all in my power to maintain and elevate the standard of my profession ... I endeavor to ... devote myself to the welfare of those committed to my care.” This oath does not specify doing so in a hospital setting.

Nurses understand the evolving constructs of health promotion and have sharp critical thinking skills and honed relationship building skills. Couple these with being the largest number of health care professionals and nurses are in the best position to offer service in the community. By combining nursing, social and public health science with primary health care for the benefit of individuals, families, communities and underserved populations, nurses can honor both these doctrines.

Through pre-symptom clinics, nurse-managed clinics, school-based programs and community research, nurses have the power to create healthy communities and the capacity to influence and reshape the environment. This includes activities such as caring for individuals, families and groups; providing community immunizations; acting as a resource for clients; and linking those in need of services to appropriate community resources.

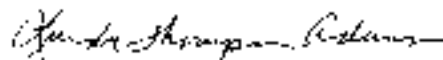
With new technologies, there is more opportunity for home care. In the future, more nurses will be working in the homes of their patients. Being in a person’s home is also beneficial because it offers a better perspective of how home life affects health care. For example, asking, “What type of food is in the refrigerator or pantry? Are there too many people living in the small home? Is the home in proper condition?”

The Canadian Institute for Health Information in 2003 compiled studies of the financial benefits of using community health nursing and found massive health care savings and reached an astonishing conclusion that went beyond money: “Intensive community nursing interventions for low-income mothers of children living in risky conditions can reduce the number of subsequent pregnancies, child abuse and neglect, use of welfare support, and criminal behavior for up to 15 years after the birth of the first child.”

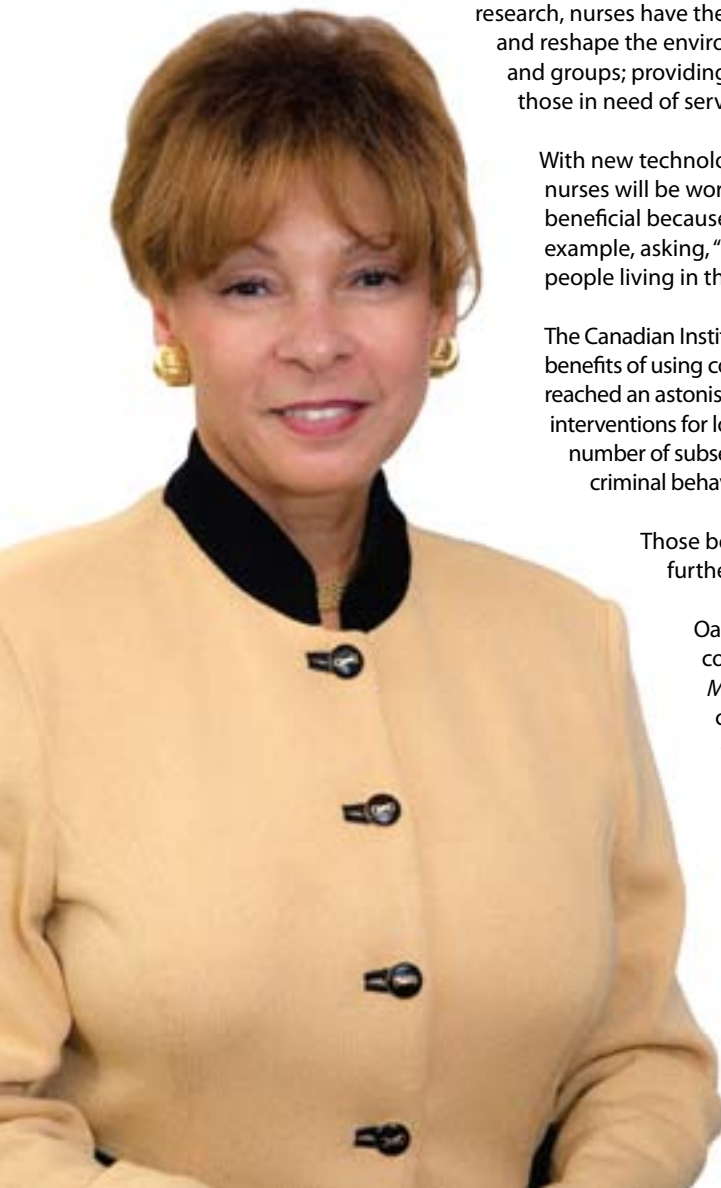
Those benefits can extend to any population by expanding the nurses’ role further into the community.

Oakland University’s School of Nursing addresses the needs of the community in countless ways — highlighted in this issue of *The Pulse Magazine* — through clinical rotations in community locations, offering certificates in programs that move nurses into the workplace, presenting conferences, supporting faculty research and partnering with organizations in our community to address a myriad of needs — from disaster preparedness to retraining displaced autoworkers as nurses to help them find a new career and fill the nursing shortage.

Community health nursing may reformulate a vision for the future.



Linda Thompson Adams
Dean, OU School of Nursing



contents

S P R I N G 2 0 0 9



4



8



14



18



26



30

SPECIAL SECTION: CREATING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

4 Ready for action

OU's School of Nursing and Detroit's Public Health Department team up to design an emergency and response training program for area nurses

8 Learning life's lessons

Students cultivate nursing and interpersonal skills in clinical rotations that focus on building a healthy society

12 Researchers focus on community

Faculty investigators research, analyze and document pressing health care concerns and disparities in the community

14 From coal mines to computers

Nurses gain expertise in growing field of occupational health nursing through new SON certificate program

18 Building a caring community

SON alumna leads senior-living company with energy and passion

20 In brief

A look at how OU SON leaders, alumni and others support healthy lives in the communities where they live and work

FEATURES

24 Nurturing a scholarship family

Local surgeon and supporter honors beloved wife's memory through scholarships supporting exceptional students

26 Closing the gap

Retention is goal of OU, St. John Health project that deepens real-life experience for nursing students

30 Retooling: from autoworker to nurse

One-time program supports displaced autoworkers by preparing them for jobs of the future

32 A life's passion

Awards recognize OU SON alumna enthusiasm and expertise for her work

DEPARTMENTS

34 News briefs

36 Highlights and accomplishments



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Why

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Where

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POH Oxford

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a gift that gives back

The United States faces a crisis in health care. An estimated 125,000 nursing positions are vacant nationwide. That number is projected to rise to one million in the next decade. Fewer nurses will result in fewer health care options and a lower quality of service. OU's School of Nursing is taking steps to aggressively address this problem. In partnership with local health care organizations, we actively recruit faculty and students for our programs. Applications and admissions have risen by 40%, but much more can be done to ease the current and future nursing shortage. The development of scholarships, and distinctive campus, online and satellite programs will serve as an important catalyst for future growth. This also will provide important incentives in attracting, retaining and graduating students into the ranks of professional nursing.

Please consider a gift to the School of Nursing. For more information about gift opportunities to the School of Nursing, please contact Colette O'Connor at (248) 370-4070 or occonnor@oakland.edu.





READY FOR ACTION

OU School of Nursing and Detroit's public health department plan for disaster

By Mary Gunderson-Switzer

America loves its nurses. For nearly a decade, the Gallup Poll consistently reports that nurses are the public's "most trusted professionals."

This collective trust in nursing goes back to the days of Florence Nightingale, when nurses working on the front lines delivered expertise along with tender mercies.

Dependable nurses are still needed on the front lines today — the lines have just moved.



LESSONS LEARNED

In the aftermath of tragedies such as September 11, post-911 Anthrax attacks and Hurricane Katrina, health care leaders throughout the United States took a

closer look within their communities and asked a tough question: Were they sufficiently prepared to handle a large-scale public health crisis in their own backyards?

Detroit's health care leaders were among those taking inventory. Although public health departments were originally established to address disease outbreaks, changing needs dictate that public health's role modernize to protect citizens from newer forms of danger, such as bioterrorism.

In 2006, a Detroit disaster readiness advisory board was formed as a spin-off from a leadership development training program conducted through the Washington, D.C.-based Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Fellowships Program. The program provides opportunities for health professionals to influence health care and health care policy at national, state and local levels.

Linda Thompson Adams, SON dean, (left) and Gwendolyn Franklin, director for Office of Nursing for Detroit Department of Health and Wellness Promotion, work to prepare area nurses to handle any health care crisis.

Equipped with fresh insights, the new Detroit advisory board focused on tackling disaster preparedness by enhancing the role of a great community treasure: its nurses.

Two members of the advisory board (and Robert Wood Johnson Fellows) were Oakland School of Nursing (SON) Dean Linda Thompson Adams and Gwendolyn Franklin, director for Office of Nursing for Detroit Department of Health and Wellness Promotion.

