Get Involved, Challenge Yourself, Grow!

By Angie Dastolfo

Does your daily work life feel stagnant, boring, and predictable? Consider getting involved, challenging yourself. Personal growth will surely follow. The opportunities can be endless as long as you look for them.

All Pennsylvania schools are required to maintain specified committees, including student assistance, wellness, safety and curriculum and instruction (C&I).

Committees such as wellness and safety correlate directly to principles of primary nursing and preventive care, which makes a nurse a perfect committee member.

Certified School Nurses are also an important integral part of student-assistance teams as they consider behaviors that inhibit learning.

School Nurses Take Care of Their Own

By Kathy Verbel, BSN, M.Ed., RN, NCSN

Do school nurses take care of their own?

This was the question posed to the attendees who visited PASNAP’s Public Relations booth at the 47th Annual NASN School Nurse Conference this past summer in Philadelphia.

Nurses were provided with slips stating “School nurses take care of their own by: ” and asked to jot down an experience, share a story, or make a brief comment on the topic.

Participation was optional. Those contributing were told that their comments could be used to compile a newsletter article for a future PASNAP Pulse edition.

When I placed the fishbowl on the end of our table to gather responses I was hopeful, but unsure of how many we’d collect. If you’ve never been to a national conference, it’s amazing. But the schedule is demanding. One could say hectic. Would colleagues take their precious free time to write a reply? So when forms began piling up in the bowl I was elated!

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A Message From Our President

As the leaves change into their brilliant colors, we know another season is upon us. Seems like we just left the warm, relaxing days of summer behind where our hectic school and work schedules were peaceful for a while. Time moves so quickly. After a while these gorgeous colors will dwindle and the gray skies of winter will move in around us. Then finally a long awaited spring will be here...Hurray Spring! One of spring’s special highlights will be our Annual PASNAP Conference on April 8 – 10, 2016 in State College, PA. The theme is “School Nurses: The Fingerprint for Student Success”. Kathy Verbel, President Elect and Conference Chair, and her committee will provide a conference that is certain to meet your needs. A variety of pertinent topics that surveyed attendees have requested will be offered. If you’ve never experienced the PASNAP conference, treat yourself this year. You will not be disappointed!

Among the brilliance of this fall season comes House Bill No. 1625 introduced by Representative Baker. For almost four years now this bill to allow delegation of care for the student with diabetes to non–licensed personnel has been introduced in the capitol. We have seen seasons of it come and go and now it has returned, haunting us once again. PLEASE DO NOT WAIT! NOW IS THE TIME TO CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS! Take a moment to educate them on how this bill will jeopardize the safety of our students. Please go to www.pasnap.org for more information and facts.

In closing I want to take this opportunity to thank each of you for every season you give and have given to our specialty of school nursing. Your daily commitment to excellence is applauded. Never doubt that you do make a difference, no matter how large or small, in the lives of your students and in your school community. It is a pleasure that I begin my term to serve as your president. Wishing each of you a safe, productive, school year of wonderful seasons!

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PASNAP Offers Future Nurse Scholarship

PASNAP is proud to offer a $1,000 award to a high school senior pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

This scholarship was initiated in 2008 in memory of Richard Berritini, a Certified School Nurse for almost 15 years at Port Allegany High School. He lost his life in 2008 serving for the National Guard in Afghanistan. We continue this scholarship in honor of all the nurses who have learned that the ability to care for others is a gift you will have with you always.

In order to be eligible for the award, the application must be submitted and postmarked by May 1. The winner will be notified via telephone by June 1. The award will be sent in the student's name directly to the college or university of the winner's choice.

To apply for the scholarship, students should go to the PASNAP website at www.pasnap.org and click on the education link.
From Pennsylvania to Utah, Florida to Washington, Vermont to Colorado, close to eighty school nurses from all around the country commented. It was gratifying to read the forms, but also quit thought-provoking. Themes began to emerge. I found responses could be sorted into 6 areas.-

1. ADVOCACY
Both in the school setting and outside the work place nurses feel we advocate for each other and our students. An unnamed nurse wrote “Through a common mission and vision of advocacy for children (and each other) we are an awesome team”.

2. LISTENING
Being there to listen to fears and frustrations, or confirming other’s worth and judgements. Nurses gave examples of scheduled quarterly meetings after school to foster teamwork and problem solve, setting up Facebook groups to share, and arranging social activities to “play” together and just be there for each other.

3. MENTORING
Nurturing, educating, and inspiring each other. Nurses share best practice tips with peers. Stephanie from Ohio wrote “As a 1st year school nurse, I would have floundered hard if it were not for the veteran nurses by my side.”

4. TAKING AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION
Nurse after nurse made comments similar to those of JoAnn from Illinois, “Be actively involved in your state organization.” Encourage peers to be involved in local, county or state organizations and conferences.

5. SUPPORTING
“Sharing, laughing and holding hands when times get tough” and “Praising a job well done” writes Michelle from Massachusetts. Both in schools and outside the work place, many nurses voiced the importance of “having a peer’s back”.

