



The "Up Close" column highlights an outstanding nursing student. Send nominee ideas to nsna@nsna.org.

By Dinah Walsh

Finding Guidance through Friendship

A love of science, biology and anatomy in high school provided the foundation for Anna Menard's future interest in nursing as a career. But it was Meghan Andris, her best friend, who sealed the deal. Meghan persuaded her to attend a four-day nursing camp at DeSales University in cooperation with Lehigh Valley Hospital. After the camp experience, Anna knew that she found a fit in nursing.

Now a senior at Villanova University, Anna is the president of the College of Nursing's SNA chapter and expects to graduate in May 2009 with a BSN. She describes her years of study as challenging yet exhilarating. "I've loved every minute of it," she says. "The opportunities for international study and the missionary work have really opened my eyes to all the ways nurses can help." In May 2008, she completed a two week trip to Durban, South Africa with eight students and two faculty members from Villanova's College of Nursing. While in Durban, the group was housed at a convent and learned about South African culture. At the local schools, the nursing students presented healthcare topics such as cardiac disease and diabetes to the students.

Prior to her experience in South Africa, Anna participated in an international missionary trips to Peru in 2006. "In Peru, access to healthcare is the main issue. We saw a lot of hypertension and arthritis in the elderly." In 2007, she traveled to Belize City to participate in a home building project and visit an HIV/AIDS orphanage. This past fall, she was part of a 21 student contingent from the university that helped build three houses in Slidell, Louisiana with Habitat for Humanity to benefit victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Anna's commitment to caring for others has not been limited to those outside her immediate community. While completing her studies, she works as a nurse tech in the Pediatric Oncology Unit at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. During the summer of 2008, she completed an externship at



the hospital in oncology, which combined practical clinical experiences with lecture components. "This was a one-of-a-kind experience that really inspired me to work in oncology," she states. After graduation, Anna hopes to continue to put her RN skills to work in the pediatric oncology field.

Anna's interest in oncology compliments her role as President of Villanova's SNA. Her chapter is involved with the local Ronald McDonald house, which houses and provides services for families of cancer patients. In addition, the Villanova chapter invites local Girl Scout Troops to visit the College of Nursing. The troops can earn healthcare promotion patches by visiting the school, using the simulation labs and attending first aid care presentations. Anna and her chapter members provide role modeling, mentoring and inspiration to the visiting Girl Scouts.

Anna serves as a model for other. Her leadership skills and commitment to serve others have been valuable assets in assisting her chapter to provide a wide variety of involvement levels for all members and serves both on and off campus interests. ©