Based on the advisory board's recommendations, the Detroit Community Health Nursing Institute was formed, which is a partnership between Detroit's Health and Wellness Promotion and OU's SON.

"The role of public health is broad, with so many pieces to it," Franklin says. "With a community-based approach, we can effectively tie all the community's nursing agencies into one coordinated [disaster preparedness] effort."

For the new institute's staff, there was one enormous task at the top of the to-do list: design the best possible emergency preparedness and response training program for area nurses. In pooling experience from the nation's tenth-largest public health department with resources from the SON, a workable plan took root.



WHAT'S THE PLAN?

"There are nurses throughout our community who want to help in times of crisis," Franklin says. "Now we have clearly defined this new role and developed a comprehensive training program for them. Whether retired nurses, nursing students or nurse aides at local nursing homes ... all community nurses can be part of this important mission."

The training classes prepare nurses for a wide range of possible health emergencies within southeast Michigan, including biological, environmental or weather-related events. Faculty and consultants from SON developed the curriculum built on best practices in training.

"Our ever-changing world requires that education keeps pace," OU's Adams says. "Terrorism, disease and natural disasters won't wait on a curriculum overhaul. Through our partnership with Health and Wellness Promotion, we have a streamlined approach to educate our nursing work force. This ensures we're ready to handle any health care crisis that comes our way."

The training program is based on a set of emergency preparedness core competencies developed by Kristine Gebbie, director for the Columbia University School of Nursing Center for Health Policy. Additionally, OU professionals applied competencies from the International Nursing Coalition for Mass Casualty Education at Vanderbilt University School of Nursing.



The program's training classes, which begin in late 2009, will be held at Detroit's Public Health Department. Sites throughout the city will be added later.

NEIGHBORLY HELP

"Nurses are expected to be first responders because they are uniquely equipped to handle a medical crisis," Franklin says. "They will be deployed into the community to establish our neighborhood help centers, where victims can go for treatment during times of disaster."

The number of help centers will depend on the need and type of disaster. Located in area schools, the centers will provide a comprehensive array of services, including triage, first aid, vaccinations, community resources for counseling and mental health services and health screenings.

As a crucial part of their training, nurses will participate in ongoing local and statewide practice drills.

With every training class they attend and each practice drill they participate in, Detroit's nurses will be prepping to step onto new front lines here at home — to willingly serve a public that continues to trust them. ■

Mary Gunderson-Switzer is a freelance writer in Warner Robins, Ga.



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A P A S S I O N *f o r* H E A L I N G

learning life's lessons

Clinical rotations teach life lessons while helping community By Karen Hildebrandt



SON student Katherine Wallace connects with Crossroads for Youth resident during a clinic.

"The nursing students who come to Crossroads for Youth do an exceptional job of relating to the young people on our campus. I am consistently impressed with their sensitive, caring and professional manner and their ability to relate to some teens who can be hard to reach. Our students benefit from the interaction and from the health information they gain through the interviews and through the student projects."

Janet McPeck, president, Crossroads for Youth

A group of Oakland University nursing students began a community-based clinical rotation expecting to learn the basics — how to take blood pressures and record health histories. Instead, they learned a more important lesson — how compassion and open communication can make a lasting impression on the lives of delinquent youths within the juvenile justice system.

Their first clinical experience, required of all nursing students in their sophomore year, brought this group to Crossroads for Youth, a residential and day treatment facility for at-risk youths, aged 11-18. OU's School of Nursing (SON) requires community-based rotations, as well as rotations in health care settings such as hospitals. Other rotations within the community include school and clinic settings in low-income neighborhoods.

KEEPING AT-RISK POPULATIONS HEALTHY

"The nursing students assigned to Crossroads for Youth were anxious at first. These kids are hardened and you can see it in their body language. They think nurses haven't faced real challenges. They will even refuse help, so then the OU students must use communications skills, even humor, to get beyond it," explains Sharon Heskitt, visiting instructor, nursing, who supervises community rotations on site.

"The nursing students do a head-to-toe assessment and provide a nursing care plan and diagnosis for every client," Heskitt adds. "This type of work is vital to the community. As health care costs rise and the number of people uninsured and underinsured increases, we must do everything possible to keep the population healthy." According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 38.6 million Americans have no health insurance at all.

The nursing students benefit from the community connection, too, by learning the importance of interpersonal skills. "A machine can take a blood pressure, but a nurse can communicate the importance of healthy habits," Heskitt added. "When you actively

learn something and then pass it on to someone else, that's when learning really happens. Communication is powerful."

COMPASSION A POWERFUL TOOL

Learning compassion was also a powerful experience for many nursing students. "It was hard to hold back the tears sometimes as we connected and heard how they lived," says Katherine Wallace, OU sophomore. "Some had witnessed their friends murdered in their neighborhood; others were forced to become self-sufficient at a very young age just to survive. We learned to listen."

Another OU student, Jakob Taube, who listened closely to his clients, says, "It would've been effortless to overlook these kids as being beyond help, but one client talked about how he missed his child's third birthday and that hit me."

"I want to be a dad with all my heart and I could empathize with him on a very personal level," Taube says. "If I hadn't made that connection, I don't know how much I would have opened up. In turn, the kids at Crossroads for Youth would have stayed within their shells as well."

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY AND NURSES

While the emotional attachments are strong, they are intangible. The health benefits to the community, however, are concrete and measurable. While on community rotations, OU students have diagnosed many health concerns, including vision issues and symptoms of fetal alcohol syndrome, which have led to preventive measures and hospital or clinic referrals.

"These community clinical experiences allow nursing students to transition into the role of the nurse," explains OU Nursing Visiting Instructor Ron Piscotty. "They're exposed to real-life patients experiencing differing levels of health and wellness. The community benefits by having a diverse student population provide health education and actual health care not otherwise available. As a whole, these clinical experiences



Sharon Heskitt, visiting instructor, SON, supervises community clinical rotations.

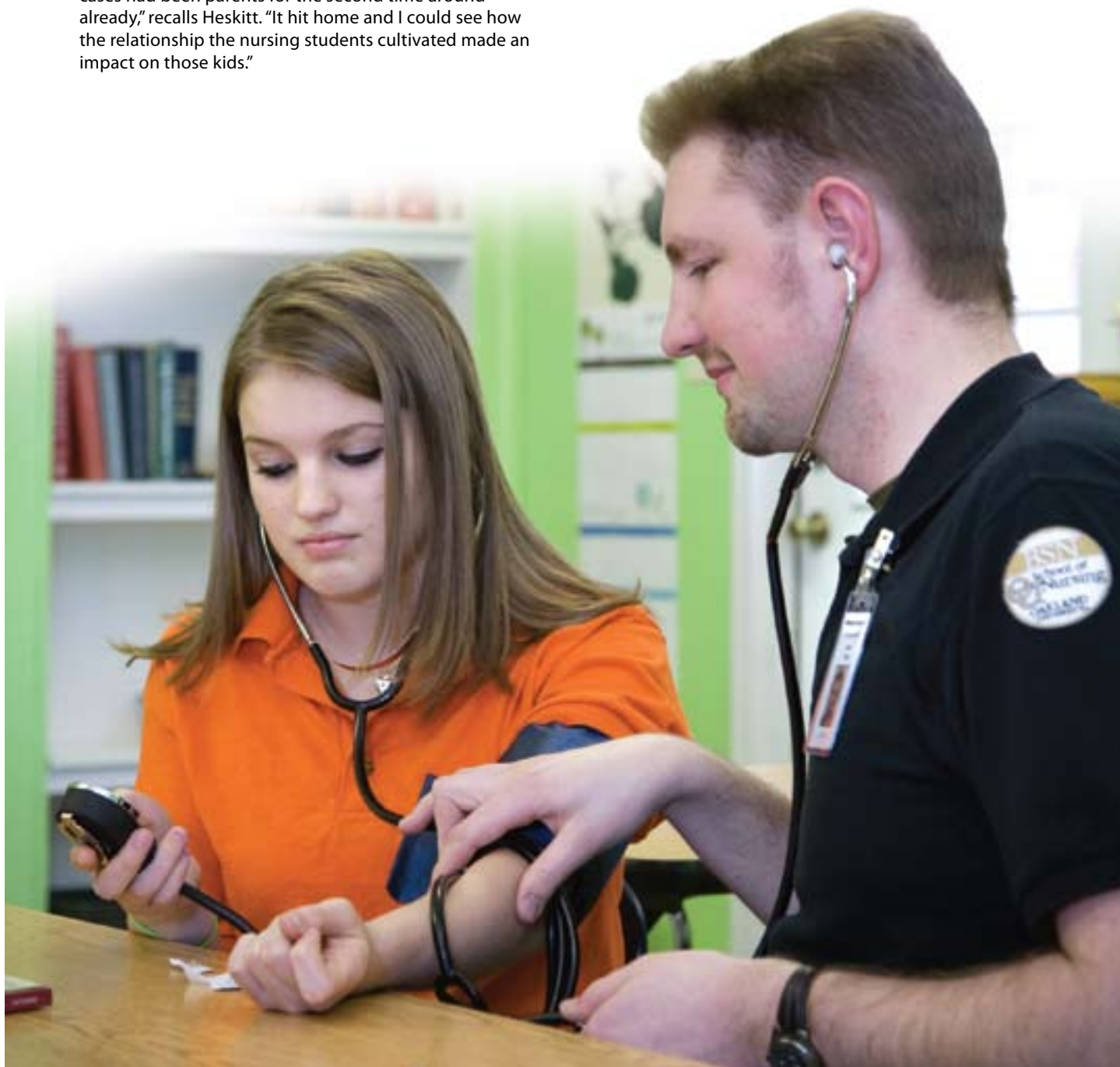
strengthen community relationships as we provide evidenced-based, quality health care and education to our clients as well as a source of highly qualified nursing graduates."

