

# VILLANOVA NURSING

FALL  
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A PUBLICATION OF THE VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF NURSING



The "Virtual" Leap to Learning





## AIDS from the Frontlines



n Africa in the era of AIDS, “there are never enough coffins,” noted Stephen Lewis, the internationally renowned humanitarian who delivered the College of Nursing’s 29th Annual Distinguished Lecture on November 15. “Everyone should recognize that we are dealing with a scourge for which there is no historical precedent. Not even the Black Death of the 14th century can approximate what is happening around the pandemic of HIV/AIDS,” he said. Among the signs of hope that Lewis sees are nurses, who represent “the core survival of these countries,” he said.

Lewis is the United Nations secretary-general’s special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa. He also chairs the Stephen Lewis Foundation, leads the World Health Organization’s Commission on the Social Determinants of Health, served as Canadian ambassador to the U.N. and was one of *Time* magazine’s 2005 “100 most influential people in the world.”

The lectureship is part of Nursing’s annual Health and Human Values Lecture Series, which this year focuses on “Profiles in Human Adversity.” The lecture by Lewis was co-sponsored by the Alpha Nu Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International. It was endorsed by the College’s Theta Delta Beta Chapter of Chi Eta Phi Sorority, Inc., and by several Villanova initiatives: Africana Studies; Women’s Studies; Campus Ministry; and the centers for Health and Wellness Education, Multicultural Affairs, and Peace and Justice Education.

See page 23 for more on his lecture, which is available as a video recording online to Villanovans at [www.villanova.edu/nursing](http://www.villanova.edu/nursing).



JOHN WELSH

*At an alumni reception preceding his lecture on Africa’s AIDS crisis, Stephen Lewis spoke with Nursing students.*

### Mark your calendar!

#### Spring 2007

- March 13** Graduate Program Open House
- March 15** Health and Human Values Lecture: “Katrina: Nurses in Extraordinary Circumstances”
- March 20** Research Symposium
- April 21** College of Nursing Annual Mass and Alumni Awards Ceremony
- April 29** Open House for high school juniors
- May 19** College of Nursing Convocation, Baccalaureate Mass
- May 20** Commencement

# VILLANOVA NURSING

Vol. 26 No. 1 Fall 2006/Winter 2007

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**On the Cover:** Kaitlin Asken, a junior in the College of Nursing, is among those benefiting from the simulations and scenarios to encourage critical thinking in the laboratory portion of their education. Photograph by Paola Noguera.

### Editorial Board

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## Perspectives

Dear Alumni and Friends of the College of Nursing:

This is another exciting year! Enrollments are excellent and we have enthusiastically welcomed our new students, faculty and associate dean, Dr. Lesley A. Perry. The inauguration of Villanova University's 32nd president, Rev. Peter M. Donohue, O.S.A., provided a wonderful opportunity for the University to gather as a community for celebration and academic discourse.

This new chapter in Villanova's history coincides with activities in which our own College is engaged. In considering our collective vision for nursing's preferred future, we do so within the context of ever-changing variables that affect higher education, health care and people around the globe who are in need of nursing care.

The rapidity of change and fluctuations in the demographics of faculty, student and patient populations, as well as the influence of economics, public policy and technology, affect the clinical landscape and the ways that students learn. These changes underscore the need to punctuate both the natural evolution of our curricula and our routine academic planning with opportunities to design our future. In a changing field like ours, it is often difficult to predict that future. I am pleased to report that the College has kept pace with the trends, as shown in this issue's focus on technology-assisted teaching and learning. Planning a new state-of-the-art building for Nursing provides an unprecedented opportunity for the College to use technology as a resource in taking the next giant step in its development.

As architects of the College's future, we must "read the tea leaves" and, using the data at our disposal as well as imagination and creativity, make strategic decisions that will influence nursing and nursing education for decades to come. We are all stakeholders in this endeavor. As we envision the future, we welcome and will seek your input as alumni, colleagues and friends of the College. I want you to know how much we appreciate your investment and support in advancing the frontiers of nursing education at Villanova.

On September 8, at Father Donohue's inauguration liturgy, I was privileged to invoke an intercession on behalf of our College. I share that prayer with all of you:

*That the College of Nursing continue to be a center of excellence by demonstrating its commitment to Villanova's mission and values through the education of its students and the performance of its alumni world-wide—in academics, clinical leadership, compassionate care and advocacy for all people in need of health restoration and health promotion of body, mind and spirit.*

**"As we envision the future, we welcome and will seek your input as alumni, colleagues and friends of the College."**

—Dean M. Louise Fitzpatrick,  
Ed.D., R.N., F.A.A.N.



M. Louise Fitzpatrick, Ed.D., R.N., F.A.A.N.  
Connelly Endowed Dean and Professor

## Highlights of 2005-06

The following are College of Nursing highlights from the previous academic year, excerpted from the Dean's Annual Report of June 14, 2006:

- robust recruitment of well-qualified students into all programs of the College;
- redesign of B.S.N. completion program for Registered Nurses;
- expansion of student international experiences through the Connelly-Delouvrier Nursing Scholarship/Connelly Endowed initiative;
- inauguration of a chapter of Chi Eta Phi Sorority, Inc, established by students from under-represented groups in the College;
- significant increases in the development of technology in teaching and learning and the use of simulation as a complement to clinical practice;
- increased scholarly work of faculty through research, presentations, publications and grants;
- Nursing faculty members receiving two of the University's three annual research and service awards;
- involvement of the College in planning and staffing the Unity Clinic in Philadelphia (a free service for uninsured individuals) as part of the Augustinian Defenders of the Rights of the Poor initiative of the Eastern Province of the Order of St. Augustine;
- sponsoring the 11th Biennial North American Learning Resource Centers Conference in June in Philadelphia;
- successfully recruiting additional well-qualified faculty and an associate dean;
- designating the College's Research Office as the Center for Nursing Research;
- the expansion of partnerships with institutions such as Aomori University in Japan, Independence Blue Cross in Philadelphia and the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency Foundation; and
- the decision of the Villanova University administration and Villanova's Board of Trustees to construct a new state-of-the-art facility for the College of Nursing on the central campus.



# The "Virtual" Leap to Learning

*Webcams and whiteboards, iLink and IMs. Fluent in the digital lingo, nursing educators employ technology in their didactic and clinical teaching. In this feature, we focus on two high-tech initiatives to advance critical thinking and professional-level knowledge: patient-based simulations/simulators and distance learning. An undergraduate tells of her clinical preparation using SimMan, and graduate students highlight the benefits of cyberclasses. Our faculty review the learning theories, as well as how to run realistic simulations and adapt virtually. Faculty also showcased their tech talents by co-hosting a conference that drew nurse educators from 41 states and internationally.*

Two faculty members analyze the theories behind why scenario-based teaching/learning serves to move nursing students along the competence continuum, enhancing interactions with patients.

# Dynamic Approach Fosters “Nurse” Behavior

*By Marycarol McGovern '68 B.S.N., '86 M.S.N., Ph.D., R.N., Assistant Professor of Nursing and Elizabeth Bruderle '90 M.S.N., D.N.Sc., R.N., Clinical Assistant Professor of Nursing*



In a post-anesthesia care scenario in the Learning Resource Center, lab assistant Karen Cash, B.S.N., R.N. reports to students on the status of SimMan.

In today's complex, dynamic and technology-driven health-care world, nurses must be able to assess and address patients' needs from a global perspective, communicate effectively, respect diversity, retrieve and assess information, think critically, understand human systems and work collaboratively with all members of the health-care team. In addition, nurses today are practicing in an environment in which the quality of patient care and of nursing care delivery systems is now measured in outcomes.

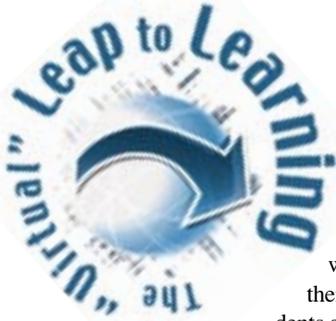
These critical requisites and standards demand teaching/learning strategies that support the development of nurses who are educated professionals capable of assuming a significant role within the health-care system, of moving the profession forward and of achieving personal satisfaction. The education of such individuals challenges faculty not only to meet students' learning needs but also to prepare them for practice in the real world.

An honest assessment of “what is” in nursing education recognizes that traditional teaching practices no longer serve faculty or students well. The content-driven curriculum, which focuses on the teacher as conveyor and assessor of knowledge, stifles faculty creativity and overwhelms students. The difference between “learning” and “being taught” becomes apparent as students assume the role of passive recipients of information. To create knowledge that is meaningful to them, students need to be actively involved with information (Bevis, 1993). Denied this opportunity, they may fail to process and integrate information into their thinking and their way of being as nurses. Without a foundational knowledge base, students struggle in the practice setting to interact with patients and make appropriate clinical decisions regarding those with complex health needs.

Shifting the focus of teaching strategies from what faculty want to teach to what students need to learn depends on the willingness of nurse educators to interact with students on an egalitarian basis. Educators must be cognizant of the effect of students' personal experiences, relationships, observations and unique learning styles on their ability to learn. To support new approaches to teaching/learning in a committed and wholehearted manner, educators also are called upon to reflect on their own beliefs about nursing, the nature of learning and their relationships with students. They must also provide empirical support for the effectiveness of new pedagogies by conducting rigorous research.

In a scenario where SimMan recovers from hip surgery in a PACU, juniors Shelley Taggart (left) and Kimberly Stevens note a drop in his blood oxygen saturation. Using their knowledge of oxygenation goals and standards of care, they adjust the oxygen mask concentration to restore his saturation to a normal level.





Although being comfortable with their existing roles makes it difficult for faculty and students to envision change, a paradigm shift in their relationship creates an environment in which students assume responsibility for their own learning, and faculty and students are free to engage in a reciprocal process based on the assessment and achievement of identified learning outcomes (Candela, Dalley and Benzel-Lindley, 2006).

Consistent with the goals of the College of Nursing's Strategic Plan, in particular its mandate to maintain academic quality and remain responsive to health-care trends and technological advances, faculty groups have been reviewing and revising teaching/learning strategies and related technology. The goal is to enhance learning in both the classroom and clinical settings. In courses for freshmen and sophomores, faculty have introduced simulated patient care scenarios to teach and evaluate students' learning in the cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains; encourage active participation; and foster critical thinking.

Critical thinking in nursing can be developed by an emphasis on "process, inquiry, and reasoning" (Duchscher, 2003). In contemporary nursing practice, students must learn to *think*, not just *do*. Through the use of patient care scenarios, faculty can model and facilitate the development of their students' skills of inquiry and decision-making, learning and practicing asking appropriate questions, and choosing assessment techniques and nursing interventions based on patient context. These scenarios include computerized simulation mannequins such as SimMan, as well as faculty-developed simulated patient situations in which students act out the roles. Such scenarios enhance current strategies used to teach and evaluate learning. (Brandt, 1996; Hertel and Millis, 2002; Rystedt and Lindstrom, 2001; Snyder, Fitzloff, Fiedler and Lambke, 2000; Wales, 1997).

Benner (2001) describes the phases of nursing skill development. Moving students to a higher level of competence through the use of simulated patient scenarios—where students must interact with a "patient" in the college laboratory—will move them more quickly along the competence continuum. In addition, using these scenarios in the freshman and sophomore years will engage students earlier in their professional development and prepare them for the high-frequency/lower-risk types of situations they will encounter as novices. Faculty believe that these scenarios offer students the opportunity to practice psychomotor nursing skills and professional decision-making in a safe setting. The scenarios also provide a controlled learning and evaluation environment, encourage active participation in learning, and change learning from memorization of a task checklist to application of principles and critical thinking.

The literature in nursing education, and in fact in most disciplines, increasingly includes descriptions of and the rationale for scenario-based teaching and learning experiences. Recent research with both

patient care/actor simulations and practice with human patient simulators/mannequins suggests that nursing students exhibit increased autonomy and self-confidence in delivering patient care after practice in a safe educational environment. These experiences foster the development of analytical skills and beginning clinical judgment (Hertel, and Millis, 2002; Snyder, Fitzloff, Fiedler and Lambke, 2000). Numerous theories of teaching and learning support the use of scenarios and the process of anchoring learning in realistic situations.

### Lessons from the learning theories

Social Learning theory supports the hands-on, student-centered, interactive nature of scenario-based experiences. People can learn by observing and interacting with each other, then develop expertise through practice. (Benner, 2001). The literature on critical thinking posits that active learning is necessary to develop this ability. Active learning can be described as involving students in *doing* things and *thinking about* the things they are doing.

When novices listen to experts describe their own patient care experiences, or talk about the details of nursing interventions, there can be an "illusion of understanding." Everything sounds clear until the novices have to apply the information to complex, unstructured clinical situations. The benchmark work of Benner (2001), among others, recognized the need for a framework of experiential learning that supports the

development of professional roles. Benner discussed moving students along the continuum from detached observers to involved performers.

Cognitive Learning theory focuses on making learning meaningful and on active learning. Cognitive development refers to the way individuals reason, view knowledge, manage diversity of opinion and relate to "experts." Students who demonstrate cognitive growth are able to engage in independent decision-making, provide nursing care despite ambiguous information, engage in critical thinking and recognize that there can be equally valid but different approaches to similar patient care problems (Bandman and Bandman, 1991; McGovern and Valiga, 1997).

