New Beginnings
Karen Flad
PASNAP President

As the summer comes to an end and school is soon to be upon us, many school nurses throughout the state will be entering their school settings with many changes and challenges for the upcoming school year. I know for myself, my first week setting up, I was faced with the most unusual situations of an Earthquake, Hurricane Irene, and the threat of a Tornado, all in the same week. Just a few days before our school doors were to open for the new school year, the American Red Cross needed the use of our building as an evacuation center for quite a few of our local residents and students. Our first day was canceled due to high local stream levels, no power for many local residents and no homes for several of our local families. Yet, as I visited school to see if I could be of assistance, I learned such valuable lessons from those that the storm left much less fortunate than myself, which I wish to share.

As I walked into the lobby of my High School, I was greeted by no power and the High School hallways looking quite dark and the air quite stale and warm. American Red Cross staff were stationed to greet all those who entered, an ARC nurse was stationed prominently in the main lobby along with two county sheriffs and a ham radio operator for the county emergency communication system. Enough food had been donated to meet the needs of the day ahead. Amazingly, enough ice and coolers were visible to handle the temporary loss of generator power. I smiled, as I watched the sheriffs share their two flashlights to assist children having enough light to use the bathrooms, by hanging them strategically on a man-made shoestring tie wrapped on the ceiling tile holders.

When I greeted the students and their families, I quickly learned that my point of view of the situation was much different than those needing the shelter. A little girl recognized me as “the school nurse who helps at the local food pantry” and ran up to me to give me a hug and ask if I needed a cot or a blanket. She informed me not to be scared and that she would help take care of me and interpret if I needed. She had one plastic bag of clothes and belongings for her entire family of six and proudly showed me her two parakeet birds that had also been rescued by boat when her apartment had flooded the night before.

Touring the gym, lobby and cafeteria areas, I was amazed at the calmness of those who were present. Many informed me that they were thankful for their safety. Their view of the situation was that they would
Notes From the Editor
Kathy Halkins

Here is the first Examiner of the 2011-2012 school year, Welcome Back! I am sure for many it will be a rough and tumble year. We have the new immunization requirements and flu season not to mention a rapid increase in the acuity of the health problems we take care of and attempt to solve for our “kids” at school.

That’s right, our “kids”. My husband says I am mother to the world and I know many of you feel that way. Not only do we take care of the kids who walk in the door each morning, we also care for the parents, the staff and other community members who happen upon our buildings. Many of us volunteer at shelters, for the Red Cross or serve as Medical Reserve Corps members.

So please enjoy the articles and while you read about what’s happening and the message from our president, please think about what you would like to tell your fellow school nurses. Write up your thoughts, tell me about something special you did or something funny that happened to you and send it in. Only another school nurse can really appreciate the things that happen and the places we’ve been.

“Reflections on my 42 year career”
Jackie March, CSN, Schuylkill Valley School District

When I began my career in school nursing I was as green as an apple on the tree. Oh sure, I had knowledge, after all I had been educated at a wonderful three year diploma program at Reading Hospital and I had spent six years working in the fast paced environment of the operating room at Reading Hospital, but I certainly had no idea what this job entailed and I was in for quite a ride.

I was told about the position at Schuylkill Valley and since I was already in college, I applied for the position. I began on an emergency certificate and was told I had two to three years to complete my college program. I started in September of 1969 and was told by my superintendant in January of 1970, that I had to complete my college courses by the following September. I took 2 courses that spring semester and 18 credits over the summer completing all my requirements. I was officially a school nurse. That was 42 years ago and now I find myself at the end of my school nursing career. Where did all the years go? It really does not seem like that amount of time has passed.

Things were very different when I began. I wore a white uniform. My superintendent really wanted me to wear my cap. I know that is hard to believe, but it is the truth. I wore a uniform for four years, white stockings, and nurse’s oxfords. I also coached cheerleading for seven years. It was easier to get a job at that time if you also coached something.....I also had a study hall and was the detention monitor. When I was at the middle school, I was also responsible for writing all the failure slips for students and doing the attendance including collecting all of the excuse blanks with reason for absence. I don’t think they thought I had enough to do.

I have had five superintendents, eleven principals and eleven assistant principals in my career. All had distinct personalities and their own way of interacting with the nursing department. I feel that I have been supported by my administrators and that they wanted the best for the students and were very willing to obtain equipment and supplies that we needed but I will never believe that administrators really know all the work that nurses do. They know we do our jobs and that we, the professional school nurses meet all the state require-
ments, but I don’t think they have any idea what a typical day encompasses. One of the nicest compliments I ever received was from an administrator who said, “I admire your calm approach to situations that happen even scary ones. You stay calm and you calm all of those around you. You just do your job and I appreciate that.”