A LASTING IMPACT

In addition, OU students are required to present a health seminar to their clients. "Some of my students presented how diet, physical activity, drugs and alcohol play a role in infant health to a group of teenagers who in many cases had been parents for the second time around already," recalls Heskitt. "It hit home and I could see how the relationship the nursing students cultivated made an impact on those kids."

"It was an amazing experience," says Wallace. "One day the Crossroads for Youth teacher asked her students to list what they were grateful for. I thought, 'Right, they won't like this.' But they said they were thankful for being alive, for the opportunity to turn their life around and for their nursing students. There wasn't a dry eye in that room. I was deeply touched by the opportunity." ■

Karen Hildebrandt is a freelance writer in Pleasant Ridge, Mich.



SON student Jakob Taube learned listening brings residents out of their shells.



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researchers focus on community

*SON faculty research
community health issues*

By Karen Hildebrandt



asthma

Nothing triggers a curious mind more than when presented with a problem. No surprise then that the professors at OU's School of Nursing (SON) give in to their curious nature and use their educated, analytical experience to research, analyze and document the health care concerns and disparities they are confronted with as they work within their communities.

The questions they pose will lead to better understanding of community health issues and ultimately better nursing care and health outcomes for members of those communities. "I believe if we can work with the community to better understand its needs, we can effectively help members to achieve improved health outcomes. Nurses and other clinicians will benefit from research as well by having an effective disease self-management strategy to use that is evidence based," explains Wanda Gibson-Scipio, SON assistant professor, who is studying disease self-management among urban adolescents with asthma and their parents.

SETTING GOOD HABITS FOR LIFE

Gibson-Scipio became interested in this field of study because she recognized health disparities among this vulnerable population. Her observations, along with existing research, verified that urban adolescents experience greater morbidity from asthma, including increased respiratory symptoms and higher rates of emergency room visits and hospitalizations. In particular, the death rate due to asthma is highest among African American males aged 15-25.

"This population often lacks adequate resources, knowledge and access to care," Gibson-Scipio adds. "In addition, there is a stigma attached to asthma among teenagers, who often feel using an inhaler is a sign of weakness. It makes them feel different from their peers. Instead of managing their asthma, they react to symptoms when they need immediate attention. Using goal setting, I hope to help adolescents take more of a preventive approach to asthma disease self-management."

According to Gibson-Scipio, disease self-management drops to 50 percent or less during adolescence and research suggests that once the pattern is established, there is minimal improvement during adulthood. She believes helping youth develop effective disease self-management skills will

diabetes

contribute to lifelong patterns of improved health behavior and ultimately reduce asthma-related health disparities within the African American population.

LEARNING FROM SURVIVORS

Gibson-Scipio's studies are not the only OU-sponsored research projects focusing on health disparities within specific sectors of the community. For example, SON Associate Professor Suha Kridli is seeking funding to analyze why diabetes and obesity are more prevalent within the Chaldean community and Sharon Mills-Wisneski, SON assistant professor, is examining the quality of life in African American breast cancer survivors in the extended phase of their survivorship.

When asked why she choose this population, Mills-Wisneski explains, "There has been very little written or known about the long-term impact of breast cancer on African American women. Past literature suggests African American women are silent and do not share that they are breast cancer survivors. We do not see or hear from this group as often, so it appears they are less afflicted by the disease. In reality, African American women on average get a more aggressive and more advanced stage of cancer. This group has been overlooked, but much can be done to reduce factors related to health disparities. Research can achieve this by giving these women an opportunity to speak. Based on what we learn we can develop interventions that will meet their needs and increase or restructure health service for this population.



"Sometimes health care workers assume everyone has the same symptoms and experiences," she adds. "The women in my study felt the nurses were great, but sometimes wished they understood their unique symptoms better. I think one of my participants said it best when she said, 'Yes, we are breast cancer survivors; we are women, mothers, daughters, sisters, and aunts. By hearing our stories, you will know more about us, our struggles and our strength. You will learn how to care for us, how to approach us and how not to be afraid to talk to us.'" ■

Karen Hildebrandt is a freelance writer in Pleasant Ridge, Mich.

breast cancer



FROM COAL MINES TO COMPUTERS

Providing Essential Care for Workers
By Harper West

As the nursing profession continues to move toward increased specialization, Oakland University's School of Nursing is at the forefront of developing programs to help nurses gain certification in specialty areas. In fact, a new continuing education program that prepares registered nurses for careers in the field of occupational health is the latest addition to SON's many offerings.

Designed to help RNs successfully complete the certified Occupational Health Nurse (OHN) Specialist Examination offered by the American Board for OHNs, this online program can be completed in six months to one year. By successfully passing the exams, nurses can become Certified Occupational Health Nurse (COHN) specialists.

"The program is self-paced," says Jaime Sinutko, project manager for SON's Institute for the Advancement of Nursing and Health Care. "It is perfect for an experienced RN looking to specialize in occupational health. Each module should take about one month to complete, but you can take as long as you want to finish each module."



“The role of the occupational health nurse (OHN) is evolving and the profession is poised to play a pivotal role in not only continuing to ensure safe and healthy work and community environments, but also in finding real solutions to the growing health care challenges that employers face.”

Richard Kowalski, RN, BS, MSA, COHN-S, president of the American Association of Occupational Health Nurses (AAOHN)

A VITAL LINK TO GOOD HEALTH

The idea of the OHN was conceived in the 1880s when two high-risk industries — coal mining and marble cutting — were the first to hire what were then called industrial nurses. It's a role that has expanded significantly over the last century as industries have modernized, safety standards have been strengthened and public health knowledge has improved.

The modern role of OHNs is as clinicians, educators, case managers, corporate directors and consultants. Their diverse responsibilities may find them giving flu shots one day, then the next day informing upper management about the value of safety initiatives that keep workers healthy and on the job.

The field has seen tremendous growth as the practice expands into epidemiology, provider networks, case management, environmental health, preventive services, early detection, health education, research and ergonomics. But it still focuses on keeping employees safe and healthy on the job.

Since OHNs are on site at businesses and industries, they may truly be the primary health care providers for some Americans, providing essential health protection, medical treatment and wellness education for workers who may not have convenient or affordable access to health care.

For Shelley Fenton (BSN '90) there's nothing better than being an OHN. “I'm able to combine my desire to help people with my business sense,” says Fenton, who recently served as a medical operations and compliance executive in occupational health and safety for DaimlerChrysler.

When asked why she does it, Fenton says it's because she enjoys making a difference for the employees and their families. “OHN is a great profession where basic skills and experience from fields such as outpatient/urgent care nursing are transferable.”

CAREER ADVANCEMENT, FLEXIBILITY

“Advanced certification is the wave of the future,” says Sinutko. “These certification programs not only help nurses receive advanced education in a niche field, but they are often a stepping stone to an advanced degree. They let nurses try out more advanced education on a flexible schedule to see if they might like to pursue a graduate degree.”

SON's OHN Certificate Program was developed with funding through a grant from Kelly Services, Inc., a staffing solutions

firm. Kelly places many occupational health nurses in positions with businesses and found that many are not certified, so they funded this program to encourage nurses to seek advanced certification, according to Sinutko.