Constructivist Learning theory, which goes a step beyond, addresses the need to anchor learning in more realistic situations. This theory asserts that learners "construct" and "reconstruct" their understanding of the world as they interact with it. For information to stick, to be available for future use, the learner must engage in a reciprocal process, building new information into his or her cognitive structure rather than having knowledge imposed by an "expert." Constructivism sees knowledge as relational. As learner and environment interact, motivation and the affective domain become not only operative, but essential.

The Social Constructivist perspective suggests that knowledge cannot be created out of context. It also recognizes that performance can occur before competence, and, in fact, the act of doing helps one to learn. Competence develops as the student increases in both knowledge and experience. (Baxter-Magolda, 1992; Vygotsky, 1978).

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OR STUDENTS WELL."**

## How the College structured its scenarios

Armed with this theoretical understanding, and the motivation to further facilitate students' development of critical thinking, clinical judgment and patient-centered clinical competence, faculty recognized that simulations would engage students in a decision-making process. The students would have to analyze assessment data in order to formulate a plan of action.

Over the years, faculty have developed many strategies to anchor learning in more realistic situations and to make students more accountable. But the nursing curriculum traditionally had not been providing an opportunity for real patient contact until the end of the sophomore year. While theory courses make use of case studies, laboratory courses generally did not focus on a patient care context to which students had to respond. Faculty recognized the need to incorporate scenarios focused on a patient's signs and symptoms and how a nurse would make decisions about how to respond and provide thoughtful, professional care.

The College of Nursing began to implement scenario-based teaching/learning experiences in 2005-06. In the two sophomore lab courses, weekly scenario-based patient situations provided opportunities for decision-making, critical thinking, and peer and faculty feedback.

In these scenarios, and at midterm and final testing, students were required to gather additional, focused, pertinent data based on the situation described and the responses of the "patient" actor or the changes in vital signs displayed by the mannequin. Students then analyzed the data to formulate a plan of action. They had to interpret information, ask relevant follow-up questions, decide what assessment or nursing care interventions are needed and demonstrate those skills competently. These sophomores had to interpret health history and physical exam data, provide feedback and appropriate referral to the patient, and state how they would document their findings and interventions. They also had to respond appropriately to scripted verbal and nonverbal cues from the student acting as a patient. In the weekly labs, the simulated patient care scenarios exacted a higher level of accountability from students and fostered more active, hands-on-learning.

On the midterm and final exams, students were required to respond to randomly selected patient care scenarios. Faculty were extremely curious to see what behaviors and outcomes their students would demonstrate. Students rose to the high level of faculty expectation. They demonstrated professional appearance and behaviors. Faculty saw "nurse" behavior rather than "task" behavior. The students performed with an increased sense of professional demeanor. They asked very focused and insightful questions and made assessment and patient care decisions based on the signs, symptoms and clinical reality of the "patient," whether SimMan or a student actor. Students used appropriate communication strategies, made referrals for follow-up care as indicated and reported succinctly on the necessary documentation.

## Feedback from the debriefing

Immediately after testing, students received their grades, as well as a quick debriefing, based on the assessment checklist. The need for immediate and structured debriefing is based in theories of reflective practice and experiential learning. Debriefing is a critical component of the simulated patient scenario approach, for it provides for an exchange of feedback between faculty and students and it facilitates critique of the usefulness of the various scenarios.

At the end of each course using these simulations, the College of Nursing asked students to rate the effect of the scenarios on their ability to learn and think critically, their level of self-confidence and their level of satisfaction with this approach. Students and faculty also



Elizabeth Bruderle '90 M.S.N., D.N.Sc., R.N., clinical assistant professor of Nursing (left) and Marycarol McGovern '68 B.S.N., '86 M.S.N., Ph.D., R.N., assistant professor of Nursing

could provide comments and suggestions in an open-ended format.

Students appeared to enjoy the patient care scenarios, and faculty who have been teaching these sophomore courses for many years noticed a significant shift in student behavior. The sophomores were very engaged in the weekly

scenarios and were willing to be risk-takers in terms of volunteering critical assessment data needed and suggesting appropriate interventions. They approached the teaching and testing scenario experiences from the perspective of "This is what I need to do" rather than "What is it that you expect me to do?" The clinical experience at the end of the sophomore year provided the opportunity for students to further develop their ability to integrate critical thinking with skill competency. Our faculty are enthusiastic about the continued development and implementation of this dynamic approach to educating students for the real world of nursing practice.

*The authors wish to acknowledge two individuals for their expertise, creativity and collaboration on implementing this initiative: Colleen Meakim '84 M.S.N., R.N., director of the College's Learning Resource Center, and Karen Cash, B.S.N., R.N., nursing lab skills assistant.*

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# Transfusing Realism into the Lab

The director of the College's Learning Resource Center probes the anatomy and physiology of creating lab experiences using SimMan and patient scenarios.



By Colleen Meakim '84 M.S.N., R.N.

Creating simulation experiences for a nursing lab environment can be a challenge, but leads to rewarding student experiences. At the College of Nursing, the process starts with a conference session with the Learning Resource Center (LRC) staff members and the faculty members who teach the course. We discuss what the goals are and what teaching/learning objectives are to be achieved. Is the purpose of the simulation teaching or testing? At what point in the course will the simulation be introduced, and how will students be expected to function? Once these questions have been answered, we can begin to think about the specifics.

The depth of the simulation will depend upon the level of the learners. A simulation experience for sophomores may be focused on gathering assessment data to make a nursing diagnosis and a simple plan for intervention, or how to teach a client while performing a basic skill such as a dressing change. Students in the upper-level courses can be given more

complicated scenarios and be expected to perform at a higher level and incorporate higher levels of critical thinking and reasoning.

In planning the scenarios, we also flesh out the preparation activities for students to complete prior to participating. These could include an audiovisual resource or answering focused questions related to scenario activities. We also develop critical elements that briefly describe what the expected student behaviors will be during the scenario. The faculty member uses these to guide discussion when the scenario is completed.

## Role-playing to learn blood administration

In a teaching scenario we planned for the first medical-surgical course in the junior year, there were several goals. We wanted to provide students with an experience in giving a blood transfusion, receiving a verbal change of shift report and responding accordingly, and providing care to a client with altered hematologic and gastrointestinal function. We selected this situation because students need to learn how to receive and give report and administer blood in the clinical environment, an experience they might not normally have. Blood administration is considered a high-risk/low-frequency area of need. If not done properly, this life-saving procedure could be life-threatening. Because intravenous therapy and care of patients with hematologic and gastrointestinal disorders are taught in this course, these care concepts can be used to create the need for blood administration.

The simulation's objectives would be:

- Receive change of shift report about the patient.
- Perform an initial assessment of the patient, including review of diagnostic information.
- Review physician orders.
- Provide appropriate care for a patient who must receive a blood transfusion, including initiating the process to give blood, retrieving blood from the blood bank, following institutional procedure for providing blood, and performing the necessary assessment and interventions during the transfusion process.
- Document the appropriate information.

We then develop an appropriate patient situation and determine the type of mannequin and setting needed. In this example, either SimMan or Vital Anne could be used as a patient in a hospital bed (the LRC also has two pediatric simulators). These high-tech patient simulators can be programmed to provide vital signs; oxygen saturation; and



During a transfusion scenario for a medical-surgical course for juniors, Ruth McDermott-Levy, M.S.N., R.N., a visiting clinical instructor, demonstrates to junior Rachel Watkins how to check the blood administration tubing.

**IF NOT DONE PROPERLY,  
THIS LIFE-SAVING  
PROCEDURE COULD BE  
LIFE-THREATENING.**

realistic heart, lung and bowel sounds. The simulator “patient” is connected to a monitor that displays EKG, blood pressure, heart rate, respiratory rate and oxygen saturation.

### The “patient”—a stockbroker under stress

The scenario begins with the students receiving a verbal report from the day shift nurse at 3 p.m. The following information is included:

*Mrs. L., age 46, was admitted to the medical-surgical unit from the emergency department, where she was seen for abdominal pain and gastrointestinal bleeding. She has a history of Crohn’s disease and gastritis. She has a high-stress job as a stockbroker, and admits to frequently taking over-the-counter anti-inflammatory drugs and antacids for stomach discomfort.*

The students are also told specific lab test results, including Mrs. L.’s low hemoglobin, which necessitated a transfusion of two units of A-negative packed red blood cells. They are also given the physical description of Mrs. L.—pallor and apparent anxiety—as well as the amount of nasal oxygen and intravenous fluid she is receiving.

Students are assigned roles before the scenario starts, and interact accordingly. Generally two students are the primary nurses; one actually performs the care, while the other provides support in performing the assessments and interventions. Another student may be assigned to record the events. Other students play the parts of a resource nurse, a blood bank lab technician, a physician to be called upon for support or other appropriate staff. When multiple scenarios take place, roles are rotated so that all students have the opportunity to be the nurse. A faculty or staff member serves as the voice of Mrs. L., responding to student questions. Someone is also on hand to change the mannequin’s vital signs or other monitor readings as the scenario progresses.

Students work in pairs to retrieve the blood and set up the transfusion procedure. This provides all of them with the opportunity to have hands-on experience in the blood administration process. As the situation unfolds, students

must be alert for things that may happen to Mrs. L., such as a change in her vital signs or lung sounds.

Once the scenario is complete, it is time for debriefing. Faculty and students discuss what occurred, what went well, what could have been improved, what the students learned and what they would do differently in the future.

Before the College introduced such simulations, faculty taught blood administration by having each student follow a checklist of things to do in setting up, hanging and discontinuing blood. This new process provides greater opportunity for critical thinking and for incorporating all aspects of the situation so that students can link this new learning with what they have learned previously. Putting the steps of a procedure within the context of a patient situation makes it more realistic and gives students an experience to relate to, thereby enhancing learning.



The programmable Vital Anne plays the part of “Mrs. L.,” a stockbroker suffering from gastrointestinal bleeding. Before the transfusion, junior Amanda Harner checks her vital signs.



# My First Encounter with SimMan

By Anne Stevens, Class of '08

Anne Stevens this fall had her clinical practicum on a telemetry unit at Delaware County Memorial Hospital in Drexel Hill, Pa. Here she shares the clinical preparation she learned through patient simulators, as well as her passion for the nursing care of patients.

**A**t the start of my sophomore year nursing lab in Fall 2005, my professor announced that my peers and I would be a pilot class for a new program the College of Nursing was hoping to incorporate into the laboratory portion of our education. This new educational tool included the use of scenarios in which



Anne Stevens, a junior, is from Bethel, Conn.

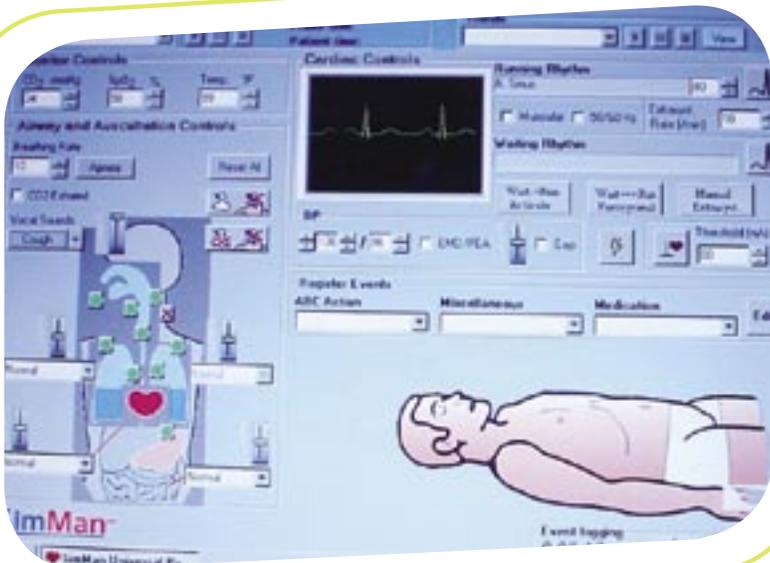
students would have to assess and interview a fictional "patient" that was experiencing various symptoms. The patient role would be carried out by classmates, professors, models or simulators. Based on the collected information, we would perform the necessary nursing interventions.

I did not know what to expect from these scenarios as I began to prepare for my first lab. Although we had been assigned readings and videos, it was difficult to fully grasp the technique without practicing on an actual patient.

My apprehension was entirely unnecessary. My first encounter with SimMan turned out to be a positive experience. It was clear that these simulations were designed to help us develop our nursing technique through a hands-on approach. The professors expected that we know the appropriate steps to perform the skill, as well as understand in advance the rationale for the nursing interventions. They would guide us in performing the skills.

I found these simulation exercises to be a highly effective learning tool. The College of Nursing, and Villanova University, have placed a great emphasis on addressing the different learning needs of students, and this technique achieves that goal by providing a hands-on approach. The patient scenarios and SimMan simulations make it easy to put what we have learned into practice and to apply nursing technique in a more realistic setting.

It has been my experience that practicing new skills with a fellow student is not always as effective as practicing with SimMan. It is rare that a student who act as the patient has signs and symptoms differing from the norm. Although it is sometimes more comfortable to role-play with your peers, SimMan allows us to work with a patient that displays signs



and symptoms mimicking those likely to be evaluated in a patient care setting.