Students to me have not changed. The faces are different, the personalities are not. Sure students today have different ways of expressing themselves, not only by changing the color of their hair but many are sporting body art with tattoos and also piercings which of course no one had years ago. It does not change who they are, just changes their appearance. Students still want people to listen to them. When exchanging conversation with students one often learns of their personal struggles: dealing with personal illness, the illness or death of a parent, divorce, abuse, lack of nourishment, bullying, difficult emotional issues, relation issues, including today discussing sexual orientation. We also have seen a change in our population in terms of diverse international students. We have had students from Mexico, Chad, Vietnam, China and India. Language is sometimes a barrier, but my admiration goes to the students who adapt quickly and learn English it appears without much difficulty. Often their parents do not speak English and they communicate on their behalf. It is very interesting and enlightening.

We as school nurses are commissioned to teach. We have a wonderful opportunity on a daily basis to make health become important to our students. Each visit is a door opening to teach personal responsibility for health. What symptoms to look for and how to interpret what they mean.

There are always many stories that could be shared such as a former student I spoke to recently who quit in her senior year. That was fifteen years ago. She told me she quit because she was bullied on a daily basis and that she only felt safe in the health room where I talked to her and let her have a “time out”. I have faced near death situations with students and colleagues and I have faced the loss of students through illness, suicide, and accidents.

I have been very happy in my job. It was a joy to come to work each morning and I have learned so much during these years. I became a Mom myself and truly believe that what I learned from my students allowed me to be better in that area of my life. I completed my Masters degree and many credits beyond that and grew so much personally. It was a difficult decision to make to leave a place that I truly love. My co-workers have become my friends, my extended family and I care about them.

I know everyone is replaceable and I know that they will find a wonderful nurse out there who will take my place. She will walk into this building and she/he will be received with kindness from all who will work with her/him. I will never lose my identity, I will always be a school nurse, but I will move on to the next phase of my life with gratitude for all the 28,000 students I have dealt with over my career, the families, my colleagues and my friends. My family will support me in this transition. I will shed my tears and I will move on with life.
An Academic-School Health Partnership: Student Nurse Perspectives on School Nursing

Shildia Jones, Nursing Student
Beth Gotwals, RN, PhD, Assistant Professor
St. Luke’s School of Nursing at Moravian College

Introduction

The St. Luke’s School of Nursing at Moravian College has developed a partnership with the Bethlehem School District that is a win-win situation for both the faculty and nursing students at the college and the school community. At the beginning of this partnership is the NU314 - Embracing the Dynamic Community course. This clinical practicum course provides a foundation in community health nursing. The concepts of community and the nursing process as it relates to the community as clients are addressed as professional nurse roles are identified and evaluated in a variety of community contexts, including the multifaceted role of the school nurse.

Each spring, junior nursing students are assigned to a school within the Bethlehem School District for two clinical days. The first day is a day to experience the roles of the professional nurse in the school setting. The second day involved completion of a hygiene project, which was discussed in the spring/summer 2011 issue of the Examiner. Objectives for this experience have the nursing students describe how the school nurse contributes to the health of the school community. The students see firsthand the roles and functions of a school nurse within the context of the community’s values, culture, and socio-economic status. Students may also identify legal, ethical, and financial issues related to school nursing. Following the experience, students submit a journal which describes the school community, the health services’ mission, and observed practice. The students reflect on the normal growth and development tasks and issues specific to the school population. Students also report on the health problems that were prevalent at the school and connect a research article to the clinical experience.

Student Nurse Perspectives on School Nursing

Shildia Jones, nursing student, had the opportunity to spend a day in the health center of Liberty High School with Kathleen Halkins, Certified School Nurse and Chairperson of Health Services for the Bethlehem School District. Her reflections on the experience provide a glimpse into the value of this community health experience. This journal exemplifies a community clinical experience that takes the student from a passive observer to an active, engaged, clinical experience. Shildia integrated concepts from disciplines such as biology, developmental psychology, and sociology to craft a ‘windshield survey’ of the Liberty High School community. (Stanhope & Lancaster, 2010). The roles of the school nurse as practitioner, educator, coordinator, advocate, and counselor were clearly identified through this clinical experience. Shildia used observation and a sense of inquiry to critically think about the student to nurse ratio and, as a future nurse leader, suggested a policy change to reflect positive school health outcomes. Here is an excerpt from her journal:

… According to Guttu, Martha, and Swanson (2004), a lower student to nurse ratio results in better health outcomes overall compared to schools with a high nurse to student ratio. Their study also revealed that schools with a smaller nurse to student ratio reported higher rates of identifying chronic illnesses such as asthma and diabetes with higher rates of nurse involvement in the treatment of the-
This type of experience was the result of an established relationship with a school district and a health services department that is interested in nursing education and innovation. St. Luke’s School of Nursing students and faculty would heartily endorse making these connections and establishing active learning guidelines as part of the community health experience for nursing students. We hope to outline further developments of this academic-school health partnership in future issues of The Examiner.

References


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**PASNAP Listserve**

One of your membership benefits is the perfect way to get information that pertains to nurses across in this Commonwealth. This is a PASNAP members only group that allows you to ask questions, seek out other opinions, and find support as you work in the world of education.