“In this litigious society, employers are looking for people who are credentialed and certified, because it adds to their validity,” says Todd Ambrosia, Ph.D., APRN-BC, a full-time visiting instructor at SON who developed the online curriculum content. “A credentialed nurse brings an expertise in a very unique area of nursing practice. Employers know this nurse has the training to intervene appropriately, whether it is an emergency toxic exposure situation or counseling a family about a contagious disease.” ■

Harper West is a professional writer specializing in health care topics.





SON helps nurses become COHNs



SON now offers a Web-based continuing education course to help nurses prepare for the Occupational Health Nurse Specialist Examination.

The course is self-paced and offers six modules:

- Occupational Health: Overview
- Workers at Risk: Identifying Occupational Disease and Injury
- Epidemiology, Toxicology and Hazardous Exposure
- Mental Health in the Workplace
- Promoting Health and Safety in the Workplace
- The Business of Occupational Health Nursing

Participants can complete the modules in any order they wish and can access them for one year after completion. Each module has an exit exam that tests comprehension of the material. Students may enroll in individual modules or all six, and enrollment is open at any time. Enrollment in all six modules is \$540. Individual modules are \$100 each.

To become a COHN specialist, a nurse must have completed 3,000 hours of work in an occupational health setting within the past five years. For additional information about COHN testing prerequisites, visit **www.abohn.org**.

For more information on the program, contact Jaime Sinutko at sinutko@oakland.edu or (248) 370-2761.



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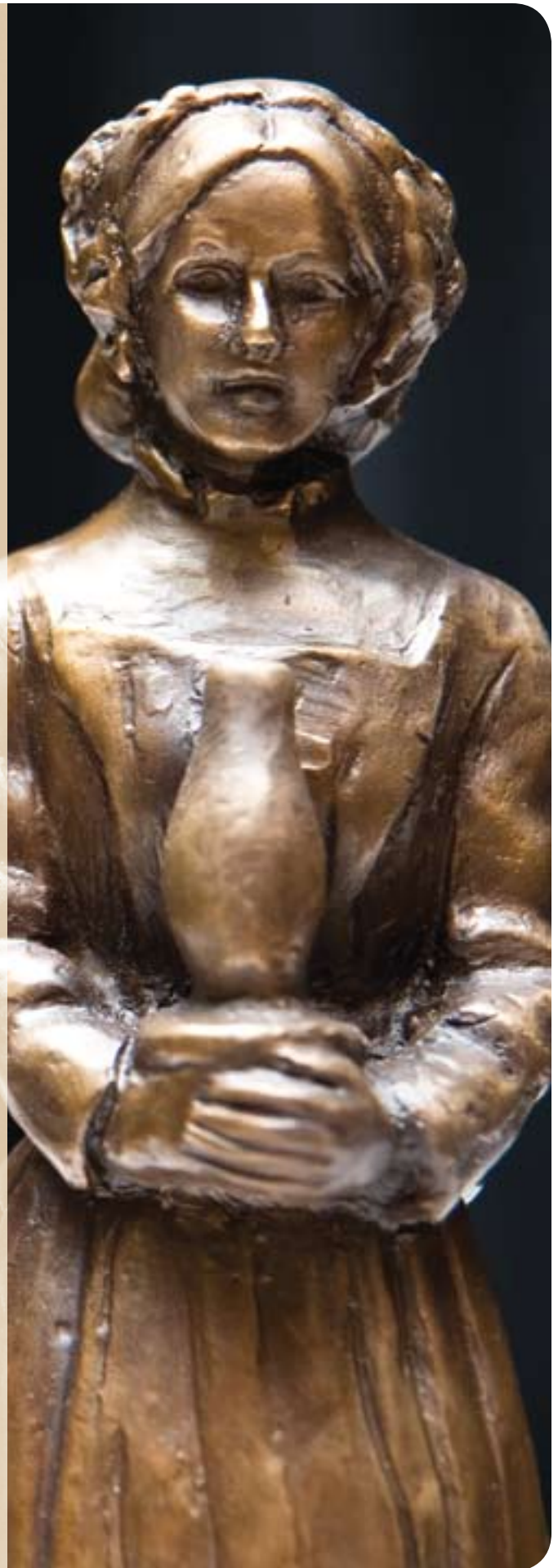
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www.oakland.edu/nursing/nightingale or contact Amy Holloway-Yurgalonis at hollowa2@oakland.edu or (248) 370-3799.

Mark Your Calendar!





Judi Ganton, COO, Ganton Retirement Centers.

Building a caring community

Alumna displays love of nursing as COO of senior-living communities
By Karen Hildebrandt

The day *The Pulse Magazine* caught up with Judi Ganton, SON '78, she had dropped everything to respond to an immediate crisis. The \$7-million assisted-living complex slated to open that week was held up in bureaucratic red tape, potentially stalling the opening. She had 80 employees ready to start work and residents set to move in. Despite the sudden upheaval, she refused to get frazzled. Instead she looked for options — opportunities to learn.

Engaged in all aspects of the business, Judi Ganton touches base with Colette O'Connor, director of development, on plans for the center.



"I've spent the whole morning trying to move the process along. The state requirements are rough but they're there to protect the residents. The process means I am learning something new every day," says the chief operating officer of Ganton Retirement Centers, Inc., a family-owned company which offers independent living in dignified community settings with supportive health care services.

Ganton became involved in long-term care in 1993 when she married Lloyd Ganton, who then owned a skilled nursing care center, some independent apartments and semi-independent centers in Spring Arbor, Mich. She had already distinguished herself in Southeastern Michigan as a dedicated nurse, strong leader and innovator of community health care services. A new opportunity to make a difference in geriatrics intrigued her.

"I researched assisted living and it led to so much more," she says. Putting all her energy to work, she designed, staffed and developed policies and procedures for her company's first assisted-living facility in 1995. Now the company operates four independent senior housing complexes, three semi-independent complexes, four full assisted-living centers, two Alzheimer centers and a nursing home and hospice house.

"We have every level of senior housing," says Ganton. "It's important to me to provide exemplary care and housing for seniors and a good working atmosphere for employees."

She believes a good administrator must be engaged in all aspects of the business. "I'm very hands on," says Ganton, who spends as much time visiting her facilities as she does in the corporate offices. "I love working with the nurses and I talk to the residents often to determine new ways to meet their needs. I was at church Sunday and one resident in her 90s was having difficulty attending, but didn't want to miss service. We got her a radio so she could listen to the service every Sunday. I may not be passing out meds anymore, but I still feel I am personally caring for the residents because I am creating a positive, healthy environment for them."

Ganton's positive enthusiasm was just as evident during her years at OU's SON. Although she was in her 30's and a

mother of three, including a newborn, she designed the class pin, edited the yearbook and served as vice president of the Student Nurses Association and president of the National Honor Society of Nursing.

"I graduated from OU's first nursing program and it was a fantastic experience," says the 2001 Nightingale Award winner. "The training was very challenging and we had many of the same instructors from beginning to end, which made the learning process very personal."

After graduating, she worked as a floor charge nurse at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital. She then joined the Oakland County Health Department, where she designed a mobile breast cancer detection unit that increased the survival rate of women — an achievement she considers her single greatest career accomplishment.

She became interested in cancer detection when she had her own harrowing experience. "I had a tumor on my esophagus and, although it was not cancerous, I went back to work with a different outlook on life. I wanted to make a difference in somebody's day. That was why I got involved in nursing in the first place," says Ganton, who at 66 has no intention of retiring any time soon.

Ganton makes a difference in so many ways. She is actively involved in the National Honor Society of Nursing, the American Cancer Society and the United Way, among other organizations. Within her community, she helped raise \$1.8 million to build the Cascades Humane Society Shelter and Adoption Center, and built the Ganton Art Gallery. She also serves as vice president of Friends of Ella Sharp Museum and works in the nursery and welcome center at Spring Arbor Free Methodist Church.

"I believe in life balance and for me that means faith, family and community," she adds. "Nursing isn't just a position. You have to be well rounded and you need to be a life-long learner. Through it all we can keep nursing alive." ■

Karen Hildebrandt is a freelance writer in Pleasant Ridge, Mich.

in brief...

Envision Nursing Care Conference

by Kathy Pomaville Pate

Oakland University's School of Nursing is hosting its third annual Envision Conference, "Envisioning Nursing in the Future with Home and Community-Based Care," Friday, September 25, 2009, at the Troy Marriott Hotel in Troy, Mich., with presenting sponsor William Beaumont Hospitals.

The conference explores the creative and futuristic opportunities for nurses to engage in entrepreneurial solutions for practice, research and education in home care, nursing and palliative care.