Technology is advancing faster than ever. It is essential to incorporate the available devices into our learning so that we are well-versed in their use before entering the clinical setting. My experience in the lab helped me feel more comfortable around my patients in the hospital setting. The combination of SimMan and peer interaction each week enabled me to develop my approach to patient care and communication. On the first day of clinical, I felt well-prepared. I cannot say I was not nervous, but I certainly was more at ease, having established a level of comfort with the skills and knowledge required to provide patient care.

Simulation exercises are an enrichment tool designed to capture the essence of nursing practice. I view the scenario-based learning as the most effective way to learn. It allows us to collaborate with our student peers in choosing the most appropriate nursing interventions for the varying needs of patients. It is an efficient way for us to incorporate the information we acquire from lectures, readings and videos while we build our interpersonal and nursing skills. Simulation exercises have been a major part of my learning experience here at Villanova, and I look forward to seeing my development as a student enrich my career as a professional nurse.

**“THE COMBINATION OF SIMMAN AND PEER INTERACTION EACH WEEK ENABLED ME TO DEVELOP MY APPROACH TO PATIENT CARE AND COMMUNICATION.”**



## College's Conference Highlights Learning Resource Centers

**N**early 500 nursing educators from 41 states, as well as the Virgin Islands, Guam, Japan, Canada and Great Britain, gathered on June 15-17, 2006, in Philadelphia for the College of Nursing's 11th Biennial North American Learning Resource Centers (LRC) Conference. The theme was "Nursing Education on the Move: Technology, Creativity and Innovation." The College sponsored the conference in collaboration with the International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning (INACSL).

The sessions focused on integrating technology into nursing education, approaches such as clinical simulations that support education in LRCs, future educational roles for LRCs and administrative issues. International nursing scholars spoke and shared their research. The conference also attracted the premier vendors in simulation technology and those offering other learning resources for nursing education from around the world.

(Above) College of Nursing representatives who attended the 11th Biennial North American Learning Resource Centers Conference included (from left) conference planner and director of Nursing's Continuing Education program Lynore DeSilets, Ed.D., R.N., BC; conference planner and presenter Colleen Meakim '84 M.S.N., R.N.; instructor Jennifer Gunberg Ross '00 B.S.N., '05 M.S.N., R.N.; doctoral student and presenter Deatrah DuBose, M.S.N., R.N.; Connelly Endowed Dean and Professor M. Louise Fitzpatrick, Ed.D., R.N., FAAN; and doctoral student Anne M. Fink, M.S.N., R.N.



# Our Roundtable in Cyberspace

In teaching doctoral students online from around the region and the world, a faculty member discovers how it connects students in a global community.

By Mary Pickett, Ph.D., R.N., Associate Professor of Nursing



**T**wo College of Nursing doctoral students—one who lives in Guam and the other in Virginia—are working together on a topic of special interest to both of them.

They meet every week in a classroom yet never have to leave home. How is that possible? The new innovative iLink software that facilitates communication in the Nursing Doctoral Program provides this online learning opportunity.

As the name implies, iLink connects students and faculty in a roundtable discussion in cyberspace. It gives new meaning to the term “global community” as students from around the world gather via this multimedia technology to share ideas and expand nursing’s horizons.

## Ph.D. program addresses shortage of nursing faculty members

Nationally, the nursing shortage continues to pose problems for health-care agencies attempting to fill vacant positions with professional nurses. Yet why do we read articles about qualified applicants to nursing schools being deferred for future classes? The answer is that there is also a shortage of qualified nurse educators for entry-level professional nurse education. The increasing median age of faculty poses another layer of complexity.

The Nursing Doctoral Program, launched in June 2004 to prepare teacher-scholars, will help to alleviate this crisis. The program combines innovative distance learning with opportunities for classes on site at Villanova during the required summer residency. These three weeks on campus provide opportunities for students to get to know one another in a traditional classroom setting. The strong bonds of collegiality and friendship that begin on campus grow deeper throughout the program.

## The view from cyberspace

In fall 2004, I began teaching doctoral students through iLink, whose audio and video capabilities maximize the “virtual” classroom environment. Using laptop computers, Webcams, headsets and high-speed Internet connections, participants see one other, engage in verbal discourse and communicate through text messaging. The video cameras enable each participant to see and hear the person who is “at the podium.” iLink offers interactive visual options that enhance discussions via real-time shared applications such as PowerPoint™ slides, Web sites and word documents. This new approach to

communicating with students around a “virtual” discussion table requires a level of technical competency, creative strategies to facilitate the teaching/learning process in a humanistic manner, and an open mind about conditions that may cause audio or visual interference during the designated class time.

Nurse professionals have generous amounts of patience and troubleshooting expertise stemming from their clinical experiences, and our students have demonstrated their ability to solve technical problems while online. We are fortunate to have a very dedicated technical staff at the College. They have supported us through our initial phase of learning the features of the advanced technology, and they are there to help both faculty and students resolve new technical glitches that are out of our range of expertise.

One of the advantages of the traditional classroom education is the bonding and interaction that occur when students are physically present. Initially I was concerned about how this interpersonal connection would develop in cyberspace. I found that, as usual, our students are very resourceful in adapting to new situations and circumstances. For example, one group set up instant messaging so they could continue their discussions outside of the seminar. Each person in the online seminar group has a unique perspective and potential to influence and inform all other members.

## Conferences as the next step for distance learning

During my academic career, I have participated in developing curricula to meet the needs of specific groups, including nurses in local and international communities. Ten years ago, I traveled with American nurse educators to provide a federally funded educational project, focused on cancer prevention and treatment strategies, to 30 English-speaking nurse educators in developing countries. To attend the conferences in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and Oslo, Norway, nurse educators had to travel from 25 countries. Today, with distance learning using the Internet, this program could be delivered without the financial and personal costs of travel, and many more international nurse educators who have access to the communication technology could take part.

Dr. Martha Rogers, whom I met years ago, developed a nursing theory called the Science of Unitary Human Beings. She viewed a human being as an irreducible, indivisible energy field in constant interaction with the environment. Dr. Rogers posited that human beings and environments do not *have* energy fields, they *are* energy fields. If she were alive today, I think she would have a wry smile and offer a very positive view of our doctoral students energetically communicating, growing and learning with each other in cyberspace.

# Six Close-up Views of Distance Learning

**A**s they juggle careers, family responsibilities and scholarly pursuits, the College of Nursing's M.S.N. and doctoral students have embraced online learning, whether in a synchronous, asynchronous or hybrid environment. Faculty creativity and expertise, the technology connection and the students' own drive for new knowledge all cultivate the online learning climate. These graduate students develop into a tightly bound group engaging in scholarly discourse and enjoying the challenges of their coursework. Here, six students comment on their experiences and the benefits of distance learning.

## Three are earning an M.S.N. in Nursing Education:

**Geraldine Shimko, B.S.N., R.N.** is a nursing faculty member at Reading Area Community College. She adapted quickly to the environment and expectations of her first online course, *Advanced Pathophysiology*, even while vacationing with her family.



"Looking at it as a student, my experience with online courses was much better than I could have imagined. Studying and preparing for the case studies was very challenging. Bulletin board-type assignments require not only your opinion, but to be thorough and reference all of the readings.

"The preparation is a little different to go 'live' online. Through the use of WebCT (Web course tools software), you could attend a lecture anytime you chose and repeat it as many

times as you wanted. It took all week to read and retain enough to be able to instantly produce your thoughts for the 'live' session. It is very energizing for the whole group to 'chat up' this scholarly debate.

"As a developing educator, I found that there are several ways to conduct an online class. Evaluation has to be very specific. The quality of student postings can be divided into levels. Keywords and references to the readings weight the quality of the post. Everyone sees everyone else's post, so originality counts. 'I agree' is the lowest level answer. However, if you are 'live,' agreement or disagreement is treated differently. Defend your positions, and even if you are not correct, the professor can still evaluate your knowledge. You would be surprised at the teachable moments that come out of an incorrect response.

"I have found my professors at the College of Nursing to be excellent role models, whether online or in a classroom. My transformation to scholarly leadership lies in their shadows."

**Mary R. Vestermark, B.S.N., R.N., CSN** is a school nurse in Lancaster, Pa. She piloted distance learning technology as part of an education course in measurement and evaluation. The course was delivered as a hybrid—combining in-class students with those online.

"It's not surprising, given the techno age we live in, that Villanova University is leading the way in distance learning for graduate students. Technology offers graduate learners the power to enhance our education by giving us the freedom to explore more information relating to our subject. The course work is challenging; interaction with teachers, stimulating. Education via distance learning helps celebrate the individual in a unique way, as well as meeting requirements and promoting individual fulfillment. I highly recommend it."

**Maureen Ruhl '94 B.S.N., R.N.**, one of Vestermark's in-class colleagues, is risk manager for the University of Pennsylvania Health System in Philadelphia. Ruhl recognizes the additional discourse that online courses bring to the classroom.

"We interacted with students from many different areas, which we would not have been able to do without distance learning. Having them participate in class enhanced our learning because many of them have years of teaching experience, so their comments were truly relevant and added a lot to the classes."

## Three are earning a Ph.D. in Nursing:

**Cathy Poillon Lovecchio '85 B.S.N., M.S.N., R.N.** appreciates the scholarly freedom afforded by online learning. With her busy schedule as an assistant professor of nursing at the University of Scranton, she finds the flexibility of the distance-learning format to be attractive.

"Distance learning allows me extra time to devote to research and preparation for class. It also led me to call my fellow colleagues after class to discuss issues. The frequent calling allowed for many more scholarly conversations. Distance learning actually helped us to build stronger bonds with each other."



**Anne M. Fink, M.S.N., R.N.** is an assistant professor of nursing at Alvernia College. The ability to interact with her classmates using distance technology has added to her professional growth, she believes.



"Webcams and text chat allow members of the class to communicate well with each other, and I've felt close to members of my cohort despite our geographic distance. Often the professors will tape synchronous classes, which is convenient if you want to review a difficult concept. Online learning is perfect for my schedule since I can attend class from work or home."

**Ruth Crothers, M.S.N., APRN, BC, CNOR** is a staff development specialist at Lourdes Medical Center of Burlington County in Willingboro N.J. She enjoys the online stimulating discussions that refine ideas and connect fellow learners, wherever they may be.

"Distance learning in the College of Nursing offers the best of both worlds in classroom learning. While it affords all the convenience of learning from a distance, synchronous distance learning also provides all the advantages of meeting in a traditional classroom. We are able to have discussions in real time and receive immediate feedback from classmates and instructors. This is especially valuable for class presentations. The presenter, either student or professor, could address any questions immediately.

"Another tremendous benefit to synchronous learning is the bonding experience enjoyed through interactions with other participants. Our class got to know one another as if we had met in person each week. In fact, we probably got to know each other a little better than if meeting in the traditional classroom because we are seeing one another within our own familiar environments."



# Ready for Their Rapidly Expanding Roles

Alumni attest to the success of the first decade of the Adult Nurse Practitioner Program

By Ann Barrow McKenzie '86 B.S.N., '91 M.S.N., R.N.

If you have sought health care, chances are you have encountered a nurse practitioner (NP), an advanced practice nurse with extensive knowledge and clinical skills honed in a graduate-level program. In the 1980s and 1990s, the number of NPs started to grow nationally in response to changes in the health-care system. The trend reflected the growing need for high-quality, cost-effective care, especially for under-served populations. Today there are approximately 145,000 NPs in the United States.

For many patients, young and old, their NP is their only connection to the health-care system. Not only does their NP provide care for acute problems, but also offers chronic care and wellness care. The latter keeps problems in check and helps prevent disease, thus lowering the burden of health-care costs for all of us.

"Nurse practitioners develop a unique partnership with their clients and play a critical role in increasing access to care and controlling health-care costs," explains Marguerite K. Schlag '68 B.S.N., Ed.D., R.N., assistant dean and director of the Graduate Nursing Program. She points out that NPs work independently or in collaboration with a physician and also advocate for health-care reform.

A decade ago, the Graduate Nursing Program took note of this trend of increased clinical preparation for nurses, especially NPs. In 1995, Claire Manfredi, Ed.D., R.N., then assistant dean and director and now professor emerita, continued to grow the graduate-level offerings. She explains, "With the assistance of a very fine faculty, we were able to implement the Adult Nurse Practitioner (ANP) track...we presented the track to the State Board of Nursing and received first-time approval." Villanova's ANP graduates would go on to provide primary care services to specific populations of patients. The program's quality is reflected in the expertise of its graduates who practice in the region and across the country.

## Primed for the Real World

Assistant Professor Elise Robinson Pizzi, M.S.N., CRNP was one of the original faculty members in the ANP track, as was former faculty member Karen McGinn '73 B.S.N., M.S.N., CRNP. Pizzi recalls the excitement of the first class, which started in August 1996 and graduated in December 1997. One of Pizzi's students in that first class, Pat Graham '97 M.S.N., CRNP, is now Pizzi's professional colleague at Prime Health Network. This primary care practice, based in Drexel Hill, Pa., has several NPs and internists.

This class was determined to succeed. Graham recalls, "Everyone had a goal to do our best—make the grade and start practicing." She says she benefited from the intensive didactic and clinical curriculum and credits the "in-depth" content developed by the faculty. She emphasizes the role preparation her class received: "Our clinical preceptors were invaluable in preparing us for life 'in the real world,'" so much so that her first clinical preceptor, a physician, later offered her a job. They have now been in practice for nine years in their suburban setting.



