

HAPPENINGS



The "Happenings" column highlights chapter activities and accomplishments. Submit your activities to Carrie Mortensen at carriemortensen@cox.net

State and School Activities

Guam

The Student Nurses Association of Guam (SNAG) participated in "Relay for Life" on May 26, 2006. Pouring rain didn't stop 12 SNAG members from walking and running the track from 7 pm to 7 am. The student nurses also competed in a scavenger hunt and won third place. The event honored cancer survivors and



Pictured from left to right are University of Guam nursing students and Relay for Life participants: Jayar Calilung, SNAG President; Regina Sinamban; Jaimee Bundang, SNAG Secretary; Joann Escalante; Rae Ann Quitugua; and Nicole Manibusan, Class President.

raised money for research and programs sponsored by the American Cancer Society. A candle lighting ceremony honoring those who have passed from cancer was a highlight of the event. The nursing students on Team UOG (University of Guam) raised nearly \$2,000 for the cause.

New York

"Patient safety matters." That is exactly what nursing students and faculty from Suffolk County Community College-Ammerman (SCCC) conveyed at the New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA) Lobby Day in Albany last spring. As part of Lobby Day, the SCCC students received education from NYSNA members on lobbying

techniques, and tips on speaking with legislators. The NYSNA, along with SCCC student nurses, lobbied the state legislature to prohibit mandatory overtime for nurses, mandate disclosure of staffing levels and quality indicators, protect the title "nurse," and promote educational advancement for nurses. During Lobby Day, Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno announced that legislation would be passed to protect the title "nurse" to apply only to RNs and LPNs, and that an additional \$1.8 million in funding was promised for the Senator Patricia K. McGee Nursing Faculty Scholarship Program, which assists RNs with the educational costs of preparing to teach nursing at the college level. In addition, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver stated legislation would pass requiring healthcare facility disclosure of staffing levels and patient complication rates. Nursing students and others who attended Lobby Day wore t-shirts and buttons that stated "Patient Safety Matters."

Oregon

Oregon high school students were given the unique opportunity to explore careers in nursing during the Oregon Student Nurses Association (OSNA) Convention. Attendees were shown a live demonstration by volunteers from the University of Portland's School of Nursing simulation lab, illustrating the technology and safe environments available and utilized in most Oregon nursing programs. The prospective nursing students were also taken on campus tours of the actual simulation lab and had the chance to experience hands-on interaction with simulation mannequins. Additionally, the convention attendees were given a chance to learn more about nursing specialties such as obstetrics, trauma, and intensive care unit (ICU) nursing from nurses specializing in those areas.

Nebraska

Southeast Community College (SCC) student nurses participated in the American Red Cross Basic Aid

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Training (BAT) project. BAT is a skills building program presented to 8-10 year olds that prepares them to respond in emergency situations. Student nurses introduced the kids to basic first aid skills, how to prevent injuries, and the response steps: check, call, and care. SCC NSNA members utilized activity books, puzzles, and games to enhance learning, while training over 2,400 fourth-grade students from Lincoln public schools.

In recognition of their participation in BAT, SCC was awarded the Nebraska State Student Nurses Association (NSSNA) Community Health and Service Award. SCC NSNA Chapter President Teresa "Buffy" McCray accepted the award on behalf of her chapter at the Student Nurse Day festivities at SCC.

New Jersey

The Raritan Valley Community College Student Nurses Association raised \$1,000 for the Resource Center for Women and Their Families, an organization that provides services to domestic violence victims and their children. The Resource Center is a non-profit agency offering critical services including a 24-hour free crisis hotline, an emergency safehouse for victims, an 18-month transitional living program, counseling services, support and educational groups, and training for volunteers interested in working with local law enforcement agencies. To raise money for the Resource Center, the nursing students sold baked goods on their college campus for only one dollar. According to the Student Nursing Association Vice President, Nancy Pucci, "Students are more receptive when it's for a good cause. They're

more likely to give us five dollars and tell us to keep the change."

The Raritan Valley Community College nursing program also collaborated with the Resource Center to provide domestic violence training to the prospective graduating class. The goal was to offer tools used to recognize signs of domestic violence, and facilitate relationships between healthcare providers and domestic violence organizations.

Iowa

Two Iowa Association of Nursing Students (IANS) members, Kari Teeter, Grandview College, Des Moines, and Laura Hudson, St. Ambrose University, Davenport, researched improper disposal of pharmaceuticals and personal care products (PPCPs) for a professionalism class in the fall of 2004. Their research and findings led to a resolution petitioning nursing students and professionals to practice and

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promote environmentally safe disposal of PPCPs in their homes, workplaces, and communities. Their findings also raised valid concerns of creating a greater public awareness of this issue. The resolution passed at the IANS convention in the fall of 2005. In the spring of 2006, the IANS resolution was presented, with few amendments, to the National Student Nurses Association (NSNA) during the annual convention in Baltimore. The resolution proposed that the NSNA promote education of safe drug disposal methods, and encourage involvement in initiatives that support proper disposal of PPCPs. The resolution passed at the NSNA convention with overwhelming support.

When IANS member Laura Hudson heard about an upcoming drug disposal event in Iowa, she contacted the project coordinator Tom Ryan, of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), about participating. As a result,

IANS members were graciously allowed to take part in the activities. “Operation Medicine Cabinet” was held on May 23-25, 2006, with a mission to collect, educate, and promote proper disposal of old and unused medications, mercury thermometers, and sharps (needles, lancets, syringes, etc.). In addition, mercury thermometers were replaced with digital thermometers and free sharps containers were distributed. Special Waste Coordinator for the Waste Commission of Scott County, Brian Seals, acknowledged that “We are trying to prevent accidental poisoning, ground water \pollution,



and the chance of a needle stick, which could lead to blood borne pathogens.” Seals added that incorrect disposal of PPCPs has been a persistent problem, but now that an ongoing pharmaceutical acceptance policy has been established, proper disposal techniques can be taught.

Nursing students helped collect over 1,200 pounds of medical waste from residents of all ages and locations within eastern Iowa and western Illinois during the three day event, which was open to the general public at no charge. Hudson remarked that if there is one message to take away from an event like “Operation Medicine Cabinet” it is “DO NOT FLUSH unused medications.” “Operation Medicine Cabinet” proved to be a resourceful and successful intervention for the education and promotion of essential steps to create a safe and healthy environment within the Iowa and Illinois communities. ©