6. CARING
Yes, we care for our students every day, but nurse after nurse noted how peers took the time to care for their own, some in very creative ways. Examples were given of covering workloads during family crisis or personal illness, sending supportive notes or donations of gifts. But my favorite example was from Anne from Delaware who shared “When my daughter took her 1st job on the other side of the country, I contacted the local school nurse.” “She since has taken her under her wing- helping and supporting us all in so many ways. I can’t be more grateful.”

New Hampshire, Indiana, Texas and California, school nurses from across the country agree that we do take care of our own. Districts and practice settings differ, but subjects are remarkably similar. School nurses are an amazing group. As Kim from Nevada put it “wait…and get refreshed”. How will you pass it forward?

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PSEA, local education associations, and county school nurse associations all need their members to take an active role in order to stay active and viable. Several School Nurses who have served before us have been active leaders as local EA president, PSEA president, DPS president, and others. Not only can we follow their lead, but also become role models for others. Let your interests and skills guide you.

There are surely opportunities in your own school building with the students you serve on a daily basis. Consider helping with existing student clubs. Even if they are not health related, the interactions with students in an environment outside the health office helps build positive trusting relationships.

Teachers often develop cross curricular activities; a little thought and creativity can often find a health link to a lesson, such as the history of a particular illness or the chemistry behind healthy food.

Have you mentored any students? Our younger, less experienced population is bursting with ideas and energy. The students in our schools will have unique perspectives and fresh views on some of our old issues.

Nursing students at all levels can do the same. Ideally, as the experienced nurse shares knowledge and expertise with a nursing student, a dialogue and exchange of information occurs which results in growth of both individuals.

Are you thinking of how you can expand your involvement and grow professionally yet? If not, let PASNAP be of assistance. List serves such as School Nurse Net allow for the exchange of ideas among School Nurse professionals. Conferences, including the PASNAP annual education conference, always present ideas, ranging from simple to grand, that attendees can take back to their home districts and implement as they see fit for the populations they serve.

We live in an ever changing world that can be both exciting and intimidating. Take a moment to reflect, get involved, challenge yourself, and grow!
Domestic Violence Grant closes after successful 3-year run

By Cheryl Mattern, M.Ed, BSN, CSN

The federal grant obtained by Fern Gilkerson and the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence closed successfully after three years of training and intervention application. This grant was administered via the Violence Against Women Act.

The partnerships developed between state entities and pilot sites served to build the foundation for replicating the Futures Without Violence program “Hanging Out or Hooking Up.”

School nurses were identified as key players in reaching adolescents in the effort to educate them about healthy relationships. School nurses, local domestic violence shelters and family planning organizations worked to strengthen relationships in order to increase access and warm referrals for teens in need of additional services.

The Pennsylvania Association of School Nurses and Practitioners is proud to have supported this project through letters of support for the grant and membership on the State Advisory Leadership Team.

Please take a moment to explore the Futures Without Violence website, www.futureswithoutviolence.org, to obtain the “Hanging Out or Hooking Up” materials as well as other valuable resources that may be utilized in the school setting in the fight against intimate partner violence and teen dating abuse.

If I can be of any assistance to you regarding training, materials, etc. please feel free to contact me at csmattern@comcast.net.

Saving Lives at School/Get Trained Program has gone viral across PA

Saving Lives at School and the Get Trained Program’s has gone “viral” across PA.

Wissahickon School District Certified School Nurses, led by District Nurse Coordinator Kathleen M. Maguire, PHD, RN, trained the entire district staff the first day back from summer vacation.

“It’s a great year for school nurses,” Maguire said. “Your voice is being heard.”
The annual PASNAP Conference will be held April 8-10 at The Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel in State College.

The theme of this year’s conference is “School Nurses, The Fingerprint for Student Success”.

Conference registration information will be available on www.pasnap.org in the near future.

Poster Presentation Contest Coming Soon

PASNAP is once again sponsoring a poster presentation contest in conjunction with the annual conference. Information of registering for the contest will be available soon on the PASNAP web site at www.pasnap.org or by contacting Cheryl Matter at csmattern@gmail.com.

Tales from the Office

Superwoman

A second-grade student comes rushing into the health office with her friend yelling “Help, Help!” When I ask what’s wrong, she points to the back of her friends hair and said “I’ve ruined her hair with my gum.” Sure enough, a large wad of gum is caught in the middle of her long blond hair. “Let me see what I can do”, I said. After 15 minutes, the gum was removed and they were both thankful. As they left, the girl who yelled “help, help” said to her friend, “I told she can fix EVERYTHING!”. If only that was true.

Submitted by Donna Radice—Central Bucks School District

Do you have a story, anecdote or ‘aha moment you are willing to share with your peers?

-a heart warming narrative
-a student comment that made you grin from ear to ear
-a wonderful resource in the community, on the web, or for your smart phone
-a new way of doing something ( or an old way that still works great!)
-an award or accomplishment that made you proud

Send to srossetti1974@gmail.com “attention newsletter “