Pat Graham '97 M.S.N., CRNP (right) and Assistant Professor Elise Robinson Pizzi, M.S.N., CRNP, who taught Graham at the College of Nursing, are now NP colleagues at a primary care practice in Drexel Hill, Pa.

Graham's ANP classmates are in a variety of settings, including clinical research, internal medicine, cardiology and outpatient clinics.

## Guiding Lehigh Valley Patients to Their Lipid Goals

Many cardiology patients in the Allentown, Pa., area know who their champion of healthy heart living is: Lori Musolf Neri '99 M.S.N., R.N., CRNP. She is the coordinator of The Center for Cardiac Risk Prevention at The Heart Care Group, P.C. Not only does Neri assess, diagnose and treat general cardiac problems, but in conjunction with Susan Talbot Washburn '95 B.S.N., '01 M.S.N., R.N., CRNP, she will assess, diagnose and treat lipid and metabolic disorders.

When Neri assumed the coordinating role, the "lipid clinic" was in its early stages. She expanded it to a more full-service prevention clinic. "We also assist in smoking cessation programs and diet and weight management," explains Neri, "and achieve about 70 percent of patients to lipid goal, 20-40 percent higher than the national average." She shares her knowledge with the local community as well, volunteering to give talks on wellness and on making realistic healthy behavior changes. Recently, she taught the College of Nursing's Healthy Lifestyles course.

Neri first came to Villanova years ago as a clinical instructor in the Undergraduate Nursing Program. "I was well-aware of the quality of Villanova's program," she says. "The level of expertise of the faculty is well-known. The role of the nurse practitioner was emerging rapidly in the mid-1990s, and I wanted a university that historically is on the 'cutting edge' of the nursing profession."

As Neri learned from the clinical experience of her NP faculty and then expanded her own practice, she discovered that “the importance of NPs in today’s health-care environment had become quite clear.”

*In Allentown, Pa., Lori Musolf Neri ’99 M.S.N., R.N., CRNP has expanded a lipid clinic into one focusing on a full range of risk prevention services.*



### **An NP in Texas Recalls the College’s Dynamic Faculty**



*Now in Texas, Patricia M. Gresham ’01 M.S.N., CRNP, CCRN notes that the College’s ANP Program led to her evidence-based practice with cardiology patients.*

From her practice with a cardiology group, Patricia M. Gresham ’01 M.S.N., CRNP, CCRN also is familiar with cardiology patients and their care needs. For several years after graduation, she practiced in West Chester, Pa. Today, Gresham is even more specialized. Now living in McAllen, Texas, she practices as an NP for a cardiothoracic and vascular surgeon at The Doctors Hospital at Renaissance. This 30-bed facility is in Edinburg, near the Mexican

border. She is responsible for the clinical care of hospitalized patients following cardiothoracic and vascular surgery and the clinical follow-up of patients in the office setting after hospital discharge.

Gresham had selected Villanova for her M.S.N. program based on its reputation for producing competent and respected advanced

practice nurses. She values the experience. “Villanova’s ANP program prepared me for a new approach to providing care,” she says. It is because of the program, she adds, that she bases her patient care on evidence-based practice.

The College guided Gresham in another way. Recalling when she was a graduate assistant for the Continuing Education Program, she says that “The experiences offered to me were invaluable and fueled my desire to continue with my education and to share with nursing students in an educational setting. I felt so fortunate to work with such accomplished and dynamic professors. Thanks to this program, I hope to continue on to obtain a Ph.D. and to begin teaching in a university setting.”

Gresham extends her knowledge to the profession by serving on the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s standard-setting panel for the Adult Health Nurse Practitioner Exam.

### **Academic Foundation Broadens a Student’s Practice**

Anne B. Coste ’04 B.S.N., ’06 M.S.N., R.N. hopes to follow in the footsteps of her accomplished NP predecessors now that she has graduated from the ANP Program. “Not only has this program given me the opportunity to lead and contribute on a different level, but it enhanced my political awareness of the many issues relating to our profession,” she says.

Coste looks forward to her role as an NP in either a primary care or specialty practice. She knows she is prepared. The academic foundation on which she will build her new career has changed her way of thinking. She welcomes the opportunities “to read more critically, and also to write and think on a much higher level,” she explains. “It’s been an exciting and inspiring time for me. I have been challenged, which has deepened and broadened my way of practicing.”



*Having graduated from the ANP Program in December, Anne B. Coste ’04 B.S.N., ’06 M.S.N., R.N. appreciates the opportunities she had to lead and contribute as a student.*

## Grant Helps Support Expansion of BSNE<sup>Express</sup>



Gathering in the Connelly Center for the October 2 ceremony to present the Nurse Faculty Lines Program grant to the College of Nursing were (from left) Michael H. Hershock, president and CEO of the Pennsylvania Higher Education Foundation (PHEF); M. Louise Fitzpatrick, Ed.D., R.N., FAAN, the College's Connelly Endowed Dean and Professor; the Rev. Peter M. Donohue, O.S.A., president of Villanova University; Joanna McGrath, M.S.N., R.N., clinical assistant professor of Nursing; Maryanne Lieb, M.S.N., R.N., coordinator of the College's BSNE<sup>Express</sup> Program; Pa. Rep. William F. Adolph Jr. (R-District 165), who is a PHEF board member; Frances Keen, D.N.Sc., R.N., assistant dean and director of the College's Undergraduate Nursing Program; and Steve Fera, vice president of social mission programs at Independence Blue Cross.

The College of Nursing is one of 11 nursing programs selected from 55 applicants to receive a Nursing Faculty Lines Program grant. This award of \$50,000 per year is effective for a three-year period, starting this academic year. The grant, announced by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Foundation (PHEF) and Independence Blue Cross, is part of Pennsylvania's effort to alleviate its growing shortage of nurses.

This grant will help fund the College's new appointee to the BSNE<sup>Express</sup> Program, Joanna McGrath, M.S.N., R.N., as clinical assistant professor. The College will use this opportunity to add a second cohort of adult students to BSNE<sup>Express</sup>, which is an accelerated 14-month program for those with a degree in another discipline who seek a bachelor's degree in nursing. This additional group of 40 students will begin coursework in May on an evening and weekend basis.

In another initiative to address the nursing shortage, PHEF will continue to fund B.S.N. student scholarship grants for eligible undergraduates. To help alleviate the shortage in nursing faculty members, PHEF provides grants for M.S.N. and Ph.D. students.

## The Remarkable Class of 2010

As the College of Nursing continues to meet the demands of the nursing shortage, it welcomed 83 freshmen this fall. The class represents 17 states, including California, Colorado, Minnesota, Missouri and Vermont. One student is from Germany.

Once again, the College maintained a competitive quality in its incoming class. These students have a remarkable academic profile. Among them are a Presidential Scholar, one recipient of a NROTC full scholarship and three recipients of Army ROTC full scholarships.

This outstanding Class of 2010 will no doubt continue the College's 53-year tradition of excellence.



Dean Fitzpatrick (inset) at New Student Orientation in August greets students and their families.

# Doctoral Students Make Their Mark

*The College of Nursing's Ph.D. program prepares students for roles in higher education, with an emphasis on the teacher-scholar. The following is a sampling of the achievements of some of the current doctoral students.*

**Ruth Crothers, M.S.N., APRN-BC, CNOR** co-authored the article "The Caring Behaviors Inventory for Elders: Development and Psychometric Characteristics" in the *International Journal of Human Caring*, 10 (1), 49-59. The co-authors are Z. R. Wolf, P.R. Zuzelo, E. Goldberg and N. Jacobson.

**Meryl Daly-Parker, M.S., R.N., CNAA** in May earned the credential Certified Nurse Administrator, Advanced.

**Deatrah DuBose, M.S.N., R.N.** presented on "Using a High-tech Patient Simulator to Enhance the Clinical Knowledge for Nursing Students" at the 11th Biennial North American Learning Resource Centers Conference, held June 15-17, 2006, in Philadelphia.

**Janet Fogg, M.S.N., R.N.** in June co-presented a poster at the Hershey Medical Center's Pediatric Research Day. The poster, on "Needs Assessment and Evaluation of a Parent Support Group in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)," was co-presented by K. Haidet and M. Winger.

**Ann Fronczek, M.S., R.N., FNP** was promoted to clinical assistant professor at Binghamton University's Decker School of Nursing.

**Margaret Hattori-Uchima, M.S.N., R.N.,** a nursing instructor in the University of

Guam's School of Nursing, Social Work, and Health Sciences, last May gave testimony before Guam's legislative budget hearings. She outlined the nursing program's funding situation, the need for more faculty due to a 55 percent increase in admissions and how the program impacts the nursing shortage in this U.S. territory.

**Tamara Kear, M.S.N., R.N., CNN** has been appointed to the National League for Nursing's Instructional Technology Task Force. She was elected vice president of Iota Kappa Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International.

**Catherine Lovecchio, M.S.N., R.N.** has been awarded funding for her dissertation research by Outside the Classroom, the company that produces Alcohol.edu®. She is researching the efficacy of an online alcohol education program to reach college students. She recently was appointed to a tenure-track position of assistant professor in the University of Scranton's department of nursing.

**Amy McKeever, M.S.N., CRNP** presented a poster on "Knowledge of *Humanpapillomavirus* and Related Sexually Transmitted Diseases: An Integrative Review," at the Eastern Nursing Research Society's 18th Annual Scientific Sessions, held in April, 2006, in Cherry Hill, N.J.

In September, she presented on "Abnormal Paps and the HPV Vaccine" at a meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Chapter of the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses. McKeever has been named assistant clinical professor at Drexel University's College of Nursing and Health Professions.

**Cynthia Rubenstein, M.S.N., R.N., PNP** in October presented the paper, "Childhood Obesity: How Pediatric Nurses Can Make a Difference," at the 8th Annual Pediatric Conference in Richmond, Va.

**Lisa Thiemann, M.N.A., R.N., CRNA** in July began a new position in Chicago as director of practice for the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists.

An article written by **Anne Vitale, M.S.N., APRN, BC**, "Towards 21st Century Nursing Practice and Education: The Use of Selected Energy Touch Therapies as Supportive Interventions—Are We There Yet?" has been accepted by *Holistic Nursing Practice*. In addition, Vitale has been invited to serve on the journal's editorial board. For the New Jersey State Nurses Association (NJSNA), she served as facilitator for its Nurses in Trenton Day and has been re-elected to and chairs the NJSNA Congress on Practice.

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## Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby

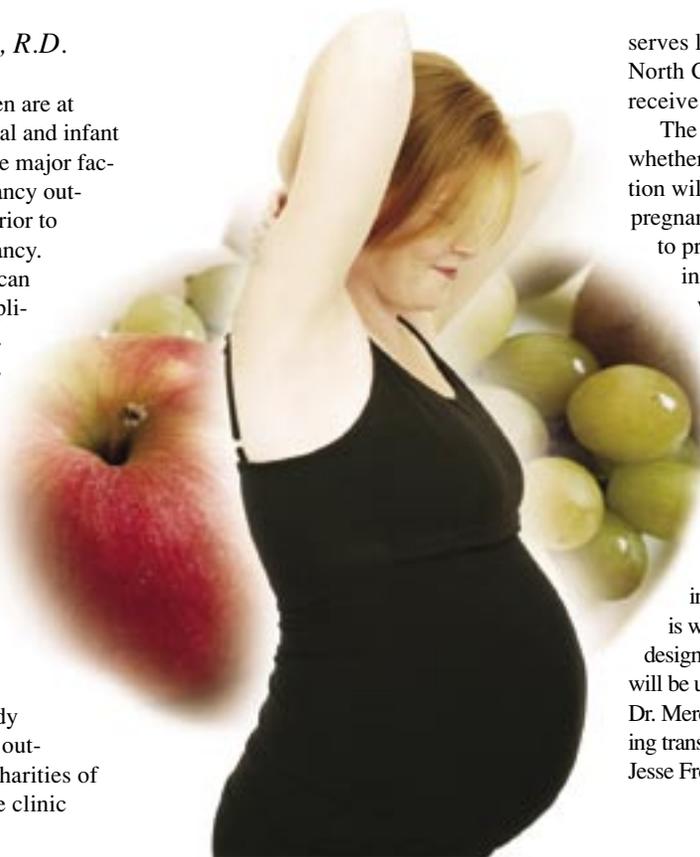
At a Catholic Charities clinic, Kimberly K. Trout, Ph.D., R.N., CNM tries a novel approach to encouraging pregnant women to eat more fruits and vegetables.

By Marcia Costello, Ph.D., R.D.

Low-income pregnant women are at higher risk for both maternal and infant medical complications. One major factor influencing a woman's pregnancy outcome is her nutritional practice prior to conception and during the pregnancy. A healthy diet during pregnancy can decrease the risk for certain complications, such as low birth weight.

Kimberly K. Trout, Ph.D., R.N., CNM, assistant professor in the College of Nursing, recently received a Villanova University Veritas grant to study these issues among low-income women. The Veritas grants provide funds for faculty work that articulates Catholic social thought and religious values based on the Augustinian tradition, which promotes social justice for the poor.

Dr. Trout is conducting a study at St. John's Prenatal Clinic. An outreach program of the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Camden, N.J., the clinic



serves low-income pregnant women in North Camden who otherwise might not receive prenatal care.