It’s easy to join. Go to [www.pasnap.org](http://www.pasnap.org) and follow the links. You will need to be approved as we only accept/approve those who are active members. You may want to use your personal email as some institutions may block group emails such as this. Looking forward to hearing from you.
The Future of Nursing
Carol Hackenbracht

The recent report recommendations from the Institute of Medicine (IOM) and the Pennsylvania Coalition for the Advancement of Nursing Education (PCANE) suggest that nurses will be playing a more prominent role in the future.

The Institute of Medicine’s October 2010 report, The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health, maintains that the more than three million nurses can “play a vital role in helping realize the objectives set forth in the 2010 Affordable Care Act, legislation that represents the broadest health care overhaul since the 1965 creation of the Medicare and Medicaid programs.” In partnership with The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the IOM developed several key messages: Nurses should practice to the full extent of their education and training, achieve higher levels of education through an educational system that promotes “seamless academic progression,” engage in lifelong learning and be full partners with physicians.

In addition the IOM report makes several recommendations for nursing including the support for nurse residency programs, increasing the number of baccalaureate degree nurses to 80 per cent by 2020, doubling the number of nurses with a doctorate by 2010, enabling nurses to lead change to advance health, and improving professional health care workforce data so that health care needs across the states can be assessed.

In April 2011, the Pennsylvania Coalition for the Advancement of Nursing Education, a group of nurse leaders and nurse educators from throughout the Commonwealth who have been meeting since the fall of 2007, published a White Paper. The vision of PCANE is to achieve a cohesive plan for the advancement of nursing education within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Its goals parallel the IOM report. The White Paper lists the primary goal as “to advocate for a seamless career pathway to achieve a nursing workforce at a higher educational level to care for the increased needs of patients across the lifespan.” The second goal is “to advocate for advancing the educational preparation of the nurses in Pennsylvania.”

Some of PCANE’s recommendations include increasing the proportion of RN’s with a BSN by 10 percent every two years to reach 80% by 2020, reflecting the IOM report. PCANE also proposes strengthening “seamless” academic programs whereby ADN/Diploma programs have formal agreements with at least one BSN programs by 2015 and LPN programs have formal agreements with at least one RN program by 2015. In addition, PCANE outlines expanding support for graduate education in nursing. The Coalition proposes that at least 10% of all BSN graduates matriculate into a master’s or doctoral program within 5 years of graduation. Funding through scholarship and loans is also recommended.

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stick together and take what resources they had brought with them and share throughout the height of the storm. So many made lemonade out of lemons.

This made me think of the many challenges and stress that many of us will face as we re-enter their school buildings and discover many of the resources gone this coming school year, whether it be less personnel, supplies or changes in assignments and duties. Will we be able to use the one or two flashlights we have and maximize their flow of light needed to do our job this coming year? How creative can we be to make our limited resources of light shine in order for our jobs to be successful this coming school year? How will we be able to keep our profession of Certified School Nurse visible vital asset to our schools that we serve this coming school year?

As the storm winds blew and rain caused much localized flooding for many hours, the storm, eventually came to an end. Looking around, I realized off in the distance was a very bright and colorful rainbow. How many of us would look to discover this beautiful site? I began to wonder where this path began and if followed, where it would end. How many of us would choose to follow it’s path?

Each of us this school year will be faced with how to balance what limited resources we may be faced with along with maximizing our ability to provide quality care to the students that we serve. We will need to choose the path to either view with our binoculars from a distance or physically find and walk to seek to make quality actions now that will provide success in the future for the students that we currently care for.

New challenges can for many of us be intimidating and fearful. I learned that during the storm, many of those faced with the challenge of being flooded out, were calmed with coming together at the evacuation site and all sharing of what resources and talents they had for the moment. The professional organization of the American Red Cross, provided a safe and unified environment for all who were in need of shelter. The Red Cross became their voice to get the services they were in need of.

How many of us will be willing to stick together this coming year to share our time, talent and resources as Certified School Nurses? Last year, our unity was strong as we wrote letters to our local and state legislators in opposition to several school related bills. This year, our professional organization and membership of PASNAP will be vital in providing our light and strength.

Additionally, how many of us will be able to look beyond the way that it has always been done and look past the upcoming challenges and the economy that all of us will face this school year and look towards new and creative ideas to meet the needs of the health and safety of the children that we serve? Will any of us be able to look beyond the damages of a storm and search and find the rainbows that may only be visible for a short time after stormy weather passes?

This year, I hope that all of us can be limber enough to face the flexibility that we will be needing to face our many challenges that each of our schools may be facing. I hope that all of us will not be afraid to think outside of the box and be willing to share and support one another as we work towards our creative ways in order to have a healthy and successful school year for not only ourselves but the students, faculty, and families that we serve. Our professional image will be vital to this success occurring, so I urge all of us to remain unified through our continued membership of PASNAP. May our light shine and visibility be seen in our membership numbers!