

Saint Cloud State University
Department of Nursing Sciences
Nursing Alumni Newsletter
Summer 2008

Welcome to the s SCSU Nursing Alumni Newsletter. View the alumni link on the SCSU Nursing Webpage where alumni news will be stored. Go to <http://www.stcloudstate.edu/nursing/alumni.asp>

ALUMNI NEEDED TO CHAIR AND COORDINATE THE NURSING ALUMNI ORGANIZATION

The nursing alumni is in need of alumni to form a board and direct activities for the nursing alumni. Organization of activities and the newsletter would be done by alumni who know what is needed for a successful and useful group. We have assistance in posting information to the website. We would like to plan a 5 year alumni celebration for summer 2009. Please discuss with your fellow alumni and bring the ideas forward.

Cheers and Best Wishes to my fellow alumni! From Mary Hoenig

This is my year to join you in “moving on” but not really “moving away” from the Department of Nursing Science and SCSU!

As the first faculty member to retire (did I really say that word??) or more politically correct, “repurpose,” I share your history and treasure the opportunities to have learned from you, as students, and in your many professional venues.

The evolution of the SCSU Nursing Program has been an amazing journey and I value the opportunities to work with outstanding

colleagues and to share experiences with the very best students in the world!!

President Potter has appointed me to Associate Professor Emerita, a position which will allow me to continue my association with the university but, I believe, also recognizes the efforts and successes of our department as a whole and our students/graduates individually and as a group.

I hope we will all continue to support our novice nurses and students wherever we meet and look forward to celebrating many anniversaries of our department – we’ve come a long way!

SOUTH AFRICA - STUDY ABROAD

First SCSU Study Abroad for Nursing Students in South Africa.
Spring Semester, 2008

Nine pioneer senior nursing students went to Port Elizabeth, South Africa to complete their 5 credit Capstone Clinical Immersion course. Joan Wilcox developed the new program in partnership with Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University Department of Nursing and their international office staff and was the director of the first program. Wilcox believes it was the passion and on-going inspirational commitment of the Class of 2008 and 2007 that was the driving force behind the successful creation of this “once in a life time” global experience for SCSU nursing students.

The students and Wilcox were all registered with the South African Nursing Council (the regulatory board of nursing in South Africa) so they could practice hands-on nursing in the hospitals and in the community. Students had clinical experiences at Dora NGinza Hospital caring for the high number

of children and adults who suffer serious burns, and on the labor and delivery wards where the number of births were as high as 51 births in one day! Many of the young girls and women were HIV positive at the time of delivery and even though drugs are now available to prevent mother-to-child transmission, they had not had any prenatal care where they could have received the medications. In addition, students had clinical experiences on Intensive Care Units, Oncology, Casualty (trauma), caring for premature infants and doing health teaching at pre-natal clinics and Anti-Retroviral Treatment Clinics. One day a week was spent in community-based home care with families living in extreme poverty with little access to health care, a day with children at an AIDS Haven, a visit to a large hospital which treated patients with tuberculosis and a traditional healer in Kwazakhele Township.

In addition to health care experiences, students visited apartheid museums, Nelson Mandela's home, the Garden Route, Robben Island and Table Mountain in Cape Town, game farms, elephant and lion parks, and of course the spectacular beaches, coastline and beauty of South Africa.

The students felt it was a "life-changing" experience where they learned to cope with enormous challenges and grew not only in knowledge and skill, but gained personal strength and confidence, and a commitment to disadvantaged people around the globe. They learned to do much with little, and even when resources were scarce, and the burden of disease and suffering were nearly overwhelming, they knew that the care and compassion they gave to others genuinely made a difference.

Submitted by Joan Wilcox



NURSING OFFICE NEWS

Our new office manager is Sue Burnet-Pick. She comes to nursing department with excellent healthcare background.

Nursing Science Lab News

The Nursing Science Lab has grown busier and busier over this past year. With our larger sophomore class (49!), we had more lab sections, and we increased opportunities for refining clinical skills. We are proud and privileged to have many new items to support maternal/child content. We now have 8 newborns, and all the materials necessary to care for them. In addition, we have updated the audiovisual materials related to learning more this about entire topic.

Brown Hall Renovation

The plans for Brown Hall renovation continue to go forward. The nursing department will be moving to new offices Spring 2009 when the construction begins.

ALUMNI NEWS

'04 - Nicole Neisen (Bloch). I was married November 17th, 2007 to my husband Lucas. Our first baby, a son, named Kane Matthew is due September 2nd, 2008!!! I am still working in the CCU at St. Cloud Hospital full time and living in Rice.