The study's primary aim is to investigate whether a novel nutrition education intervention will improve nutritional outcomes for pregnant women and their babies. The goal is to promote increased fruit and vegetable intake during pregnancy by informing women about research showing that babies often will prefer the foods that their pregnant moms had eaten. To put it simply, "Your baby prefers what you eat."

"One of the most exciting things about this project is that it is bringing together the talents of several different departments here at Villanova," Dr. Trout states. "Jill Flanagan, an instructor in Villanova's communication department, is working with one of her students on the design and translation of the pamphlets that will be used by the nurses for patient teaching. Dr. Mercedes Juliá, professor of Spanish, is offering translation support from her students, and Dr. Jesse Frey of the mathematics department is

### Transitions

**Lesley A. Perry, Ph.D., R.N.** in August became associate dean and professor. She brings a wealth of experience in educational administration spanning many years. Dr. Perry most recently was associate dean for Academic Affairs at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey's School of Nursing in Newark. In Baltimore, during her 29 years as an educator and administrator at the University of Maryland School of Nursing, she held leadership



positions involving both academic and operations-related activities. She serves as associate dean-Undergraduate Studies, associate dean for Administrative Services and vice dean of the school, as well as liaison for the construction of its new nursing building. The Maryland Association for Higher Education honored Dr. Perry with its Outstanding Educator Award in the administrative category. An educational consultant, she has spoken extensively on education issues, as well as on pediatric and maternal-child health.

Dr. Perry earned a B.S.N. from Roberts Wesleyan College, an M.S.N. from Boston University and a Ph.D. in Nursing from the University of Maryland.

**Elizabeth "Buffy" Muncy Blunt, Ph.D., R.N., APRN, BC** joined the faculty in November as assistant professor and coordinator of the Nurse Practitioner Program. Most recently, Dr.

Blunt was an assistant professor in the M.S.N. program at Drexel University's College of Nursing and Health Professions in Philadelphia, where she had previously been the director of the graduate nursing programs. She maintains her adult nurse practitioner clinical practice at both a health clinic and an emergency department in Philadelphia.



assisting with the statistical design and analysis of the study results.”

Dr. Trout’s research interests derive from her extensive work in nurse-midwifery and women’s health. She earned three nursing degrees at the University of Pennsylvania, including her Ph.D. in 2005. Her passion for improving women’s health is evident in her doctoral dissertation, which examined differences in insulin sensitivity between the follicular and luteal phases of the menstrual cycle. Dr. Trout’s findings will be reported in an upcoming issue of *Diabetes Technology and Therapeutics*.

To further study the unique effects of diabetes in women, Dr. Trout is developing a research proposal with a nurse researcher from Temple University. They are investigating the impact of a lower carbohydrate diet on maternal and neonatal outcomes in women with the type of diabetes



*Experienced in nurse-midwifery and women’s health, Kimberly K. Trout, Ph.D., R.N., CNM plans to study the unique effects of diabetes in women.*

that first occurs during pregnancy. According to Dr. Trout, “Despite the fact that diet is often considered the most important element of treatment, surprisingly, there is a lack of evidence as to what constitutes an optimal diet for the patient with gestational diabetes.”

## A Faculty with an International Focus

**M. Louise Fitzpatrick, Ph.D., R.N., FAAN**, Connelly Endowed Dean and Professor, was featured in *Best Practices in Nursing Education: Stories of Exemplary Teachers*, by Mary Jane Smith and Joyce J. Fitzpatrick (2006, Springer Publishing Company). It has just been translated into Japanese. The 21 experienced nursing educators interviewed all have “stature in the nursing education community of scholars,” note the authors.

**Ruth McDermott-Levy ’96 M.S.N., R.N.**, visiting clinical instructor, has been appointed to the editorial board of the new journal *Nursing Education Oman*.

**Gale Robinson-Smith, Ph.D., R.N., C.S.**, assistant professor, in May 2006 presented in

Aomori, Japan, on “Hospital and Home-based Psychiatric Nursing Care” at Aomori University of Health and Welfare.

**Nancy C. Sharts-Hopko, Ph.D., R.N., FAAN**, professor and director of Nursing’s Doctoral Program, co-authored with H. Niki and Y. Morishima a pocket guide for Japanese-English medical translation. Published in Tokyo, the guide is *Sonomama-tsukaeru Byoin Eigo Hyogen 5000 [5000 Handy English Hospital Phrases for Health Professionals]* (2006, Igaku-Shoin).

In Amman, Jordan, Dr. Sharts-Hopko was one of five plenary speakers to address the Jordanian Nursing Council’s first Global Citizenship Conference, in April 2006.

She focused on “Knowledge Development and Dissemination for Global Nursing Challenges.”



**Carol Toussie**

**Weingarten, Ph.D., R.N.**, associate professor, last March in Jerusalem gave the keynote presentation, “Strategies to Address the Nursing Shortage,” at the Hadassah Nurses Mission and Conference, held at Hadassah University Hospital in Ein Kerem. For Hadassah’s National Nurses Councils, Dr. Weingarten serves on the advisory board that is a resource for its 37 nurses councils in the United States and the Hadassah Hospitals in Israel.

Dr. Blunt earned a B.S.N. from Widener University in 1976, a master’s degree in education from Saint Joseph’s University in 1987 and a master’s degree in adult primary care nursing from the University of Pennsylvania in 1995. In 1999, she completed a post-master’s certificate as a family nurse practitioner at MCP Hahnemann University (now part of Drexel). In 2004, Drexel awarded her a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Technology.

**Kathy D. Gray-Siracusa, Ph.D., R.N.** joined the faculty in August as assistant professor. She teaches medical-surgical nursing to undergraduates and health-care administration topics to graduate students. Her career includes a clinical focus in critical care and nearly 20 years of management



and administration experience in the service sector in New York, New Jersey and Philadelphia. She has served as a senior director of nursing and as a vice president for patient care services.

Dr. Gray-Siracusa began her nursing education at SUNY Upstate Medical Center, where she earned an associate degree in 1976. She completed her B.S.N. and M.S. at Syracuse University. In 1993, she earned an M.B.A. from Widener University. While pursuing her doctoral education at the University

of Maryland School of Nursing, which awarded her a Ph.D. last year, she researched the effect of acuity-based staffing on quality outcomes in long-term care.

Certified in critical care nursing as well as advanced nursing administration, Dr. Gray-Siracusa continues her critical care nursing practice in an ICU in Langhorne, Pa., and her nursing research and administration practice in Camden, N.J.

**Joanna McGrath, M.S.N., R.N.** has transitioned to clinical assistant professor in the *BSNExpress* Program. She had served as a visiting clinical professor. McGrath’s clinical expertise spans 22 years in maternal-child health, including positions as a clinical specialist, in-hospital educator, staff

## Villanova Honors Two Nursing Faculty Members

Two of the three faculty members honored at Villanova University's Commencement on May 21, 2006, were from the College of Nursing. The Rev. Edmund J. Dobbin, O.S.A., at the time University president and now president emeritus, presented awards to:

### Suzanne C. Smeltzer, Ed.D., R.N., FAAN Outstanding Faculty Research Award

A professor of Nursing and director of the Center for Nursing Research, Dr. Smeltzer is the 40th recipient of this faculty award. She was honored for her exceptional reputation within her field and her distinguished scholarship at Villanova. She has been a tireless advocate and researcher in the areas of multiple sclerosis, health



At Commencement last May, the Rev. Edmund J. Dobbin, O.S.A., presented faculty awards to Professor Suzanne C. Smeltzer, Ed.D., R.N., FAAN (second from left) and Professor Nancy Sharts-Hopko, Ph.D., R.N., FAAN (second from right). With them is Connelly Endowed Dean and Professor M. Louise Fitzpatrick, Ed.D., R.N., FAAN.



development educator and legal nurse consultant. She received the Pennsylvania Public Health Association Merit Award for her work in developing a Child Death Review Team, a project of the Penn-

sylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. She earned a B.S.N. from Thomas Jefferson University and an M.S.N. from the University of Pennsylvania. She will be teaching Parent-Child Nursing and Introduction to Professional Nursing, as well as advising BSNE*Express* students in the weekend and evening option.

**Jennifer Gunberg**  
Ross '00 B.S.N., '05  
M.S.N., R.N. is a  
clinical instructor for  
this academic year.

Ross has a background in telemetry and critical care nursing, in which she maintains her clinical practice.



### Publications

**Patricia K. Bradley, Ph.D., R.N.**, assistant professor, contributed the chapter on "Breast Cancer in African American Women" to *African American Women's Health and Social Issues*, 2nd ed., edited by Catherine Fisher Collins (2006, Praeger). The book, targeted for health-care professionals and students, was developed by a multidisciplinary team.

**Theresa Capriotti '95 M.S.N., D.O., R.N., CRNP**, clinical associate professor, published the article "Resistant Superbugs Create Need for Novel Antibiotics" in *MEDSURG Nursing*, 15 (1), 46-51. She also published the article "Inadequate Cardiovascular Disease Prevention in Women with Physical Disabilities" in *Rehabilitation Nursing*, 31 (3), 94-101.

**Linda Carman Copel, Ph.D., APRN, BC, DAPA**, associate professor, published "Partner Abuse in Physically Disabled Women: A Proposed Model For Understanding Intimate Partner Violence" in *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care* 42 (2), 110-125.

**Lynore DeSilets, Ed.D., R.N., BC**, assistant professor, assistant dean, and director of the Continuing Education in Nursing and Health Care Program, published "How Do You Know If It Is Really Continuing Education?" (Administrative Angles column) in the *Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing, Continuing Competence for the Future*, 37 (3), 100-101.

**M. Frances Keen, D.N.Sc., R.N., C**, associate professor, assistant dean and director of the

Nursing Undergraduate Program, is a contributing author for *Our Shared Legacy: Nursing Education at Johns Hopkins, 1889-2006*, edited by Mame Warren with Linda Emerson Sabin as a third co-author (2006, Johns Hopkins University Press). Dr. Keen is a 1970 graduate of the Johns Hopkins Hospital School of Nursing and a past president of the Johns Hopkins University Alumni Association and the Johns Hopkins Nurses Alumni Association. She authored Chapter 5, "Tension and Triumph 1970-1979," which examines this turbulent decade and the difficult transition from a hospital school of nursing to what eventually became a degree-granting university-based program at Hopkins.

**M. Louise Fitzpatrick, Ed.D., R.N., FAAN**, Connelly Endowed Dean and Professor, contributed Chapter 14, "Historical Research: The Method" for *Nursing Research: A Qualitative Perspective*, 4th ed., by Patricia L. Munhall (2007, Jones and Bartlett Publishers).

**Suzanne C. Smeltzer, Ed.D., R.N., FAAN**, professor and director of the Center for Nursing Research, and **Nancy C. Sharts-Hopko, Ph.D., R.N., FAAN**, professor and director of Nursing's Doctoral Program, co-authored *A Provider's Guide for the Care of Women with Physical Disabilities and Chronic Health Conditions*, 2nd ed. (2006, North Carolina Office on Disability and Health). Dr. Smeltzer also published an invited paper, "Preventive Health Screening for Breast and Cervical Cancer and Osteoporosis in Women with Physical Disabilities," in *Family and Community Health*, 29 (1 Suppl.), 35S-43S.

issues of women with disabilities, improvement of health and wellness of people with disabilities, and the integration of disability content into the education and training of health-care professionals.

**Nancy C. Sharts-Hopko, Ph.D., R.N., FAAN**  
*The Lawrence C. Gallen, O.S.A. Faculty Service Award*

A professor of Nursing and director of Nursing's Doctoral Program, Dr. Sharts-Hopko was recognized for her outstanding service to the University. She has dedicated herself to Villanova's student, academic and health issues, giving of her time and talents for 20 years.

## Inglis Award Recognizes Health Promotion Project

The College of Nursing is one of four organizations to receive a \$20,000 Inglis Award for Innovation. The award recognizes the College's Health Promotion for Women with Disabilities Project. The Inglis Awards honor the enterprise of the region's non-profit organizations that enhance the quality of life for people with physical disabilities. The Board of Directors of Inglis Foundation, based in Philadelphia, announced the 2006 recipients on May 3 and presented the award to Villanova at a ceremony on June 20.

Suzanne C. Smeltzer, Ed.D., R.N., FAAN directs the Women with Disabilities Project. She is a professor of Nursing and director of the College's Center for Nursing Research. The project's goal is to improve the health and health access of women with disabilities. Initially, the project was funded by a grant from Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation.

Nursing faculty who participate in the project are committed to educating health-care professionals about these issues and to providing information for women with disabilities so they can be informed consumers

### Awards and Leadership Achievements

Faculty presenters at the 11th Biennial North American Learning Resource Centers Conference, held June 15-17, 2006, in Philadelphia, included:

- **Marita Frain '69 B.S.N., Ed.M., R.N.**, assistant professor, on "Critical Learning Resource: the Bibliographic Pathway to Evidence-Based Nursing Practice."
- **Colleen H. Meakim '85 M.S.N., R.N.**, director of the Learning Resource Center, on "Making the Leap! From Traditionally Run Labs to a Simulation Rich Environment."
- **Patricia A. Mynaugh Ph.D., R.N.**, associate professor, on "Computerized Testing: Challenges Faculty, Students and Learning Resource Center Staff Face."
- **Elise Robinson Pizzi, M.S.N., CRNP**, assistant professor, and **Deborah Wimmer '83 M.S.N., R.N., PNP**, clinical assistant professor, on "Using the SOAP Format to Enhance Physical Diagnosis: Making the Transition from Nurse to Nurse Practitioner."

