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State & School Activities

Arkansas

University of Arkansas students from Eleanor Mann School of Nursing held their annual health fair at a local elementary school earlier this year. With support from community businesses, nursing students showed the children that health can be fun while promoting healthy habits for a lifetime. Some nursing students wielded a giant-sized toothbrush to illustrate effective brushing. Others performed as dancing fruits and vegetables to teach nutrition basics. For the past six years, senior nursing students have organized the health fair at local elementary schools to learn organizational and management skills while experiencing first-hand the role of nurse as teacher.

Georgia

Emory Student Nurses' Association (ESNA) participated in the "Just for Kids Shoebox Drive," sponsored by the Georgia Association of Nursing Students (GANS). Children ages 2-13 from Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (CHOA) were selected to receive a variety of items from this drive, such as coloring books, crayons, books, puzzles and much more. These children who have chronic and acute illnesses that most children their age have not had to deal with. They are children from all over the state of Georgia, and more recently, our neighboring states of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. These children are often stuck in the hospital for long-term care and this drive lets them know that the student nurses of Georgia care about them.



Some of the NYU nursing students who volunteered to vaccinate elderly people in New York City against the flu.

New York

To help ensure that older New Yorkers avoid the flu this winter, 45 NYU College of Nursing students lent a hand at more than a dozen flu shot clinics during November. The volunteer effort was conceived by Carrie D'Andrea, an NYU nursing student who, as part of her nursing leadership class, is working at the Visiting Nurse Service of New York (VNSNY) Flu Vaccine Initiative to fulfill the clinical requirements of the class. One of Ms. D'Andrea's first responsibilities at VNSNY was to recruit some extra hands for the flu vaccine initiative. By sending out an

email, she found more willing classmates than she had imagined. Students who volunteer have been able to receive both credit for the volunteer hours and a free flu shot.

With more students volunteering each day, the NYU students cut the waiting time for older adults seeking flu shots and assisted them in filling out considerable paperwork. Moreover, in the course of conducting health screenings to ensure that people would not suffer adverse reactions from the vaccine, nursing students have been able to refer several individuals for needed health care.

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“Nursing students have helped tremendously in protecting the community from a virus that kills about 36,000 people in the United States each year,” stated Noreen Brennan, clinical coordinator for the Leadership Class. “In addition to providing health screening, students helped keep things organized at the sites and made the experience pleasant for the recipients. Most students also received a free flu shot at the clinics and it’s exciting to know that we are able to increase the immunizations in our student population, especially as they go to work with ill patients at other sites in their community.”

The students have worked at sites run in the Manhattan neighborhoods of Harlem, Washington Heights, Morningside Heights, the Upper West Side, East and West Villages, Chelsea, Times Square, Lower East Side, Flatiron District, and in Staten Island. Clinics have been held in large residential complexes, single-room occupancy buildings that house formerly homeless people, and retirement communities. Ms. D’Andrea noted, “The older people receiving flu vaccines have appreciated the opportunity to get some help with the forms and have really enjoyed talking with the nursing students.”

“This project has opened my eyes to community health and wellness, and to the importance of immunizing as many people as possible,” she added. “Many of the nursing students have had the same response.”

Michigan

Michigan Nursing Student Association (MNSA) announced its “Be Healthy and Live Longer Campaign” this fall. The campaign kicked off September 1, 2005 and has been extended until February 1, 2006. The MNSA Board encouraged all nurses, student nurses, nursing faculty, friends and family to make healthier lifestyle habits. To aid in this, MNSA began a friendly competition between nursing schools to see who can make the healthiest lifestyle changes. Proceeds from the competition will go to the MNSA scholarship fund and the winner will receive a nursing scholarship which will be awarded at the 2006 MNSA Convention. The goal of this competition is to help people lead healthy lifestyles, so the more who enter the better!

North Carolina

In spring 2005, members of Carolinas College of Health Sciences Student Nurses’ Association combined efforts with the Student Government Association in helping the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer. In Charlotte, North Carolina, the walk provides awareness of local and national programs as well as sites and web sites that can educate both women and men on:



Pictured at the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer: in the front row is Student Nurses’ Association treasurer, Terri Richardson and president Margaret Langel. They are joined by students and friends (l to r): James Marshall, Lisa Smith, Thomas Smith, Carrie Fink, Elena Carroll and Anna Carroll.

- The risks of breast cancer;
- The need for annual mammograms after the age of 40; or earlier if there is a family history of breast cancer;
- The importance of monthly self breast exams;
- The nutritional and exercise habits which can reduce the risk of breast cancer and much, much more.

As many nursing schools still have predominantly female populations, our students thought this would be a good way to raise awareness in our own school.

The Susan G. Komen Run and Walk for Breast Cancer Awareness is coming this fall to many area of the United States. We would like to encourage fellow SNA members to join together in participation in their local walks and use the opportunity to increase their own awareness of programs available. ☺

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Maisha Hollis, administrative assistant, contributed to this column.