"Community health nursing will reformulate a vision for the future of health care," says SON Dean Linda Thompson Adams. "With so many populations in need of health care and unable to access appropriate services, nurses are in the best position to provide services to the community."

Keynote speaker Brendan McCormack, professor, nursing research, University of Ulster in Ireland, will emphasize the community rehabilitation of older people. McCormack leads a number of research projects in Europe and Australia that focus on the development of person-centered practice. He is also the leader of the Institute of Nursing Research "Working with Older People."

His writings, which focus on gerontological nursing, include more than 90 peer-reviewed publications and five books. He is co-editor of the *International Journal of Older People Nursing*. McCormack was recently appointed as a standing member of Sigma Theta Tau's Global Health Advisory Council, President of the All-Ireland Gerontological Nurses Association and chairman of AGE Northern Ireland, a new older person's charity.

Other speakers will include: Gwen Franklin, director, Healthy Living Home Care, on Getting Your Home Business Started; Doris Neumeyer, from Beaumont Hospital-Troy, discussing Infection Control and Emergency Preparedness for Home Care; and Margaret Wolters, from St. Mary's Palliative Care and Hospice in Minn., focusing on Supporting Children with Life-Limiting Conditions.

Individuals can register for the conference at www.oakland.edu/nursing beginning in June. The cost is \$75.

For additional information, please contact Amy Holloway-Yurgalonis at hollowa2@oakland.edu or (248) 370-3799.



Brendan
McCormack



Gwen
Franklin

SON centers on wellness in the community by Karen Hildebrandt

Using a unique, forward-thinking model for wellness, OU's School of Nursing will actively engage adults and senior citizens in exercise, nutrition and disease prevention to maintain optimum health. OU's new Center for Pre-Symptom Health Care and Societal Research will offer physicals, exercise training, nutritional counseling and educational information in a relaxing, social atmosphere.

The center received a substantial boost when SON received a \$330,000 Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Award from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Award funds will be used to purchase equipment to assist in preventive and chronic disease management, as well as promote alternative therapies.

"We are on the cutting edge of a new trend," says SON Dean Linda Thompson Adams. "The new center will offer a social 'coffee-shop' style gathering place, with shared common spaces and an interactive media center with Wi-Fi. Nutritious meals, exercise and wellness consultations will take place in a comfortable, contemporary setting."

The center will also foster collaborative research efforts and provide learning opportunities for students, including a license practice site for SON's nurse practitioner program.



SON Dean Linda Thompson Adams accepts an award from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to purchase equipment for OU's new Center for Pre-Symptom Health Care and Societal Research.

"The center will have a tremendous impact," says OU President Gary Russi. "According to state estimates, Michigan needs to increase primary care and health education by at least 20 percent to keep pace with retiring baby boomers who will require enormous resources and increased care in cardiovascular disease, laboratory testing, pre-symptom intervention and alternative therapies. This center, along with our faculty expertise in biomedical, nursing, pre-symptom medicine and physical therapy and the addition of our new medical school will position Oakland University as the premier health care university in southeast Michigan."

SON alum recognized for HIV/AIDS work



OU President Gary Russi (right) and OUAA board president Gregory Garrett, SECS '97, present Sharon Valenti with the Odyssey Award at OU's Alumni Awards Banquet.

Last fall, Sharon Valenti (MSN '97, SON '93) received the prestigious Odyssey Award during Oakland University's annual Alumni Awards Banquet. The award, which recognizes alumni who seek to exemplify OU's motto "to seek virtue and knowledge," honored Valenti's exemplary work in the HIV/AIDS field.

A certified HIV/AIDS nurse practitioner at St. John Hospital and Medical Center, Valenti's passion for HIV/AIDS care was sparked in the early 1990's when she cared for an HIV-positive infant who was isolated from the rest of the nursery.

"I was filled with compassion for that infant — that was the start for me," she recalls. Her career in HIV/AIDS care began at St. John Hospital in 2000 where she worked as an NP in infectious diseases. She now works in HIV patient care, community prevention projects and research. In 2004,

she traveled to Tanzania, Africa, to teach an HIV course at Muhimbili University Hospital's School of Nursing.

Her work has been recognized locally and nationally — from OU's Alumni Awards to her appointment to the President's Advisory Council for HIV/AIDS (PACHA) in Washington, D.C. The council provides information to the president and the Department of Health and Human Services on issues related to HIV care and treatment, social services and HIV prevention and research.

"Sharon is a shining example of a successful alumna who is combining compassionate care with innovative leadership to make a difference in the world," says Linda Thompson Adams, dean, SON.

Valenti is a credentialed HIV Specialist™ with the American Academy of HIV Medicine and with the National Association of Nurses in AIDS Care (ANAC) as an advanced HIV/AIDS certified nurse specialist. She served as president of ANAC of Southeast Michigan from 2004-06 and 2006-08. She also serves on the Great Lakes Board for the American Academy of HIV Medicine; the PACHA full council; and is a member of the U.S. domestic subcommittee for HIV/AIDS.

World nurse, humanitarian shares tales of inspiration



Baroness Caroline Cox

More than 100 years ago, community nurses climbed dozens of flights of stairs to care for patients with tuberculosis, praying that they did not contract the disease. Today, the stakes for nurses in the community are still high, but so are the rewards. One nurse who knows this well is Baroness Caroline Cox.

This humanitarian, nurse extraordinaire and Nobel Peace

Prize candidate shared her stories and words of hope and inspiration amidst tragedy at OU's Meadow Brook Hall in April. She offered a global view of community nursing and the importance of responsibility for humanity to nursing students.

This nurse and grandmother has been shot down in a helicopter, targeted by jihad fighters and witnessed savage carnage first hand. She delivered medicine to the maimed

and dying in war-torn countries and bought back children who had been enslaved. For the last three decades, Lady Cox has tirelessly fought for the neglected and oppressed across the globe, which also includes the transformation of the former Soviet Union policies for orphaned and abandoned children from institutions to foster family care. She also served the Armenians after an attempted ethnic genocide in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Lady Cox began as a true embodiment of a nurse, viewing health as more than the mere absence of disease. Nursing to her is more than serving at the bedside. She viewed world oppression and inhumanity and those affected by them as her patients.

Lady Cox is Chief Executive of Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), serves as a non-executive director of the Siberian Medical University and has been a trustee of Medical Emergency Relief International (MERLIN).

OU's SON is pursuing alternative partnerships and collaborations with Lady Cox and her life-altering missions.



Safety City focuses on injury prevention

Together with the Royal Oak fire and police departments, William Beaumont Hospital now offers Safety City USA, a group of programs that educate children, teens, new parents, seniors and many others on safety issues.

"With a goal to prevent injuries and ultimately save lives, this year-round interactive learning center provides safety education programs for people of all ages," says Val Gokenbach, vice president and chief nurse executive at Beaumont Royal Oak, where the facility is housed. Gokenbach, who serves on OU's School of Nursing Board of Visitors and is co-chair of Safety City along with Royal Oak Firefighter Cary Thompson, brought Safety City USA to life in 2006.

"I've seen way too many injuries and deaths that could have been prevented," Thompson says. "With this partnership, we'll save lives." The project was created entirely through contributions — a generous financial donation from the family of Charles Maggard, a former Royal Oak police officer — and donations of time, labor and materials from more than 68 local businesses and organizations.

Safety City USA programs provide hands-on, interactive, age-appropriate and fun activities. The classroom — a replica of a home interior — is set up so students can learn how to handle real-life situations.

Open to school groups, community organizations and school clubs for tours and activities, organizers can choose from a variety of safety education programs — from fire, driver, pedestrian, Internet, playground, stranger danger and much more. Modeled after Children's Safety Village of Windsor and Essex County in Canada, the educational classes and activities are led by fire and police personnel from Royal Oak, health care professionals from Beaumont Hospital and other trained volunteers, including SON students.

"By improving the habits and behaviors of adults and children who participate in the programs, Safety City USA has the potential to prevent injuries and death of hundreds — if not thousands — of lives," says Gokenbach.

For more information about Safety City USA see:
<https://www.beaumont Hospitals.com/Safety-City-USA>

Online RN to BSN program available to all



OU's online RN to BSN program provides RNs the opportunity to earn a BSN through an affordable, convenient program. The program offers all required degree completion sequence,

non-nursing and general education courses for RNs online at in-state tuition rates.

This degree completion course sequence recognizes the RN's prior education and experience. Courses add value to this base and promote continued advancement in the profession. Because RNs are licensed and practicing in their field, the nursing course sequence includes only one non-traditional clinical course.