Several faculty members presented at the Eastern Nursing Research Society's 18th Annual Scientific Sessions, held last April in Cherry Hill, N.J.:

- **Linda Carman Copel, Ph.D., APRN, BC, DAPA**, associate professor, presented a poster on "Spiritual Distress: the Lived Experience of Women in Abusive Relationships Who Sought Spiritual Guidance."
- **Ruth McDermott-Levy '96 M.S.N., R.N.**, visiting clinical instructor, presented a poster, "An Integrative Review of a Tool to Measure Acculturation."
- **Suzanne C. Smeltzer, Ed.D., R.N., FAAN**, professor and director of the Center for Nursing Research; **Mary Anne Dolen, Dr.Ph., R.N.**; **Gale Robinson-Smith, Ph.D., R.N., CS**, assistant professor; and **Vanessa Zimmerman '98 M.S.N., R.N.** presented a paper on "Integration of Disability-related Content in Nursing Curricula."

VITAL (Villanova Institute for Teaching and Learning) coordinates resources for the University's faculty members so that they can help their students become more effective learners. In May, two Nursing faculty members received VITAL mini-grants to fund their research:

- The project of **Mary Ann Cantrell '89 M.S.N., Ph.D., R.N., CS**, associate professor, is "The Role of Debriefing in the Teaching-Learning Process Involving Clinical Simulations in Undergraduate Nursing Education."
- The project of **Marilyn Fetter, Ph.D., R.N.**, assistant professor, is

"Integrating Care Technologies and Informatics Competencies into Baccalaureate Nursing Courses."

**Mary Ann Cantrell '89 M.S.N., Ph.D., R.N., CS**, associate professor, was interviewed for an online article, "Beginning to See What a Nurse Is," posted June 5, 2006, on [modernhealthcare.com](http://modernhealthcare.com). She presented with **Elizabeth B. Dowdell, Ph.D., R.N., CRNP**, associate professor, and Susan Gresko, CRNP, RN, on "Children with Asthma—Does Using a Spirometer Change the Outcome in a Nurse Managed Practice?" for the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners' Philadelphia Chapter last March.

**Theresa Capriotti '95 M.S.N., D.O., R.N., CRNP**, clinical associate professor, in May received the Bridgebuilders Award from Villanova University's Learning Support Services for a third semester. She was one of only two faculty members to have been nominated so often by the students who use the services.

**Linda Carman Copel, Ph.D., APRN, BC, DAPA**, associate professor, presented last April on "Psychiatric Medications" at a Bryn Mawr Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research Continuing Education program.

**Lynore DeSilets, Ed.D., R.N., BC**, assistant professor, assistant dean, and director of the Continuing Education in Nursing and Health Care Program, was appointed to the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Task Force Addressing the Development of a



of health care, can ask relevant questions of their health-care providers, and can take measures to achieve a healthier life style and a better quality of life.

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*Professor Suzanne C. Smeltzer, Ed.D., R.N., FAAN (left) accepts a 2006 Inglis Award for Innovation from Janet Ries Stern, chairperson of the Inglis Foundation Innovation Awards Review Committee.*

The Inglis Award will enable faculty to:

- update and expand the project's Web site ([www.nurseweb.villanova.edu/womenwithdisabilities](http://www.nurseweb.villanova.edu/womenwithdisabilities));
- provide education to women with disabilities and to health-care providers; and
- begin to develop online instructional modules to teach nurses, nursing faculty and other health-care professionals about barriers that make access to health care difficult for women with disabilities, as well as the health issues of and health promotion for this population.

Inglis Foundation works with people with physical disabilities to enable them to pursue their life goals and to enjoy life with the greatest amount of independence.

Premier Program Designation for the Accreditation Program. Dr. DeSilets was elected treasurer of the Alpha Nu Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International.

**Elizabeth Burgess Dowdell, Ph.D., R.N., CRNP**, associate professor, in June 2006 was interviewed by the Associated Press for an article about a Lubbock, Texas, infant abducted from home. Dr. Dowdell also was interviewed by the ABC-TV affiliate, Channel 27 in Harrisburg, Pa., for a segment, "Elder Abuse in Nursing Homes."

Dr. Dowdell is part of a research team studying "Internet Related Techniques Used by Offenders in Crimes Against Children." The study's primary investigator is forensic psychologist Robert Prentky, Ph.D., director of the Boston-based Justice Resource Institute. A joint effort of the institute, Boston College and Villanova University, the study is funded through a one-year award from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The goals of the research project are to reduce online sexual victimization of children and adolescents and to understand the growth of obscenity and pornography via the Internet and its tie to child sexual victimization. Dr. Dowdell's role in this critical research relates to the exploration of the child's use of the Internet. She will survey middle school students and their parents regarding Internet safety knowledge; experiences online; and the impact of any online negative experiences as a result of viewing unwanted pornographic

images, being solicited or engaging in inappropriate sexual activity via a request from an online predator.

**Colleen H. Meakim, M.S.N., R.N.**, director of the Learning Resource Center, in June 2006 was elected vice president for communications for The International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning. She will serve a two-year term with responsibilities for recording the association's official business, as well as managing its Web site and listserve.

**Barbara Ott, Ph.D., R.N.**, associate professor, was elected to a two-year term as an advisor to the Nursing Affinity Group of the American Society of Bioethics and Humanities.

**Lesley A. Perry, Ph.D., R.N.**, associate dean and professor, has been named Alumna of the Year by Roberts Wesleyan College, where she earned her B.S.N. degree. She received the award in September at the annual alumni banquet.

**Marguerite K. Schlag '68 B.S.N., Ed.D., R.N.**, assistant dean and director of the Graduate Nursing Program, in September became president of the Eastern Division (New York and New Jersey) of the American Cancer Society, Inc. (ACS). She has served as a board member since 1998 and for more than 25 years has been a volunteer with the Eastern Division. Dr. Schlag is a past recipient of the St. George Medal—the highest honor the ACS bestows on a volunteer for distinguished service in the fight against cancer.

**Suzanne C. Smeltzer, Ed.D., R.N., FAAN**, professor and director of the Center for Nursing Research, was appointed by the director of the Office on Disability, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to a task force to develop the Strategic Plan for the Surgeon General's 2005 Call to Action to Improve the Health and Well-being of People with Disabilities.

**Carol Toussie Weingarten, Ph.D., R.N.**, associate professor, participated in the "Graduate Nursing Education" panel at the National Student Nurses' Association annual convention, held last April in Baltimore. At Villanova University's VITAL Teaching-Learning and Information Technology Conference last May, she presented a workshop, "Rise and Shine: Service Learning Engages Students and Brings Out Their Best." Dr. Weingarten received a service learning grant from the Wachovia Foundation to work with Nursing students at the Alcorn Elementary School in Philadelphia.

**Bette Wildgust, M.S., '97 M.S.N., CRNA**, clinical associate professor and director of the Villanova University Crozer-Chester Medical Center School of Nurse Anesthesia, is a co-recipient of the annual Pennsylvania Association of Nurse Anesthetists (PANA) Didactic Instructor of the Year Award, presented in October at the PANA Fall Symposium in Gettysburg.

**Joyce S. Willens '83 B.S.N., Ph.D., R.N., C.** assistant professor, was invited this fall to attend two pain management advisory group meetings: the national ULTRAM® ER Nursing Working Group in Miami and the regional Kadian Advisory Board in Florham Park, N.J.

## Augustinians and Health-care Partners Open Free Clinic in South Philadelphia

By Ann Barrow McKenzie '86 B.S.N., '91 M.S.N., R.N.

The emergency room and outpatient department of the former St. Agnes Medical Center in South Philadelphia are once again bustling with life, ever since the free Unity Clinic for the uninsured opened on June 27, 2006. The medical center, part of Mercy Health System, has been transitioned into what is now the St. Agnes Continuing Care Center to serve residents in the Philadelphia, south Jersey and Delaware regions. The new Unity Clinic, for which Mercy Health System donated the space, is one way that the local community continues to be served at this location (1900 S. Broad St.).

The Augustinian Defenders of the Rights of the Poor (ADROP) initiated Unity Clinic as one of its service projects, with the help of the College of Nursing. ADROP is administered by the Province of St. Thomas of Villanova and directed by the Rev. John E. Deegan, O.S.A., former Prior Provincial. Father Deegan is now director of the Province's Justice and Peace Program and executive director of ADROP. The clinic is designed to assist the area's marginalized patients and function as a clinical site for Villanova Nursing students and faculty practice.

For health-care expertise, Father Deegan reached out to M. Louise Fitzpatrick, Ed.D., R.N., FAAN, Connelly Endowed Dean and Professor. She worked with an alumna and adjunct faculty member, Stacy Grant Hohenleitner '93 M.S.N., R.N., CNA, NHA, to set the framework of the clinic and meet the many demands of such a project. Donna L. Torrisi '72 B.S.N., M.S.N., FNP provided advice.

ADROP is "dedicated to advocacy for and collaboration with the poor and those who have no voice." Other ADROP activities include a legal clinic and programs to teach English as a Second Language, bring music and art into selected schools, and involve students with the homebound elderly.

The College has been instrumental in developing and organizing the clinic and recruiting volunteer staff members, among them nurse practitioner Judy Hamilton '72 B.S.N., '82 M.S.N. Beyond the major goal of providing ser-

vice, the College's objective extends to establishing and developing the site for faculty practice and student education. To this end, the College has placed a Nurse Practitioner (NP) adjunct faculty member, Joan LaJoie '04 M.S.N., CRNP, as its continuing presence at Unity Clinic. Currently, the clinic operates one evening a week. As it grows and sources of support are forthcoming, the clinic hopes to expand its hours and services.

The concept for the clinic was to develop it as a collaborative clinical practice model among NPs, physicians and physician assistants, but it has opened as a nurse-managed clinic. The expectation is that medical residents will soon rotate through the clinic and volunteer physicians will join the NPs and physician assistants.

Many of the patients are Indonesian and do not speak English, but many understand Mandarin. There have also been some Hispanic patients. The long-term goal is for community members to coordinate health clinic activities and volunteer as translators where needed. The health-care providers—licensed registered nurses (R.N.s), NPs, physicians and other allied health professionals—are volunteers. Many of the nurses who donate their services are Villanovans.

Volunteers help register the patients. The clinic has three exam rooms that accommodate patients with medical conditions of all kinds, including diabetes, hypertension and other primary care issues. The clinic can process blood drawn for lab studies. Currently, the clinic handles about 20 patients each night, but has the potential for many more.

The clinic initiative underscores both the commitment of the Augustinians to the poor and the service mission of Villanova, its College of Nursing and the many other institutions and organizations sponsored by the Order of St. Augustine.

If you are interested in volunteering and are an NP or R.N. with a background in adult health and licensed to practice in Pennsylvania, please contact Monica Medina at [mmedinapac@gmail.com](mailto:mmedinapac@gmail.com).



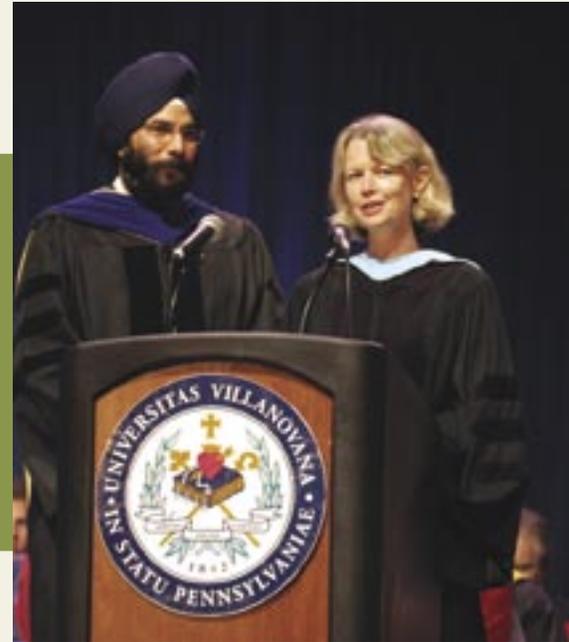
JEFF SACKS PRODUCTIONS

*Unity Clinic was one of clinical practica sites for Aileen Dinan '06 M.S.N. while an Adult Nurse Practitioner student at the College of Nursing.*

**Unity Clinic** is approved by United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania's Donor Choice Program. Donors may designate a gift to ADROP during the annual United Way campaign (the organization code is 29721). Contributions to the annual fund of the Province of St. Thomas of Villanova may also be designated for Unity Clinic ([www.augustinian.org](http://www.augustinian.org)).

# Celebrating the Inauguration of Father Donohue

College of Nursing faculty, staff and students were happy to support and be involved in the inauguration of the Rev. Peter M. Donohue, O.S.A. as the 32nd president of Villanova University. During inauguration week from September 6-10, they took part in the celebrations and ceremonies and joined Father Donohue as community volunteers.



