



Nursing Students' Association of New York State

# STAT Newsletter

## Winter 2017 Issue

### Letter from the Editor

Dear STAT Readers,

I hope everyone is enjoying their well-deserved break this holiday season! You've worked hard in this past semester, now is the moment to spend some time on yourself and with your friends and family!

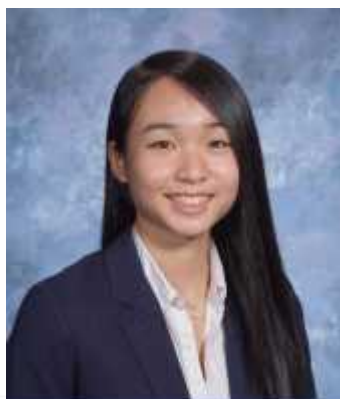
In this edition of STAT, the NSANYS Board of Directors as well as some special guests, share with you their experiences of volunteering in their community, working while going to school, and job hunting after graduation.

We have been working hard to plan our 65<sup>th</sup> Annual NSANYS Convention, which will take place on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at the Wyndam New Yorker Hotel in New York City. We look forward to meeting our members while providing them with guidance with their school board chapter, networking opportunities, all while expanding your knowledge in the many fields of nursing. Be sure to check out STAT's Spring 2017 Edition, which will highlight upcoming conventions.

Finally, we would like to thank you for your continuing support of STAT and we wish you the best of luck in the rest of your nursing semesters!

Sincerely,

Heather Lim  
NSANYS STAT Editor 2016-2017  
Hunter-Bellevue School of Nursing



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Hunter School of Nursing Students

## Serving our Community

### Spread Soap Not Germs Project

By Stephanie Chang

Hunter-Bellevue School of Nursing

National Handwashing Week is December 5<sup>th</sup> to December 11<sup>th</sup> of each year. This year, NSANYS partnered up with Penny Shaw, the director of Project Happy at Hunter College, for an exciting new project. Project Happy is a program that started in 1981 at Hunter College. The program works with children and young adults who have disabilities to promote skill development through athletic and recreational activities.

On December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016, student nurses from Hunter-Bellevue School of Nursing and St. Paul's School of Nursing gathered together to teach handwashing to children and adults ranging from ages 6 to 35. The goal of this project was to educate about the importance of handwashing and hand hygiene. Each child or young adult completed the task of recognizing the 5 tips for handwashing: 1. Wash your hands before you eat, 2. Wash your hands with lots of soap and water, 3. Wash your hands after you've been to the toilet, 4. Keep your fingernails clean and short, and 5. Wash your hands after playing outside.

Afterwards, a fun and interactive activity took place. Erasable markers were dispersed among the children and young adults, where everyone drew germ monsters on their hands to represent the germs that may accumulate on their hands from daily activities. Later, student nurses took the children and young adults to the bathrooms to wash their hands in an effective manner. The result? There were no more germ monsters on everyone's hands!



Nursing Students with Project Happy Director, Penny Shaw at Spread Soap Not Germs Project

Feedback from guidance counselors and parents were overwhelmingly positive. NSANYS hopes to partner with Happy Project again in the future to educate even more people on a variety of health topics such as dental hygiene and healthy eating habits, and hopefully, more nursing students can participate and join in the fun as well!

## Hunter-Bellevue School of Nursing Save the Runners in New York City's Most Popular Marathon

By Heather Lim

Hunter-Bellevue School of Nursing



Hunter-Bellevue School of Nursing girls teamed up in a medical tent

On November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016, the well-known TCS Marathon took place once again in New York City. Runners from all around the world flew into NYC to participate in this, otherwise known as the world's biggest and most popular marathon; it takes a strong medical team to make sure these runners get the appropriate medical attention they need for them to finish this race. Up to 12,000 marathon volunteers were spread out in medical tents around the 26.2-mile block party through the world's most diverse city. Each medical tent was split up into different teams, each consisted of doctors, nurses, physical therapists, sport psychologists, EMTs, and medical students, who all got ready to work as soon as a runner was sent through their tent.



I was lucky that I was placed in the last medical tent, right by the finish line, where I saw common cases such as dehydration and muscle cramps to a severe case when a runner became extremely confused with a high fever and had to be sent to the hospital. Despite feeling ill after the race, all the runners I've interacted with assured me of one thing: they were glad to check this race off from their bucket list. This marathon was one of the most memorable hands-on experience I've had throughout my volunteering career, and hopefully I will be able to participate in this marathon again next year.