All required nursing courses are offered online each fall and winter term, while one course is offered each summer term. Non-nursing and general education required courses are offered online throughout the academic year.

Since students can set their own pace, the time to complete the program varies. However, the minimum time needed is two years, excluding summer. There is no mandatory time limit for degree completion.



For more information about admission requirements and transfer credits review the RN/BSN degree completion sequence booklet available on the OU SON Web site at www2.oakland.edu/nursing/rnbsn.cfm

Nurturing a scholarship family

Dr. Ylvisaker's extended family includes 29 recipients of the Tekla Strom Ylvisaker Endowed Scholarship for Nursing

By Karen Hildebrandt

With a slight tremor in his voice and tearing eyes, John Ylvisaker, M.D., reads a hand-written note from one of the recipients of the Tekla Strom Ylvisaker Endowed Scholarship for Nursing, a scholarship he personally endowed in memory of his wife, a former nurse.

"Thank you for a very special friendship. You shared love, wisdom and new experiences with us. We are grateful," the note reads. Picking up another letter, among a pile on his living room table, he reads, "I thought of you when I heard the lyrics 'For Good' from the musical 'Wicked,' ... 'I'm who I am today because I knew you.'"

"You see, this is why I do this — to be a positive influence on their lives," says Dr. Y., as his scholarship recipients affectionately call him. "The scholars are so dear to me. I'm proud of these kids — every one of them. They are like family to me."

Dr. Y., soon to reach the age of 90, has extended his family to 29 recipients plus their families, opening his home to the scholarship recipients' parents, spouses, children and significant others.

HONORING A BELOVED NURSE

When his wife, Tekla, died tragically at age 60, Dr. Ylvisaker established the scholarship with the desire that other individuals would be "blessed by the attributes and skills



Tekla Strom Ylvisaker, died at the age of 60, was blessed with attributes and skills of nursing.

of nursing in the service of others" as she had been. Taking his role as donor very seriously, he soon became active on the selection committee.

"When I established the scholarship, I wanted to know what type of people would receive it," he recalls. "I was so impressed with the young women we selected, I wanted to meet them and their families, and I began the introductory lunches. Now I have summer and Christmas parties for all my scholars."

Each year the scholarship is awarded to an exceptional sophomore, who receives the scholarship for the remaining three years of the nursing program. Community service is an important criterion of the OU nursing scholarship, as well as the scholarships he endows at the

University of Minnesota School of Medicine, where he went to school, and Bethany Lutheran College, a liberal arts institution founded by his father.

"I want these students to be aware of the world around them and become active participants and leaders," he explains. "I want them to be conscious of the positive role models they can become."

MENTORING MAKES A DIFFERENCE

The importance of role models was not lost on Sharon Kramer, a past recipient who now works at Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak. "Dr. Y. was the best of mentors. He



Dr. Y. hosts introductory lunches for scholarship recipients so he can meet them, and they can meet each other. He also invites recipients and their families to summer and Christmas parties each year.

opened my mind, broadened my horizons and gave me confidence," she says. "These things are so important when you're young and searching for the right path for yourself.

"I'd like to think we have passed on that mentorship as part of the scholarship family. In the beginning we shared books. Later we shared work experiences and parental advice. As we mature, we're able to mentor the new scholarship recipients."

Earning an education was not as easy for Dr. Ylvisaker. He prepared for the Lutheran ministry at the urging of his father but left in his third year because it didn't feel right. With a lot of guts but little money, he put himself through medical school working 60 hours a week at a defense plant.

Remembering the hardships he endured to reach his educational dreams, Dr. Y. expanded the OU nursing scholarship program to include the Ylvisaker Achievement Award, given to one student each year who overcame obstacles to achieve their degree. Often these awards are gifted to second-degree students changing careers or those who had an event disrupt their education earlier in life.

FALLING IN LOVE WITH OU

After establishing himself in the Detroit area as a general and vascular surgeon and later a medical director, Dr. Y. fell in love with Oakland University. He actively supported Meadow Brook Hall, donated money to refurbish its tennis courts and was a founding member of OU's health education program, which brought together top administrators from area hospitals and universities with a goal to support a medical school at OU. "It just wasn't in the cards at the time," he says, "but I would like to think that we laid the groundwork for the medical school now being realized. I give our group credit for its foresight and enthusiasm."

Dr. Ylvisaker has also designated a substantial sum in his will for OU, so his scholarship program will continue and grow. "I want the spirit of the scholarship to carry on," he says, adding, "I hope the OU School of Nursing never abandons its founding philosophy — to foster humanitarian service. That is what nursing is all about — the caring for a community." ■

Karen Hildebrandt is a freelance writer in Pleasant Ridge, Mich.

OU and St. John Health focus on retention

CLOSING THE GAP

between nursing education and practice

By Karen Hildebrandt

As the baby boomers age into retirement and health care needs grow, the national nursing shortage crisis will intensify. This becomes even more discouraging factoring in the high turnover rate of new nurses. The average hospital nurse turnover rate is 8.4 percent, but a staggering 27.1 percent of nurses leave their position within the first year, according to PricewaterhouseCoopers' Health Research Institute. Plus, as today's nurses — whose average age is 45 — reach retirement the shortage intensifies.

OU's School of Nursing and St. John Health are partnering to address this high attrition rate by transforming nursing education through the new Riverview Project. The project deepens real-life nursing experiences for students, while improving community health care services and offering new vocational opportunities to displaced workers.

A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

Collaborative research points to numerous root causes for attrition and identifies a three-year window of opportunity (senior year and first two years after graduation) to thwart

the problem. With the help of a five-year \$5.3 million educational grant from St. John Health for Transforming Nursing Education, the project makes those three years less stressful and more conducive to real-life training by engaging nursing students through more intensive, lengthier rotations, virtual simulations and support systems leveraging mentors and preceptors.

Reducing attrition and nursing shortages in the community by improving nursing education ultimately improves the quality of health care and increases access. Recent research clearly links well-prepared nurses to lower mortality and failure-to-rescue rates, according to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing.



St. John Detroit Riverview Hospital

"We found a gap between what nursing students are taught and actual nursing practice in the community. The world of nursing is hectic and requires much more responsibility than a student normally experiences in rotations," says Linda Thompson Adams, dean, SON. "Nurses are confronted with many stressful situations which

Barbara Penprase, director of OU's program at Riverview, moves between SON students answering questions in one of the labs that holds more than 20 simulated patient settings where SON students practice fundamental skills.





Intensive, virtual simulations in three clinical labs provide nursing students with experiences in a variety of scenarios to improve teamwork, problem-solving and critical-thinking skills.

require immediate attention and resolution. We find nursing students don't always have the critical-thinking skills necessary to react as quickly and effectively as required."

The project will address the gap in three phases:

Phase 1: A precepted clinical model where students work one-on-one with an experienced nurse through their clinical rotation.

Phase 2: Additional virtual simulations within three clinical labs and six surgical operating rooms ensure nursing students receive equal experiences in a variety of scenarios to improve teamwork, problem-solving and critical-thinking skills.

Phase 3: An on-boarding program will include mentoring, support groups and continuing education opportunities in critical thinking, leadership skills and stress management.



Mary Naber, senior vice president of St. John's WorkLife Services

ADDRESSING NURSING, COMMUNITY NEEDS

"This partnership offers St. John Health the opportunity to collaborate with Oakland University to address important community needs — job training, economic stimulus in Detroit and an infusion of health care workers in areas of critical shortage," says Mary Naber, senior vice president of St. John's WorkLife Services.

Phases one and two began in winter 2009, while the on-boarding program is in progress. To accommodate the ambitious project, OU students and staff work out of the 45,000-square-foot Detroit Riverview site.

Detroit Riverview, a former hospital campus, ceased inpatient operations in 2007 and now provides primary care, urgent care, lab services and a pharmacy. The campus, and OU's nursing program, are part of the Healthy Neighborhoods Detroit Initiative.

"The entire second floor of Detroit Riverview will be renovated to create classrooms, lecture halls and simulated patient settings for real-life training of nursing students," explains Naber. "What makes the Riverview campus ideal for the program is that the existing Intensive Care Unit, Step-Down Unit and Operating Rooms will be used to give students hands-on experiences that bridge the gap between academic preparations and workplace realities."

"We have more than 20 patient beds where students can practice assessment and fundamental skills," adds Barbara Penprase, director, OU's accelerated second degree program. "Each area is positioned in front of wall mounts that hold oxygen, suction and patient call lights, which is similar to what is used at hospitals during clinical rotations."