*(Above) Catherine Todd Magel, Ed.D., R.N., BC assistant professor of Nursing, was one of the faculty representatives presenting a gift to the newly inaugurated president at the September 8 ceremony. Dr. Rominder P.S. Suri, associate professor of civil and environment engineering, is on the left.*



*(Left) M. Louise Fitzpatrick, Ed.D., R.N., FAAN, Connelly Endowed Dean and Professor, with the Rev. Peter M. Donohue, O.S.A., just prior to his inauguration*



*Saturday, September 9, found many Nursing students among the more than 1,200 Villanovans who volunteered for the community day of service. They assisted at soup kitchens and many other charitable organizations. A large contingent supported the Go! For Mito 5k Run & 1 Mile Walk at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (they're shown here on its steps). The College's volunteers—organized by sophomore Amy Burgener (holding the sign in the inset photo)—included faculty, staff and alumni, as well as members of Theta Delta Beta Chapter of Chi Eta Phi Sorority, Inc., Student Nurses Association of Pennsylvania, the Undergraduate Nursing Senate, the Graduate Nurse Network, Alpha Nu Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International, the Center for Health and Wellness Education, Greek organizations and NROTC.*



## Distinguished Lecture Focuses on Africa's AIDS Pandemic

By Ann Barrow McKenzie '86 B.S.N., '91 M.S.N., R.N.

Even after documenting genocide years ago in Africa, nothing prepared Stephen Lewis for “the appalling epicenter of the [AIDS] pandemic.” That is how he began to describe a compelling, frightening and very human crisis. Lewis, who is the United Nations secretary-general’s special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, spoke on the “Race Against Time: Finding Hope in AIDS-Ravaged Africa” for the College of Nursing’s 29th Annual Distinguished Lecture.

Addressing a captivated audience that packed the Villanova Room of Connelly Center on November 15, Lewis first illustrated the international AIDS landscape in China, India and Russia. Turning back to Africa, he described the most “soul-destroying dimension” of the last five years: the “extraordinary pervasiveness of death... you feel as if you are walking through a graveyard rather than a country.” With life expectancy reduced 10-to-15 years, many Africans are living only into their 30s— unheard of historically, he said. After visiting a pediatric ward with five small children per cot, he asked himself, “Has the world gone mad?” Every 10 minutes, he heard the wails of a mother whose baby had just died.

As Lewis spoke, “You could have heard a pin drop,” noted Lynore DeSilets, Ed.D., R.N., BC, chair of the Lectureship Committee. “He made it real. Made it human.”

Lewis passionately described the crux of the crisis as gender inequality, saying that until women had some control in the family and society, there would be no improvement. He does see hope in the new U.N. women’s agency, as well as in recent advances in affordable combination drugs. He also looks forward to a vaccine—but it is likely 10 years or more away.

What is happening to Africa’s children is the most painful aspect for Lewis. “He painted such a vivid picture... You could tell he lived it,” said graduate Nursing student Stacy Meyers, B.S.N., R.N., whose clinical practice is in maternal-child health. Africa now has millions of orphans, and many households are headed by children who

(Above) Humanitarian Stephen Lewis offered his personal story of the HIV/AIDS catastrophe in Africa, supported by startling facts.

witnessed excruciating parental death. Grandmothers, after burying their adult children, care for the grandchildren, all the while worrying, “What happens when I die?” Only 5 percent of African children with HIV/AIDS are getting treatment, he said, and then only via downsized adult regimens. He also pointed to the ethical issues surrounding the disparity between the ways African and Western countries provide treatments to prevent HIV transmission during childbirth.

It is the nurses of Africa who are holding the health-care system together, Lewis said. Not only are they caring for huge numbers of acutely ill and dying patients in resource-poor hospitals, but they are spreading their knowledge and skills in the community.

The most “negligent manifestation of the pandemic,” Lewis emphasized, “is the delinquency of the donor community” in the face of Africa’s request for resources. He called on governments to release more resources quickly. His love and hope for Africa are evident in his decades-long career as a social democrat and diplomat. In a land of palpable anguish, Lewis finds decency, music, commitment and tremendous generosity. He was also buoyed by the audience, saying “It is gratifying to see so many in the room who care and are committed to doing something about it.”

With World AIDS Day approaching on December 1, Lewis concluded with a plea. “Things are happening in the world that should not be happening,” he said, “and they require your personal and collective response. To the extent that you can do so, I beg you to do so.”



Father Donohue greets Nursing undergraduates from the Sultanate of Oman at the September 8 post-inauguration dinner and festival on Mendel Field.



Enjoying the September 6 presidential reception in the Pavilion for Villanova University faculty and staff are (from left) Diane Ellis '84 B.S.N., '92 M.S.N., R.N., clinical assistant professor of Nursing; Dean Fitzpatrick; and Kim Trout, Ph.D., R.N., assistant professor of Nursing.

# التمر يرض

**“...bless every one who taught me and contributed to my learning.  
Thank them for enriching me and caring for me.”**

—Azza Al-Nabhani '02 B.S.N., from a prayer she chanted in Arabic at a May 2002 celebration in Corr Chapel for the College's Omani nurses graduating that year

## Partnership to Continue with Omani Ministry of Health

**T**he College of Nursing is pleased to announce the continuation of its relationship as education partners with the Ministry of Health of the Sultanate of Oman.

For 12 years, nursing students have come from Oman to complete their B.S.N. and M.S.N. degrees at Villanova University's College of Nursing. M. Louise Fitzpatrick, Ed.D., R.N., FAAN, Connelly Endowed Dean and Professor, initiated the collaboration with H.E. Dr. Ali Al-Moosa, Oman's Minister of Health. Dean Fitzpatrick regularly travels to Oman to interview prospective students,

consult with ministry officials and visit with alumni.

Villanova awarded an honorary degree to Dr. Al-Moosa in 2001 for his primary leadership in developing programs that significantly reduced maternal-infant mortality in Oman. He also improved health care in his country and in that region of the Middle East.



*Dr. M. Louise Fitzpatrick, Ed.D., R.N., FAAN, Connelly Endowed Dean and Professor, and H.E. Dr. Ali Al-Moosa, Minister of Health of the Sultanate of Oman, in 1994 launched an educational partnership. Since then, more than 100 Omani nurses have earned degrees at the College of Nursing. (The Arabic word at the top means “nursing.”)*

## Parents' Weekend Brunch Highlights Student Scholars

**T**he College of Nursing held a brunch during Parents' Weekend for its undergraduate and graduate scholarship recipients and invited guests. The scholarships awarded on September 16 at the Villanova Conference Center were:

**The Robert and Frances Capone Scholarship**  
Meghan C. Murphy, senior

**The Jill Laura Creedon Scholarship for Nursing**  
Danielle Cichowic, junior

**The Eastwood Family Scholarship**  
Danielle T. Sammartino, sophomore

**Margaret S. & Jeremiah J. Enright Memorial Scholarship**  
Tiffany Lawson, junior  
Monica Clay, BSNE*Express*

**The Daniel M. and Christine A. Finnegan Endowed Nursing Scholarship in Memory of Eileen S. Lupton, Class of 2003**  
Kerri E. White, senior

**Mary Alice Holland Scholarship**  
Elizabeth Schweitzer, senior

**Jannetti Publications MedSurg Nursing Scholarship**  
Nicole Martinez, R.N.

**The Kreider Family Endowed Nursing Scholarship**  
Elizabeth A. Wray, senior

**The Eileen Shea Lupton Endowed Memorial Scholarship**  
Ann E. Donnelly, junior

**The Mother Teresa Endowed Nursing Scholarship Established by Peter and Colleen Schleider in Memory of Richard and Ellen Wright**  
Irene Cheng, sophomore

**The Mary V. O'Donnell Endowed Nursing Scholarship**  
Christine Fink, senior

**Julia B. Paparella Scholarship**  
Allison Koblitz, senior

# Students Commended at Convocation

The annual College of Nursing Convocation on May 20 recognized 102 traditional B.S.N. candidates, 64 nontraditional students who graduated in August and 21 Omani B.S.N. completion students who finished in December 2005. Also celebrated were the 55 M.S.N. graduates who graduated in December 2005 and last May.

The following awards were presented in the St. Thomas of Villanova Church:

### College of Nursing Medallion for Distinguished Academic Achievement

**Joseph Petro and Helen Yura-Petro Award for Achievement in Nursing Theory**  
Lauren Elizabeth Moran '06 B.S.N.

### College of Nursing Medallion for Distinguished Academic Achievement

Jennifer Gunberg Ross '00 B.S.N., '05 M.S.N.

### Founders Award

Lauren Goldschmidt '06 B.S.N.

### The Hazel Johnson Leadership Award

Megan O. Davenport '06 B.S.N.

### Claire M. Manfredi Graduate Nursing Leadership Award

Hilal Alrahbi '02 B.S.N., '06 M.S.N.

### H. Elaine McCauly Award for Clinical Excellence

Ashley J. Rodenbach '06 B.S.N.

### The Reverend Francis X.N. McGuire, O.S.A. Award of the Villanova University Alumni Association

Christine R. Martinenza '06 B.S.N.

### Nursing Pioneer Award (a new award from the Saint Barnabas Health Care System of West Orange, N.J.)

Kristin M. Schaffner '06 B.S.N.



The Rev. Edmund J. Dobbin, O.S.A., at the time University president (left), and Dean Fitzpatrick (center) pose with students who received special awards at Convocation last spring. They included (from second to left) Lena J. Congo '06 B.S.N.; Lauren Elizabeth Moran '06 B.S.N.; Hilal Alrahbi '02 B.S.N., '06 M.S.N.; Kimberly A. Pratt '06 M.S.N.; Kristin M. Schaffner '06 B.S.N.; Christine R. Martinenza '06 B.S.N.; Ashley J. Rodenbach '06 B.S.N.; Lauren Goldschmidt '06 B.S.N.; and Megan O. Davenport '06 B.S.N.

### Ralston Center Award for Gerontology Nursing Excellence (new in 2006)

Kimberly A. Pratt '06 M.S.N.

### Subaru Honors Award (new in 2006)

Lena J. Congo '06 B.S.N.

### Other Honors for Students

In May, **Tiffany Lawson**, now a junior, received a \$500 scholarship at Villanova University's Women of Color Scholarship Luncheon. She is the historian for the College's Theta Delta Beta Chapter of Chi Eta Phi Sorority, Inc.

In May, **Lauren Chapnick**, now a senior, was awarded a \$5,000 Promise of Nursing Regional Scholarship, administered by the Foundation of the National Student Nurses' Association. The scholarship funds—contributed by health-care organizations, by Johnson & Johnson and by other companies with an interest in nursing education—were raised at a gala sponsored by Johnson & Johnson. Ninety nursing students, including 13 from Pennsylvania, received scholarships.



Among the Nursing students honored at the September brunch were (from left) Danielle T. Sammartino, Christine Fink, Meghan C. Murphy, Kerri E. White, Elizabeth A. Wray, Ann E. Donnelly, Danielle Cichowic and Elizabeth Schweitzer.

## Confident in Her Critical Skills

The inaugural Subaru Honors Scholar can now accelerate her goal to earn a master's degree.



Now a Level I staff nurse in the Cardio-Thoracic Surgical ICU of the University of Pennsylvania Hospital, Lena Congo '06 B.S.N. (center) is grateful for the graduate study opportunity afforded to her by being named the inaugural Subaru Honors Scholar. Lee Grodsky, regional marketing manager for Subaru's Mid-Atlantic Region, made the presentation to her at Convocation on May 20. With them is Dean Fitzpatrick.

By Ann Barrow McKenzie  
'86 B.S.N., '91 M.S.N., R.N.

**A**s a brand-new nurse starting your first job, making grad school happen can be a winding road. Lena Congo '06 B.S.N., R.N. is now in the driver's seat to realize that dream of obtaining an M.S.N., thanks to being named the College of Nursing's first Subaru Honors Scholar. The Philadelphia native was awarded this honor at Convocation last May.

Subaru Honors is a new program from Subaru of America Mid-Atlantic Region.

It is aimed at supporting academic and professional growth at the leadership level of nursing. The \$5,000 scholarship, to be awarded annually to a Villanova Nursing senior, encourages rapid and seamless transition from baccalaureate to graduate education at the College, and further develop the recipient's leadership potential. The student, selected by the College, must demonstrate leadership ability through academic, clinical and community involvement.

Congo was a logical choice for the inaugural award. As an undergraduate, she was a leader in everything from Campus Ministry

and the Villanova Gospel Choir to Villanova's chapters of the Student Nurses Association of Pennsylvania and Chi Eta Phi Sorority, Inc. Her achievements brought her numerous scholarships and awards, including membership in Sigma Theta Tau International, nursing's honor society, and *Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges*.

At the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania (HUP), Congo's talent and skills qualified her to start her career as a Level I staff nurse in the Cardio-Thoracic Surgical ICU (CT-SICU)—unusual for a new graduate. But she has not lost

sight of her other activities. "While I was an undergraduate at Villanova, it was very important for me to be involved in professional nursing organizations because they promote leadership development, professional growth and networking," she explains. "I'm involved in building the newly formed Theta Delta Beta chapter of Chi Eta Phi Sorority, Inc. at Villanova by serving as president. I'm also in the process of becoming a member of the Pennsylvania Nurses Association and the American Association of Critical Care Nurses. Additionally, I am involved in the planning and implementation of community service and health awareness programs at my church in Germantown, Pa."

Starting out in critical care takes demonstrated leadership, advocacy and critical thinking,

### A Special Offer from Subaru

In appreciation of the contributions of Villanova Nursing faculty, students and alumni to their profession, Subaru of America has announced that it is pleased to extend its VIP New Vehicle Purchase Program to them. As participants, they are eligible to purchase or lease a new Subaru vehicle at Subaru dealer invoice cost. For details, visit [www.subaruhonors.com](http://www.subaruhonors.com) and click on VIP Offer.