### Other Highlights in Community Health



Stony Brook nursing students with Sigma Theta Tau provide cares to locals in Haiti (Top)



Hunter girls at Heart-to-Heart Volunteering (Top)



(Left to Right)  
Giselle Melendez (NSANYS advisor),  
Jaclyn Malone (NSANYS president), &  
Kelly LaMattina (Previous NSANYS  
President) at Molloy students' induction  
Into Sigma Theta Tau International Honor  
Society



(Right)  
NSANYS board members Michelle  
(left) & Yulia (right) with Miss  
Colorado at the Kansas Mid-Year  
convention



Molloy nursing students donated gifts to St. Anthony's Senior Center



Medical Marathon volunteers ready for action

## To Give or Not to Give? That is my Dilemma!

By Christopher Alexander Jr.

Orange County School of Nursing

Tis the season to give, from Thanksgiving to Christmas, we are afforded many opportunities to the give. Too many to mention. I am often torn between the giving my last dime and nickels to worthy ventures but as a nursing student, that can be a challenge.

To give, what does that mean? Among the many meanings that can be proffered, I readily embraced this one – to freely devote, set aside, or sacrifice for a purpose. I accepted that instead of trying to squeeze my last pennies, I could devote my time, talents, and other resources to a cause that I believe in and impacted me the most. I could volunteer at a local soup kitchen in my community, I could provide child care services to my friends, family or neighbors who may need a helping hand.

Having participated in the Annual Breast Cancer walk in the Woodbury Commons Outlet Mall last October, I gained a new level of respect for the word give. This was cemented when my son, as a Cub Scout, had to go to the Giving Tree to find an ornament which would determine for whom he had to get to a gift for.

I am no longer in a dilemma as to giving. As a nursing student, I am convinced that dollars and cents are not the only form of giving. For each time that we sacrifice for a purpose, we give. For the New Year, let's keep on giving.



Stony Brook's event for Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Mission

## Stay Connected with #NSANYS!



Instagram: @NSANYS

Twitter: @\_NSANYS



Website: nsanys.org

Facebook: facebook.com/NSANYS







**NSANYS 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention**

**Breaking Down Barriers: The Power of You**

**Date: Saturday, February 20, 2016**

**Time: 7AM-5PM**

**Location: The Wyndam New Yorker  
481 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, New York, NY 10001**

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**This Year's Convention Will Include**

Networking, Resume Review, NCLEX Review, Educational Resources,  
Scholarship Opportunities, Pharmacology Review, Leadership  
Opportunities, Nursing Panels, Focus Sessions, & more!

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**REGISTRATION FEES: EARLY BIRD SPECIAL** (Late registration price in parentheses)

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Breakfast, lunch, and light snacks will be provided! ~ Registration past deadline is done at the convention. We will accept cash & credit/debit payments.

**NSNA Members** including Pre-Nursing Students that are NSNA members

Full Day Pass WITH NCLEX & PHARM REVIEW \$75 (\$85)

Full Day Pass WITHOUT NCLEX & PHARM REVIEW \$65 (\$75)

**Non-NSNA Members** including Pre-Nursing Students that are not NSNA members

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**Full Day Pass WITH NCLEX - \$85 (\$95)**

**Full Day WITHOUT NCLEX - \$75 (\$85)**

# Global Initiatives

## Study Abroad in Tanzania

By Amanda Schlesier

Stony Brook School of Nursing

This past summer I was fortunate enough to travel to Tanzania, Africa with a group of nursing and pre-nursing students for a three week health-related excursion. The Stony Brook University based study abroad program was one of the most exciting and rewarding experiences of my life. I was able to interact with people from a different culture that I would never have had the opportunity to meet otherwise. It was thrilling to learn to speak the language, participate in traditional dances, eat the local cuisine and learn about the rich history of Tanzania.

As part of this program, I participated in a 10-day internship, which included spending four days at Darede Hospital shadowing nursing students during their daily rounds. It was truly an eye-opening, yet frustrating, experience that I will never forget. The language barrier made it difficult to communicate with the nursing students on a more technical level. I was so interested in the processes and procedures they were performing that I had what felt like a million questions for them. Unfortunately, due to the language barrier, some of the questions and answers were lost in translation. Despite this, the experience made me appreciate all the medical advances we take for granted here in America, and opened my eyes to see just how wasteful we were back home.

The first thing that stood out to me during rounds at the hospital was how grateful all the patients were. There were eight to ten people to a room in the regular medical/surgical wings. No meals were provided for the patients, so if they didn't have family there to feed them, they went without food. The equipment was crude (to American standards). And yet, they all thanked the nurse profusely every time they were seen. One woman told us she had been there several weeks for a bronchial infection and, although she missed home, she was lucky to be there.