BENEFITS ABOUND

According to Thompson Adams, the benefits to the university and the community are obvious.

"At OU, we have limited spots for students and limited clinical sites. The high new nurse attrition rate means wasted resources. Of course, students don't want to lose time and money invested in their education. Working with St. John to transform student and new nurse experiences means everyone can achieve success," she says.

For hospitals, recruiting qualified caring nurses can be both challenging and costly. St. John Health estimates it costs anywhere from \$25,000 to \$60,000 to replace one nurse. Naber sees the Riverview campus as a community-conscious solution to the nursing shortage.

"This partnership provides a pipeline of nurses for SJH to hire," Naber adds. "They train in our facilities, learn the culture and how to provide the highest quality patient care experience — caring for the whole person — mind, body, spirit. St. John Health wants nurses who have a passion for healing." ■

Karen Hildebrandt is a freelance writer in Pleasant Ridge, Mich.

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As part of the Henry Ford Cohort (HFC) program, SON student Angela Davis (right) learns nursing essentials from SON Associate Professor Sarah Newton.

RETOOLING from AUTOWORKER to NURSE

By Harper West

After working for 11 years at the Chrysler Corp. Mack 1 Engine plant in Detroit, Angela Davis experienced what has become common to too many auto workers and others: in January 2007, she was laid off. With unemployment across the U.S. at a 14-year high and more than 100,000 Americans expected to lose their jobs every month for the foreseeable future, Davis decided her route to survival involved retooling her skills for a new career in nursing.

With the health care industry one of the few sectors that's still experiencing growth, Davis' choice was forward-thinking. The 36-year-old Detroit resident is now part of a new program that will speed her toward her new career in two years, rather than the three it typically takes to earn a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

The program — called the Henry Ford Cohort (HFC) — is a partnership between Oakland University's School of Nursing (OU), Henry Ford Health System (HFHS) and Ford Motor Company. The one-time program runs year-round, allowing students to complete their BSN in two calendar years.

For Davis, this is the main attraction. "I expect to graduate in August 2010. I don't even mind going to school in the summer," she says.

"Nursing programs have traditionally only offered courses in fall and winter semesters," Diane Norris, associate dean of the OU School of Nursing, explains. "Bringing summer courses to the traditional program is something we're looking at

that may be a key to reducing wait times for enrollment and getting students through the pipeline more quickly."

MOTIVATED, ENTHUSIASTIC STUDENTS

"The HFC program began when Ford wanted to help out workers it was laying off," says Norris. "Ford brought in HFHS and OU as partners. We expanded the idea to offer accelerated nursing education to laid-off workers at all auto manufacturers and auto suppliers."

A group of 52 students were accepted for the one-time program that began in fall 2008. Although students had to meet all normal SON admission requirements, they didn't have as long a wait to begin coursework as traditional students.

Davis had already been taking prerequisites for the nursing program using her buyout package to pay for tuition. "I had the majority of the prerequisites done when a former co-worker told me about the program," she recalls.



Diane Norris, associate dean, OU SON

That's a great example of the type of students in the program. "These students are older, but also more mature and motivated," says Norris.

Program instructors agree. "The highlight for me has been the

dedication and excitement the students display toward learning," says Marisa Ferrari, instructor. "They are always prepared for class, and they go above and beyond to learn the material. Their enthusiasm makes it fun."

LEARNING NEW SKILLS; DISCOVERING HIDDEN TALENTS

The biggest adjustment for Davis has been learning organizational skills. "I took seven classes last semester and some days had two exams on the same day. I had to learn how to plan."

But Davis also learned she has key skills needed for nursing. "When we had to do a nursing care plan and make decisions about how to treat a patient, I learned that I do have critical-thinking skills," she says proudly.

Davis is also proud that she is going into a field that is about helping people.

CREATING A WIN-WIN-WIN

"For years, OU has recognized the important role it plays in helping area residents prepare for jobs of the future," says Linda Thompson Adams, dean, OU SON. "This program is a win-win-win. Workers can retrain and make a good living. The health care field gets well-educated, motivated employees. Communities get valuable nursing talent to care for residents and communities gain the economic benefit of employed workers." ■

Harper West is a professional writer specializing in health care topics.

Through the HFC program, Angela Davis learns she now has key skills needed for nursing: critical-thinking and organizational skills.





“Nursing is who I am.”

Charlotte Mather

Charlotte Mather (second from left) is honored with a Nightingale Award in 2008. Also pictured (from left); Rhonda Walker, WDIV, emcee; Linda Thompson Adams, dean, SON; and Laurine Parmely, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan.

a life's passion

Award-winning nurse has strong voice for profession
By Kathy Pomaville Pate

They say it isn't work if you love what you do. In that case, Charlotte Mather (BSN '92, MBA '05) hasn't worked a day in her life.

"Nursing is who I am. I know in my heart that I've chosen the right profession and my life's passion," says Mather. "It's not just a job. It's a ministry."

Spend a short time talking with Mather and it's clear she delights in every aspect of nursing, particularly in her position at Genesys Regional Medical Center in Grand Blanc, Mich. As administrative director of Women and Children's Services, she oversees four units.

Mather oozes with enthusiasm for her profession, colleagues and patients. She's not just excited about nursing — she's good at it.

Last year she received one of the highest honors nurses dream of achieving — the Robert Wood Johnson Executive Nurse Fellowship. The award gives her the opportunity to complete a three-year fellowship with 20 of the best executive leadership nurses nationwide.

The Nightingale Award for Excellence in Nursing — a much coveted honor — was also bestowed on Mather last year.

What did she do to garner so much attention? First, she improved patient satisfaction scores by 60 percent in the Family Birthing Center. Next, she led a Perinatal Safety Initiative that achieved a zero neonatal mortality and birth trauma rate for two years running. Finally, she implemented a plan to reduce the rate of pressure ulcers to less than one percent.

Just think — Mather wasn't always interested in nursing. She was on her way to becoming a math teacher when she realized it wasn't a good fit.

"Math isn't very interactive. It has no personality," says Mather. "Most of my friends at OU were in nursing so I started asking questions. That's when I realized nursing is so much who I am."

Mather changed course, earned a nursing degree, and landed her first job at Children's Hospital in Detroit. She was hooked. Even a move to Japan didn't keep her from the profession. She worked abroad for five years while her husband served in the military. After returning stateside, Mather took a position with William Beaumont Hospital in Troy, Mich., and eventually found her way to Genesys.

During her professional journey, Mather returned to OU to earn an MBA. A big decision, considering so many in the medical profession encouraged her to pursue an MSN.

"I received a lot of pressure to earn an MSN," says Mather. "Ultimately, I think I have a stronger voice for the nurses when I come to the table with a CFO because I understand both sides of the issues. As a nurse, I can relate to patient-care needs. As an executive, I can understand the financial demands."

MBA vs. MSN. At least she didn't stick with the undergraduate math degree. ■

Kathy Pomaville Pate is a freelance writer from Dryden, Mich.



Charlotte Mather, BSN '92, MBA '05

Nightingale event to honor top nurses

by Kathy Pomaville Pate



The 21st Annual Nightingale Awards for Nursing® will honor nine award recipients and nine runners-up for their unyielding professionalism and guidance while they are "Leading the Way" in the field of nursing on Tuesday, May 5, 2009, at the San Marino Club in Troy, Mich.

21st Annual Nightingale Awards for Nursing®

Hosted by Oakland University's School of Nursing and its Board of Visitors with the help of presenting sponsor St. John Health System, the awards are bestowed in honor of Florence Nightingale, the Briton who created the nursing profession in the mid-1800s.

Other sponsors include gold sponsor Henry Ford Health System, silver sponsor Detroit Medical Center, William Beaumont Hospitals, Karmanos Cancer Institute, Crittenton Hospital Medical Center, Garden City Hospital, St. Joseph Mercy Oakland Hospital and many other local health care systems. MAGIC 105.11 radio afternoon show co-host Mitzi Miles will emcee the event.

In addition to honoring area nurses, the event raises money to help OU's SON provide scholarships and the high tech equipment needed to train nurses in today's health care arena.

"Nurses play such a critical role in health care, which often seems to go unnoticed," says SON Dean Linda Thompson Adams. "The Nightingale Awards is a way to showcase the nursing profession and pay special tribute to those who have committed their lives to improving the lives of others and who distinguish themselves through exemplary compassion, devotion and professionalism every day."

The Nightingale Awards for Nursing® coincide with National Nurses Week and Florence Nightingale's birthday, May 12, 1820. The awards promote nursing's essential health care role and the various ways nurses care for America's citizens.