'04 - Amanda (Weber) Hitchings - I'm still working at St. Cloud Hospital as a Charge Nurse in the Medical Progressive Care Unit. Besides working full time, I stay plenty busy with my kids, Jackson (2) and Emily (6 months). Our house is currently for sale and we plan to move to Delano once it sells. My husband, Joe, is from Delano and we would love to move closer to family.

'04 - Kristin Payne Brandt

Not too much is new with me or my family. I am still a proud mommy to Bella, who is already 7 months old. Everyone seems to think we should be "thinking" number 2 already, ahhh we'll see. We are hoping to head over sea's this fall for some traveling. Germany area to check out some architecture and get in some relaxing R-n-R. I am enjoying the Float Pool more and more! I have been busy with lots of precepting and teaching new employees to St Cloud Hospital. I just added the ER to one of my areas, interesting and challenging in more ways than I ever imagined. I have really become proud of my career and I can't imagine doing anything else! Nursing is where it is at! Can't wait to hear about everyone else!

'05 - Carissa Neis - I've been working full-time at Minneapolis Children's Hospital in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit since 11/2006. I love my job, most days!!! I plan on continuing my education at U Penn (University of Pennsylvania) with hopes of becoming a Pediatric Intensive Care Nurse Practitioner. I would love to be the first Nurse Practitioner in Minneapolis Children's Hospital, PICU. I live in Maple Grove, MN with my cat, Rage, and make frequent trips to St. Cloud to visit my family and friends.

'05 - Laura Wentland - I am currently working in the Central Minnesota Heart Center Float Pool, at the St. Cloud Hospital. This new and exciting group floats between CCU, Tele, and CPRU. I work with a great group of talented professionals, many of whom graduated from SCSU. I enjoy working with the SCSU students they are well prepared individuals, in this fast pace ever changing world. Congratulations to you and the rest of the educators involved with this very successful program.

'05 - Heather Brezinski - I have been working on the surgical floor at the St. cloud hospital since OCT 2006. I really enjoy it there. The staff and the facility are great. I also get to work with several St. Cloud state alumni so that is good to see old faces. I am currently planning my wedding that is this August 2, 2008. So life has been Hectic.

'05 - Jill (Biersma) Hauge - Alan and I are expecting our second child in January. We are very excited and Ashton (age 2) can't wait to be a big brother.

'05 - Melissa Massmann - I am still working at St Cloud Hospital on the Surgical Care Unit. I am Progressive trained (an 8 bed monitored unit) and also recently became oriented to charge.

I have a 9 month old baby named Ryan. He is such a joy and we love him so much.

'05 - Sara (Willert) Zimney - All is great. I am starting my third year on medical unit 1 at the St. Cloud Hospital. I just passed my medical surgical certification exam this month and working to apply for my level 3 or 4 nursing. Brian and I will be married 3 years in September and will be expecting our first little one on December 26th. We are currently living in Sartell.

'05 - Melanie Borgert - I am still working at the St. Cloud Hospital in the float pool. I was trained this past year to go to CCU and

ICU. I currently float to 11 units now.
I am getting married September 13. So it has been a busy year for me!

'05 - Jim Loch - I am currently in the position I was hired for out of school, which is oncology/hospice at St. Luke's in Duluth. I have had the fortune to precept 3 student nurse interns and trained in several nurses that have been hired and am the service excellence representative for our floor. Just this month I was part of a team that received an award for team excellence. One of my hospice patients and his girlfriend were debating getting married and decided to make it official before my pt died. Some family members got a judge to sign a waiver to get a marriage license without a waiting period and arranged for a priest to come to the floor and perform the wedding. When I saw all the people coming to the floor I offered to bring the pt (who was 350 pounds and in a specialty bed) into our hospice lounge so everyone would be able to partake in the event. It so happened that the event ended up happening at a very busy time of the day (change of shift) I am fortunate to have a great charge nurse who wrangled a couple of people to help and when I got out of report we were able to make it happen. The next day the pt died. It was felt by everyone involved that he died in peace.

On a personal note my son, Travis, graduated from high school this year and plans to attend Concordia Moorhead for Music Education My daughter, Elizabeth, got her first job at Subway being a sandwich artist, and loves to play volleyball in school, and my wife continues as a pre-press technician but for a new company which actually was a part of her previous company but split off to start a new company. We still live in Two Harbors but have discussed moving to Duluth when Elizabeth graduates. Hope all is well with everyone

'05 - Taryn Shalei Valentine - I am still working on a med/surg unit at the University of Utah, and have been working there since June 2005. I am working as a charge nurse and serve on a patient safety and quality committee.

'05 - Melissa Erdahl - I just returned from a national week long VA Polytrauma conference in San Diego. My team participated in several presentations there regarding treatments for returning soldiers with a dual diagnosis of mild TBI and PTSD. I continue to work on a Transitional Unit and have recently given tours to Nancy Pelosi and Norm Colman. It's very high profile, exciting stuff!