Another thing that jumped out at me was just how much the nursing students did at the hospital. They had almost complete autonomy to practice; one of the students even hung a bag of blood without any supervision! Another student completely re-dressed a woman's stage four pressure ulcers. They all seemed extremely experienced clinically and were shocked when we told them we were not allowed to do most of the things that they did around the hospital. While their clinical skills were more advanced than ours, we felt that we had more knowledge on diseases and disease processes than they appeared to have, though it was hard to tell, given the language barrier.



Amanda Schlesier with a nursing student



Simulation mannequin in the nursing school

A delivery room at Darede Hospital

The trip made me look at healthcare in the U.S. in a completely different light and has sparked my interest in global health. It made me proud to be going in to the field of nursing, and I really look forward to continuing my education in such a rewarding profession!



# Nursing in the News

## Sedentarism in Society

By Elizabeth Gambo

Molloy College School of Nursing

Elizabeth will feature this topic at the 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention in Dallas, TX!

My name is Elizabeth Gambo and I am the Policy and Education Director for NSANYS. One of my duties is to write a resolution to present at the NSNA convention. This year, my resolution pertains to sedentarism. Due to a variety of factors, sedentarism is becoming increasingly prevalent. Though apparently benign, sedentarism, especially when chronic, increases the morbidity of numerous deadly, though preventable, maladies. To date, it is reported that about 60% or more of adults' waking hours are spent sedentary<sup>1</sup>. Any extended sitting such as sitting behind a desk at work or behind the wheel can be harmful<sup>2</sup>. Research has linked sitting for long periods of time with a variety of health concerns, including obesity and metabolic syndrome<sup>2</sup>. Individuals who participate in at least seven hours of moderate to vigorous physical activity but watch over seven hours of television a week have a greater risk from these maladies<sup>3</sup>. Not only is it important to get physical activity but it is equally as important to decrease the amount of inactivity in daily living. Increasing awareness about how to combat sedentarism is dire. Simple tasks to keep moving can help to increase longevity and quality of life. Activities including taking the stairs and getting up during commercial breaks can help to increase movement. Understanding the harmful consequences of a sedentary lifestyle will help to promote the change needed to combat this preventable epidemic.

### Reference:

<sup>1</sup>Draper, C. The Power of Movement: Why sitting is the new smoking!. Retrieved from <http://drcrystaldraper.com/the-power-of-movement-why-sitting-is-the-new-smoking>

<sup>2</sup>Levine, J. A. (2015). What are the risks of sitting too much?. *Mayo Clinic*. Retrieved from: [www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/adult-health/expert-answers/sitting/faq-20058005](http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/adult-health/expert-answers/sitting/faq-20058005)

<sup>3</sup>Matthews, C. E., George, S. M., Moore, S. C., Bowles, H. R., Blair, A., Park, Y., ... & Schatzkin, A. (2012). Amount of time spent in sedentary behaviors and cause-specific mortality in US adults. *The American journal of clinical nutrition*, 95(2), 437-445.)

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**Let us know!**

**Email us at  
[stat.nsanys@gmail.com](mailto:stat.nsanys@gmail.com)**



# Leadership in Nursing

## The Best is Yet to Come: Reflections from New Graduate Nurses

By Diana Wilkonski

Stony Brook School of Nursing

Study hard. Get good grades. Land an internship. Pass the boards. Get a job. As a nursing student, this has always been the plan. For the last four years or so years we have tortured ourselves trying to memorize every drug interaction, every disease process, and every nursing skill known to man. We've logged extra hours during simulation and clinicals working to figure out infusion pumps and tried so hard not to break sterility while inserting a foley on a mannequin. Because by the end of it we need to know it all in order to be good nurses. *Right?*

There seems to be this anxiety-producing misconception that what we learn in nursing school is the be-all-end-all and that *who we are* as nursing students will define who *we will be* as nurses-- that the defining moments of nursing school determine our nursing path. Many forget that nursing school fails to teach us some of the most important lessons, not for lack of effort, but because some lessons simply cannot be understood until you are practicing in as a Registered Nurse. This is not a *give-me-my-tuition-back* approach, but rather a reminder of the reality following our education: we learn our greatest lessons and make our greatest strides while we are on the job.