The Nightingale Awards are presented to nurses in the areas of administration, advanced nurse practice, research and education, long-term care and rehabilitation, nursing in the community, staff practice, the OU distinguished alumni in nursing and the People's Choice Award.

Nightingale Award nominations are sent to health care agencies throughout Michigan. All licensed registered nurses working in the state are eligible. A selection committee reviews candidate nominations based on achievements, community service and professional organizations. Selected from more than 150 nominations, award winners each receive a check for \$1,000 and a solid bronze statue of Florence Nightingale. Runners-up receive a plaque and Nightingale pin.



Nurse practitioner event offers networking, information

Oakland University's School of Nursing hosted its second annual Nurse Practitioner Night in March. OU nurse practitioner alumni and students, along with students from Madonna University, attended to learn from each other and interact with community health care sponsors.

The featured speaker, OU SON Visiting Professor Ann Whall, Ph.D., RN, SON Allesee Endowed Chair in Gerontology, spoke on nursing theory for advanced practice nurses. The night also included an announcement that \$2,500 in scholarship funds would be available to students in Fall 2009, thanks to sponsor support.



Ann Whall

Filling a need: Car seat safety

Research shows, correctly installed car seats and booster seats can make the difference between life and death for a child in



Jaime Sinutko, RN, BSN

a car accident. Michigan law requires all children 5 to 8 years old or under 4 feet, 9 inches travel in a booster seat. Parents want to do what's right for their children, but many are not aware of the law or simply cannot afford a booster seat.

Jaime Sinutko, SON project manager and ER nurse, realized the

extent of this issue when the principal of her son's school canceled field trips because the parents providing the private transportation did not have car or booster seats.

Sinutko took action. She raised money to buy car and booster seats to give them to families in need. With the help of volunteers, donors and experts in safety issues from Children's Hospital as well as students from SON's Student Nurses Association, and nurses from Beaumont and DMC Hospitals, booster seats were provided and car seats were adjusted at an event at Troy Union Elementary School last October.

"I was surprised at the number of families pulling into the school's parking lot for a booster seat," Sinutko says. "I was more surprised that of those who did have car seats, not a single one was installed correctly."

Students receive gift of lifetime from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Eleven SON students received a significant gift from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) New Careers in Nursing Scholarship program to help fund their education. Entry-level students in OU's SON BSN Accelerated Second Degree program were eligible for \$150,000 worth of scholarships, totaling 15 scholarships over three semesters.

OU's SON was one of the first institutions nationwide — and one of two in Michigan — to receive the grant funding from the program sponsored by RWJF and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing.

"This program aims to safeguard the health of the nation by helping to ease the nurse and nurse faculty shortage," says RWJF President Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, M.D., MBA. "This new initiative also will advance our strategic goal of promoting leadership in the health professions."

Recipients say the gift means everything to them.

Recipient Katerina Karnas — who has two young children and a husband who is blind — says, "I really want to be

a nurse because I love caring for people. I feel like I've accomplished something and I am willing to work very hard. I won't let anyone down!"

On an educational leave of absence as a patient care technician, recipient Karyn Davis is pursuing her dream to be an ER or ICU nurse. "This gift means everything to me," she says. "My brother kept telling me to have faith and that things would work out so when I got the news about the scholarship, he was the first person I called!"



Karyn Davis

Other student recipients are: Suzanne Curtis, Jennifer Lane, Kevin Magnotte, Jennifer Spiller, Theresa Carrier-Torrealba, Innocent Idusuyi, Amanda Lee, Natalie Martin and Tiffany Ostrowski. The scholarship recipients were selected based on financial need and merit.

SON faculty accomplishments

◆ GRANTS RECEIVED

Barbara Penprase, associate professor, received the New Careers in Nursing Scholarship, a \$150,000 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation/American Association of Colleges of Nursing that gives 15 nursing students \$10,000 in financial assistance to complete the Accelerated Second Degree Nursing program.

The Michigan Nursing Corps Demonstration Models provided OU SON and Beaumont Hospital grant applicants **Cathy Campbell**, director, nursing education, Beaumont Royal Oak; **Barbara Penprase**, associate professor; **Adreena Harley**, director, nursing education, Beaumont Troy; **Val Gokenbach**, vice president and chief nurse executive, Beaumont Royal Oak; **Nancy Susick**, vice president and chief nurse executive, Beaumont Troy; **Diane M. Norris**, associate dean, OU SON; and **Linda Thompson Adams**, SON dean, with \$250,000 to support a preceptor staff course to prepare nurses to be stronger clinical faculty.

◆ PUBLISHED ARTICLES

Barbara Penprase, associate professor, published a current review of research on Accelerated Second Degree Nursing programs in the *Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, with Sandy Koczara, RN, MSN.

Barbara Penprase, associate professor, published "A Little Knowledge Goes a Long Way in Prevention: Best Practices of PPE Usage in the Operating Room" in *AORN* with Jamie Penprase, BSN, RN, OU CRNA program student.

Sarah Newton, associate professor; **Margaret Harris** assistant professor; **Laura Pittiglio**, assistant professor; and **Gary Moore**, associate professor; published an article titled "Nursing student math aptitude and success on a medication calculation assessment" in *Nurse Educator*.

◆ PRESENTATIONS

Margaret Harris, assistant professor; **Laura Pittiglio**, assistant professor; **Fatma Mili**, professor, engineering; presented "Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Gaming for an Online Learning Experience" at the New Century Learning Consortium Online Faculty brown-bag in January 2009.

Margaret Harris, assistant professor; **Laura Pittiglio**, assistant professor; **Fatma Mili**, professor, engineering; presented poster sessions on:

- "Nursing education through gaming, VI-MED: Virtual hospital environment for nursing education" at the Second Annual International Conference on Teaching and Learning: Creative and Critical Thinking at Oakland University in May 2008.
- "Simulating critical thinking in nursing education through gaming" at the Second Annual International Conference on Teaching and Learning: Creative and Critical Thinking at Oakland University in May 2008.
- "VI-MED virtual hospital environment with implications for nursing education" at the Drexel University Nursing Education Institute in Atlantic City, N.J., in June 2008.

Patricia Ketcham, director, nursing labs; and **Margaret Harris** assistant professor; presented a poster on "Facilitating pediatric clinical orientation in a simulation laboratory" at the 12th International Learning Resource Centers Conference in San Jose, Calif., in June 2008.

Margaret Harris, assistant professor, presented a poster on "Teaching Innovation: Simulation creates an environment for nursing students to safety practice critical thinking" at the Second Annual International Conference on Teaching and Learning: Creative and Critical Thinking at Oakland University in May 2008.

Margaret Harris, assistant professor; **Patricia Ketcham**, director, nursing labs; **Gary Moore**, associate professor; **Laura Pittiglio**, assistant professor; **N. Francisco**, simulation specialist; and **Dawn Baker**, visiting instructor; presented a paper titled "Bringing simulation to life: A creative approach to promote critical thinking" at the Second Annual International Conference on Teaching and Learning: Creative and Critical Thinking at Oakland University in May 2008.

Jon Barr, engineering student; **Margaret Harris** assistant professor; **Laura Pittiglio**, assistant professor; and **Fatma Mili**, professor, engineering; presented "Nursing Training: 3D game with learning objectives" at the International Conference on Advances in Computer-Human Interaction in Sainte Luce, Martinique.

◆ AWARDS

Barbara Penprase, associate professor, was recognized by Oakland University in 2008 for her dedication to excellence in teaching. The award cited how she offers a variety of instructional strategies and clinical expertise to her students, as well as acknowledges her approachable teaching style. The award also recognized her development and implementation of OU's Accelerated Second Degree Nursing program, the first of its kind in Michigan.

◆ STUDENT RESEARCH

Marlene Mullin, OU DNP graduate, had an article on her doctoral research accepted for publication by *Heart and Lung*, and her work was accepted for poster presentation at the inaugural DNP Conference in Memphis, Tenn.

Sandra Saucier, OU DNP student, is completing a research project comparing bedside ultrasound with the standard chest x-ray post chest tube removal to detection of pneumothorax in the cardiothoracic patient population.

Nancy Walter, MSN, RN, director, palliative care at Memorial Hermann Texas Medical Center, and OU DNP student is completing a research project titled "Neonatal comfort at end of life and nursing moral distress" focusing on how technology and life-prolonging care can cause ethical and moral issues, which often results in nurses experiencing moral distress that can have far reaching consequences on quality of care and nurse retention. A pilot study is providing an initial look at whether providing more comfort measures to infants at the end of life in the NICU is related to a decrease in moral distress for the nurse.

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