'05 - Cathy Keller - Not much new happening in my world. I continue to work for Dr. Bottini at River Campus neurosurgery. I enjoy my job with the challenges and complexity of neurosurgery. My daughter Emily is enrolled in the respiratory care program at NDSU with graduation planned for 12 -2010. Husband works seasonal job so no summer vacation plans, maybe next winter.

'05 - Rochelle Franklin - . I work in Labor and Delivery at Northwest Medical Center in Bentonville Arkansas. I live in Fayetteville still with Bergen. She is going to start first grade this year and is getting incredibly big and smart. I am looking forward to visiting Minnesota over Fourth of July weekend. I have no plans to move back to Minnesota right now but am considering it next year. If anyone has any suggestions for good hospitals I am open to hearing them. I plan to continue to work in Labor and Delivery, not sure if anyone else is working there as well.

'06 - Melissa Brost - Well I am still at North Memorial but now I am now a critical care RN. I just bought a house and am getting married 10-4-08. I plan on going back to school real soon.

'06 - Kari Olson - I had a baby...Edward James Olson, born March 13th, 2008.

'06 - Crystal Fleischhacker (Humbert)
In March I went back to the St. Cloud Hospital Telemetry unit and am enjoying it a lot. I still work casual at the Paynesville Hospital also. I also had a little girl 9-4-07 Adalyn.

'06 - Emily Fiedler - I bought a townhouse a few months ago in Columbia Heights and am living there with my boyfriend Ben who is currently in Physician Assistant school. I just started a new job at Minneapolis Children's Hospital in the Emergency Department. I still work casual at Regions hospital on the trauma unit. Hope everyone else is doing well!

'06 - Kris Kok - I am now a Unit Coordinator (since February) on the 40-bed Adult Health Unit at Rice Memorial Hospital (med/surg). Jeston and I are expecting a baby September 28th! Yeah!!! SO exciting! Glad to see that the alumni newsletters are still happening...it is always nice to catch up on what is going on with everyone.

'06- Shannon Kiffmeyer - My husband Josh and I recently had a little girl. Her name is Adalee Inez Geisinger, and she was born on May 18th. She was 7 lbs. 4 oz. and 18 in. long. Mom and baby are doing very good, she has red hair just like mommy. Hope all is going well at SCSU! Shannon Geisinger (Kiffmeyer)

'06 - Nicole Ouke - I continue to work in OB and Med/Surg, and have started training to ER. In addition, started the FNP program at MNSU this summer and hope to graduate in 2 1/2-3 years. Although I stay busy with work and school, I plan on trips to the Mexico, Grand Cayman, and Malaysia next year.

'06 - Hilary Smith (Zigfried) - I am still working at the U of M hospital in the Peds ICU and still love it. We have a house in Zimmerman. My husband recently joined the Army to become a helicopter pilot and so we will be traveling the world starting this winter.

'06 – Justine Wirth – My wife and I have a 16 month old boy named Salvador (Sal).

'06 – Heidi Elelbrock - I've currently been accepted into the Nurse Practitioner Program at Metro State (headed for my PhD or DNP) and start classes this fall. Marisa Frost is starting in the fall at NDSU in the Nurse Practitioner Program. Just thought I would let you know SCSU prepared us well to continue our education!

'07 - Hilary Brown - I am working in a PCU at Mayo. and that I just got engaged. My fiancé works in St. Cloud so after we are married (maybe may) I am planning to look for jobs in the St. Cloud area and move back so if you know of a good job openings send them my way;) Hillary

'07 – Nicole Spaulding - I'm still at North Memorial, 7 west, Acute Med/Surg. This summer I have an intern. It's been a great experience and I'm learning a lot as I mentor her. I was an intern at this hospital on another unit just 2 summers ago, it seems like yesterday...I can't believe I've been out of school for a year already.

'07 - Amy Cruser - I just finished my first year of graduate school at College of St. Scholastica

'07 - Jennifer Schumann - I have been working at Abbott Northwestern for 1 year in the cardiovascular surgery ICU. Caring for open-heart patients now. Living in Maple Grove.

'07 – Rachel Anderson - I'm still at Mercy ER. They suckered me into working on the disaster committee. The metro radiological drill last week was a lot of fun... Other than that, I'm living in Maple Grove. Jen Schumann makes an interesting roommate - I'm tripping over her new puppy a lot. I'm spending a lot of time in Two Harbors, and I just came back from Scotland/ Ireland/ Wales. Probably be visiting Vancouver soon. Right now I'm precepting one of your

current students. Keeps life interesting! And that probably means I should stop writing an email and pay attention.