In order to provide greater insight on this, I contacted seven new nurses--both male and female-- working in a variety of settings and all having less than a year's experience. Our conversation begun with the prompt, "What are some things you have learned on the job, that was not apparent to you during nursing school?" Their responses elicited six main, recurring themes which are listed below.

### 1. Time Management: It Comes With Time

Redundant, yes. Slightly obvious, yes. However, this does not take away from the significance that new nurses cited this as their most common challenge on the job. Several planes affect a new nurse's ability to manage time:

- We are still learning our skills and our way around, making us inherently slower than seasoned nurses
- Most of us have not had the chance to manage upwards of two patients on the floor during our educational experiences
- We lack insight to foresee the unplanned events may occur during a shift, setting us back in our work

These factors, in addition to the shift in support you have from professors and preceptors, to other nurses and managers who have their own set of tasks to accomplish, creates a rough transition for a new nurse to find creative solutions to give each patient and family the time and attention they deserve. Many of us might realize this as we watched our preceptors on the floor become overwhelmed with tasks ranging from discharge planning, to new admissions, to medication administration, and to conversations with family members. Many of us already feel the stress ourselves as we take on more responsibility on the floor than we feel prepared for.

But what we *really* want to know is how can we overcome this. Spoken from the mouths of new grads to your ears: Don't wait to get things done. "The earlier in your shift you can do something, do it. This makes those unplanned events a little less stressful."

Furthermore, start now; try to take on as many tasks as your preceptor will allow within your ability. The stress this may produce will fade with practice and, while doing so, you will inherit your own task-managing style, largely benefiting you in the long run.

Finally, never be afraid to step back, take a deep breath and ask for help. "A nurse that does not ask for help can be dangerous," says one new grad. "We all need help at some point".

### 2. Your Tribe Determines Your Vibe (And Vice Versa)

Through your own observations on the unit, I'm sure you were pretty quick to determine that nursing is a field that very rarely functions in isolation. Some of us may have gotten a taste of this teamwork through simulation practices and within the clinical setting; however, the camaraderie that you experience as a practicing nurse is a much different experience. "On a busy floor, you're only going to get through it if you have good nurses around you." *But staffing and scheduling sort of seems like something staff nurses have very little control over?* This is true, therefore our new nurses offer the advice, "Try to help everyone...even if you believe they wouldn't do the same, because as a new nurse, you'll need plenty of help." Being the type of nurse that people know they could turn to, even for small tasks, can make all the difference during stressful moments.



*How can we work to improve this as student nurses?* Promoting nurse-to-nurse teamwork is key. Nursing programs tend to focus a lot on interdisciplinary teamwork, which is of equal importance, however, as one graduate puts it, “they are not in the trenches with you”. Offer a hand to your fellow students whenever possible. This type of gesture gets noticed, and increases the likelihood that help will be offered to you and improves relationships within your cohorts.

### **3. You Get a “Crash Course” On the Job**

We all have countless clinical hours from our Fundamentals and Medical/ Surgical courses. However, as student nurses, we often lack experiences in the specialty areas we dream of working in one day. A new nurse specializing in the Neonatal ICU suggested that you only appreciate the true experience of the specialty unit once you start. Even specialty areas aside, this idea brought up by several new nurses seems to exist across the board: your skills are most enhanced while on the job. Delegation, prioritizing, even improving your assessment skills all come with time. Medications, as one new grad mentioned, are constantly changing as new types and brands emerge. You become most familiar with them as they repeat in your orders. To graduate with the belief that you are armed with everything you must know (specifically in these specialty fields we get such little time in) is a huge misconception and causes quite a lot of apprehension. The advice here may seem easier said than done: *do your best*. “Nursing school is stressful- take each day with stride”. Focus on your short-term goals, such as passing that next test, or getting through that difficult clinical. You learn more than you realize and by the time that you pass the boards and start your job, you are well prepared to expand your education on the unit.

### **4. You Are in a Field of Customer Service**

Take it as it is, this push for “clients” rather than “patients” and “the client is always right” mentality has made its way into many areas of nursing, while also meeting some resistance. As one graduate described it, “the people way above us [administration] have extremely high customer service expectations of the doctors and nurses and a lot of it is about making the patient happy”. Taken in those terms, is constantly worrying about making the customer happy necessarily a burden on nurses? One grad says “This isn’t a terrible thing as you should always try to give your patients and family members the best experience possible, although it isn’t always easy and can take a lot of energy out of you”. Another says, “If your patients ‘like you’ and feel you treated them well, they will most likely leave happy. Always know there will be the ones you can’t please and be able to let that go. Some people are just plain difficult”. These may be the instances where you need to take a breath, take a step back, and ask for help. Another nurse offers that imagining the patient as a loved one could make a huge difference in how you handle a difficult situation. “I treat people [patients] the way I would want my family to be treated. It has worked great for me so far”. Lastly, always go back to your fundamental skills. Keeping patients happy is, for the most part, a positive outcome, but don’t forget: always keep safety in mind first.

### **5. You’re Going to Feel New Feelings and A Lot of Them**

The reality is fear, discouragement, sadness, and insecurity are common feelings among new nurses. Perhaps, as a student nurse, you’ve witnessed a patient screaming out in 10/10 pain or been in a situation dealing with a patient with a poor prognosis shadowed by the grief of their family members. However, the helplessness we attribute to being a student acts somewhat as a buffer to these feelings because we can slide by with the notion that others with more experience will be there to take care of it. As a newly graduated, board-certified RN, you are the one to take care of it and you’re expected to know everything, right? The good news is that no one expects that from you and you’re not alone in these feelings. Furthermore, says one new grad, these feelings will slowly dwindle as they are replaced with greater confidence and comfort.

One of the biggest pieces of advice I personally have received throughout my academic career is that, despite every effort we make to prepare, we have to be okay with the realization that we do not know everything. We felt that way on our first day of nursing school and, though that feeling faded with experience, it will return on our first day on the job, and once again on our first day on a new job. To accept that feeling and go from there is normal and healthy which only allows for improvement. As for the grief and pain we share with our patients, that may not get easier, we will just seek new ways of coping. This brings us to our final, brighter note.

### 6. You're Going to Love It More Than You'd Ever Imagined

Maybe not the most shocking take-home point, but definitely one worth mentioning. My final question to our graduate advisors was, "What do you love most about being a nurse?" From a group who just finished or begun their first year on the job, the amount of love they had for this field could encompass a whole new article. This first year where reality is faced, lessons are new, and emotions are high, still elicited nothing but positivity when posed with this question. Some responded that the novelty of it is actually what they found most appealing these days. "What I love most is not exactly knowing what my day will be like or what I will see for the first time".

Recurrently, the impact the new nurse graduates are able to make in their patients' recovery be that through their skills, demeanor, or compassion, further demonstrates their love for nursing. "I think it's cool that I can influence someone's attitude about their situation just by being positive and attentive to their needs. It makes the job so worthwhile".

These 'words-from-the-wise' may encourage some of us to buckle down, get motivated, and actively search for experiences and opportunities. Others may take on a more passive approach, realizing that it is simply not possible for us to know and control everything, while knowing that our greatest skills will come with time and experience. We take what we need from the advice that we are given as we are going to learn to do throughout our careers. Currently we may feel as though "there is always something more to learn", which can be fear-producing, when instead, it is truly the added perk of the job. So continue to take nursing school in stride, ask for help when necessary, encourage positive relationships, and as you do so, keep in mind: *the best is yet to come*.

## Advice for Job Searching: Make the Best Out of Your Nursing School Days

By Joanna Law

Publicity Chair of Sigma Theta Tau International, Alpha Phi Chapter



Landing a job in a hospital doesn't come easy for new graduate nurses. It's been said that the job outlook in the nursing job market is beginning to increase, but many job postings ask for the "1-2 years of RN experience" that new graduates don't have. Not only are there more people graduating with nursing degrees than ever before, but every new nurse being hired is a risky and expensive move for a hospital to make. As a new graduate nurse, I can validate that hospitals do hire new graduates. As long as you did what you can to make yourself look hireable, it'll just be a matter of time before a nurse recruiter contacts you back for a job interview.

While certain experiences may be considered "more desirable" than other experiences on a new graduate nurse's résumé, I suggest being open to any healthcare or nursing-related opportunity that comes your way while you're still in nursing school. Whether it's working as a nursing assistant, volunteering in the community, or getting a certification, it's the skills that you acquired and the ability to work with people that will make your résumé more unique. Participating in professional organizations can also be an eye-opening experience that provide greater insight on the current trends in nursing today. By engaging in various events and activities, you can build a professional network of people who can give advice on job searching and interviewing, review your cover letter and résumé, or even offer you a job position. You won't know what you're missing out on, unless you step out of your comfort zone and explore the opportunities out there.

In summary, a door will not open by itself unless you make the effort to turn the doorknob. Whenever possible, take advantage of every opportunity, learn and engage, and reflect on your experiences. Although job searching can be stressful and discouraging, nurse recruiters will eventually recognize your hard work and efforts in nursing school, just don't give up!





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