**"This Subaru Honors Award** has given me the opportunity for my dreams to become a reality and the financial means to continue my education. I had a desire to attend graduate school but I didn't anticipate attending or even applying to graduate school until later on in my career. With this award I can begin early career planning and at a young age advance in my career and achieve my goals of becoming a leader, teacher, researcher and mentor in the nursing profession. Truly this award is evidence of the commitment that Subaru has for the nursing profession and I'm honored to be its first recipient."

— Lena Congo '06 B.S.N.

plus nursing knowledge and skill. Congo knows she is well-prepared. "Villanova helped me develop professionally and personally, giving me the confidence as a new graduate to undertake the challenges present in the intensive care area. Villanova incorporated values of love and service to mankind in our educational experience, and I will take them into the clinical area as I care for my patients and their families," she affirms.

In July, Congo passed her R.N. licensure exam, and in September started her new job at HUP. This fall, she is taking part in the Gateway to Critical Care Program, which HUP created for new graduates entering critical care areas. The 20-week program features 100 hours of classroom learning and a one-on-one

preceptor. Congo, after seeing four familiar faces at CT-SICU's orientation, noted that "It speaks highly of Villanova's educational preparation that four out of the five new grads hired on such an intense unit were from Villanova."

In January, Congo will begin the Graduate Nursing Program's Adult Nurse Practitioner track at her alma mater. She looks forward to her first class, Clinical Ethics: Theory and Practice, and is ready to balance her new professional life with going back to school. "I always had plans to go to graduate school, and Villanova played a role in my desire to continue my education. I had the opportunity to be mentored by outstanding leaders, researchers and educators who inspired me to continue my

education at the graduate level," she recalls. "Seeing the passion for nursing and the standards of clinical practice that these mentors upheld sparked my interest in pursuing my master's degree."

Building on her momentum as an undergraduate, Congo says "I continue to set new career goals as I learn all of the opportunities that are available in this profession. Taking this step toward obtaining my master's degree will help guide my decision for my future in this profession." She plans to bring others along with her: "I want to continue to develop leadership skills and become a mentor, researcher and educator, and make contributions to the profession and society by giving back to those who are underserved."

## Nurse Anesthesia Student Earns National Award

**T**ara D. Ray '06 M.S.N., R.N., of Ambler, Pa., who graduated this November from the Villanova University/Crozer-Chester Medical Center School of Nurse Anesthesia, while a senior received the 2006 Student Excellence in Education Award from the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA). Ray presented her project and was honored during the student luncheon at AANA's annual meeting, which

took place in Cleveland in August. AANA is the professional association for more than 35,000 certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) and student nurse anesthetists.

"Share your secrets—Teach!" was the title of Ray's project. She created it to inform and encourage CRNAs and related health-care professionals to become instructors and share their expertise with student nurse anesthetists.

Ray's success is hardly a surprise to faculty members. Bette Wildgust, M.S., '97 M.S.N., CRNA, clinical associate professor and program director at the School of Nurse Anesthesia, describes Ray as "highly intelligent, motivated, industrious...an excellent student in all areas." Ray will be practicing as a CRNA at Albert Einstein Medical Center in Philadelphia after her graduation.

## IBC Internship Offers a Learning Lab in Managed Care



The three juniors from the College of Nursing who interned at Independence Blue Cross (IBC) last summer were Takira Johnson (front, right), Nadine Ramadan (back, second from right) and Nicole Roskowski (back, third from right). IBC representatives joining them for the photo are Joseph A. Frick, president and CEO (back, fifth from left), and Stephen P. Fera, vice president of IBC's social mission programs (back, sixth from left).

**T**hree College of Nursing students joined 11 other students from four programs in Philadelphia to participate in the summer internship at Independence Blue Cross (IBC).

As Southeastern Pennsylvania's largest health insurer, IBC offered the students a behind-the-scenes look at how managed health care works. The internship uses IBC as a real-world learning laboratory to bridge the gap between the clinical material taught in the classroom and the actual practice of health administration in a business and clinical setting. Now in its second year, the program has been expanded to include internships at local health-care clinics supported by IBC. The internship is a companion initiative to the IBC Nurse Scholars Program.

Nicole Roskowski, a junior at the College, noted that "The experience we interns had was very valuable, and it's even more valuable when we can share them. The challenges in health care are difficult to solve individually. I will discuss and further examine the challenges and questions I had during my internship with my professors and classmates to help us work towards a solution."



*Katherine “Katie” Fallon ’01 B.S.N., R.N. (left) and Ellen Tracy ’81 B.S.N., ’97 M.S.N., R.N. were honored by the Villanova University Alumni Association last June. The Rev. Peter M. Donohue, O.S.A. presented them with alumni medals.*

In 2002, the College honored Tracy with the Medallion for Clinical Excellence in Nursing Practice.

### **An Advocate for Refugee Health in Darfur**

**T**he VUAA awards its Young Alumni Medal to a recent alumnus/a who has reached a significant level of achievement in his or her profession and who is a model of the quality and caliber of today’s Villanova student. The 2006 recipient, Katherine “Katie” Fallon ’01 B.S.N., R.N., a staff nurse at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), has already had an impact on international health care (see the Spring 2005 *Villanova Nursing*).

As a public health educator in a challenging environment and as a fierce advocate for the most vulnerable people in the world, Fallon is a worthy recipient of this award. In 2004-05, while based in Sudan’s western region of Darfur, she worked for six months with refugees through the American Refugee Committee (ARC), an international humanitarian organization. She was supported by an MGH Durant Fellowship for Refugee Medicine—one of the first nurses to receive this honor.

In Darfur, Fallon took part in pediatric polio vaccinations and created and coordinated a mobile clinic, along with its staff and supplies. She also taught local nurses vital skills. Based on her observations at clinic sites in remote villages, Fallon developed a sustainable health promotion program for hundreds of children. Through play and song, she taught them the basics of self-care and supplied them with essentials such as toothbrushes. Selfless in her service, she fought desperate conditions to give power to the powerless and transform their future by engaging them in their own health care.

## **Top Alumni Awards Honor Two Nurses**

*By Ann Barrow McKenzie ’86 B.S.N., ’91 M.S.N., R.N.*

At the Vigil Mass and Alumni Awards Ceremony, two College of Nursing alumnae received prestigious awards from the Villanova University Alumni Association (VUAA). The ceremony took place in the St. Thomas of Villanova Church on June 10, during Alumni Reunion Weekend 2006.

### **A Leader in Pediatric Oncology Nursing**

**E**llen Tracy ’81 B.S.N., ’97 M.S.N., R.N., director of the Oncology Program at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, received a St. Thomas of Villanova Alumni Medal, the highest honor bestowed by the VUAA. The award honors alumni who best symbolize the spirit and legacy of Villanova’s patron saint. Those honored have achieved a level of distinction within their professions and have brought extraordinary benefit to the University and to their communities.

Tracy was recognized for her outstanding career and leadership in oncology nursing

and for the countless lives she has touched. Her master’s degree research—on minimizing the adverse effects of chemotherapy in pediatric cancer patients—sparked related research in other pediatric oncology centers, earning her national recognition and wide respect in the field.

Among her many other accomplishments, Tracy has supervised the expansion and renovation of the oncology unit at the children’s hospital and implemented new clinical information system technologies. She has developed stress management programs and psychosocial support groups for families and oncology staff members. In addition, she has facilitated strong collaborative relationships among physicians, staff and patients’ families.

## Dedication and Energy Take Wing

On a flight path that began in pharmaceutical sales, Elyse M. Braxton '06 B.S.N., R.N. in mid-career changed course to soar into med-surg military nursing.

By Ann Barrow McKenzie '86 B.S.N., '91 M.S.N., R.N.

**M**otivated doesn't begin to describe Navy Nurse Corps Ens. Elyse M. Braxton '06 B.S.N., R.N. Braxton, a graduate of the College of Nursing's BSN-Express program, holds another bachelor's degree—in finance and international business from Elizabethtown College. In the midst of her sales and marketing career in the pharmaceutical industry, she began to have what she called "military urges." However, at age 36, she thought she might be too old to sign up for the service, so she joined the USO in the summer of 2002. She could not have foreseen where this decision would take her.



*In August, Navy Nurse Corps Ens. Elyse M. Braxton '06 B.S.N., R.N. received her gold bars from her fellow squadron officers at the Willow Grove naval air station near her hometown of Philadelphia.*

It all began at a fundraiser, when Braxton met an Air Force chief master sergeant. Their conversation led her to take a tour of a military base and then to interview with recruiters. In April 2003, the Philadelphia native enlisted in the Navy Reserve.

Braxton loves anything related to flying and, as a risk-taker herself, she appreciates the risks taken by naval aviators. She was assigned as an aviation maintenance administrationman

with Fleet Logistics Support Squadron VR-52. The squadron is based at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Willow Grove, north of her hometown of Philadelphia. As a petty officer 3rd class, Braxton took seven volunteer vacations in Germany to provide for sick and injured American troops. She set a goal of earning a direct commission to go on active duty in an armed forces nurse corps. Why?

"It was on my second trip to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany for Christmas 2003 that I was inspired to become a nurse," explains Braxton. "Two months earlier, I served as the medical yeoman in boot camp, and my shipmates asked if I was nurse. No, the idea hadn't even crossed my mind. Yet one December night, an Army nurse asked if I had ever considered nursing because of my love for the troops. That is when the revelation to become a nurse hit me. I found my calling,

**"...one December night, an Army nurse asked if I had ever considered nursing because of my love for the troops. That is when the revelation to become a nurse hit me."**

and I've never looked back."

Supported by the Montgomery G.I. Bill-Selected Reserve, Braxton returned to school. She chose Villanova and the College's BSN-Express program because of the College's mission statement. "'We are created in God's image' and that 'nursing is a healing ministry' are what touched my heart most," Braxton says. "The size of the program and the proximity to home were nice features, too. If I had to do it all over again, I'd come back to Villanova. You're a name, not a number here."

During the intense 14-month BSN-Express program, Braxton continued to become involved on many fronts while earning a spot on the Dean's List and membership in Sigma Theta Tau International, nursing's honor society. She adds, "I've supplemented my student experience by joining Chi Eta Phi, a minority

nursing sorority, and by traveling to Aomori for the Nursing in Japan experience."

At the BSN-Express program completion ceremony on July 31, Braxton stood tall in front of her classmates, faculty and family as she was sworn in as an officer in the Navy Nurse Corps. She earned not only her commission as an ensign but a standing ovation from her classmates. In August, she returned to her airwing in Willow Grove to have her bars pinned on her uniform in front of the sailors and officers with whom she had started her naval career.

Already, Braxton's service and achievements in her new career have been remarkable. She graduated with the highest honor from boot camp. She was recognized for her efforts helping Hurricane Katrina evacuees. Coaching aquatics for Special Olympics and volunteering at the Landstuhl Regional

Medical Center in Germany led to a Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal. Braxton earned her Enlisted Aviation Warfare Specialist wings, the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, a citation from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and the Pennsylvania Medal of Honor for her military service. "It's just one big adventure, in the uniform of the day, for me," she says.

After passing her nursing licensure exam in September, Braxton reported to Officer Indoctrination School in Newport, R.I., for five weeks. She then moved on to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., for a three-year tour of duty. She had been there before, having completed her leadership rotation at this well-known medical facility.

Braxton's latest goal is to become an efficient and effective military nurse. "I am



*(Above) During her commissioning as a Navy nurse, Braxton swears to "...support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies." Navy Capt. (Select) Robert H. Powers, who administered the oath, was her first commanding officer.*



*(Left) Braxton shares a lighter moment with Patricia K. Bradley, Ph.D., R.N., assistant professor of Nursing. Last April, Braxton became a charter member of the College's Theta Delta Beta Chapter of Chi Eta Phi Sorority, Inc.*

leaning towards an operational billet within the Navy, allowing me to work on a ship or as a flight nurse. Critical care is the usual avenue for these positions," she notes. "I will start out in med-surg, which will give me a solid nursing foundation. I would eventually like to get my M.S.N.," she states.

She knows she will be integrating her previous career with her new one. "Sales and nursing are a lot alike, as you're trying to 'sell' people on new ideas or behaviors, handle objections and probe for more information to answer your questions," Braxton says. "Communication is the key to success in both careers."

In addition to relying on her faith, Braxton notes that the troops she encounters have

made a big difference in her life. "They've been my biggest inspiration to do well in the Navy, in school and as a future nurse," she explains. She will miss Villanova, saying "I'm truly humbled to have been chosen to share my adventures with my Villanova Nursing family."

As she speeds along professionally, Braxton has set some personal and fun goals as well: do more salsa dancing, learn to knit and improve her fluency in Spanish. She also wants to connect with Special Olympics in Maryland to resume volunteering. Braxton advises others to "follow your heart, follow your goals and take calculated risks. The bottom line is to never give up on your goals, no matter how long it takes you. The rewards are that much sweeter."

## News from Our Graduates

### 1950s

**Rosalie Ghilardi Mirenda '59 B.S.N., D.N.Sc., R.N.**, president of Neumann College in Aston, Pa., in April received the Widener University Alumni Association's Outstanding Alumni Award.

### 1960s

**Patricia D'Alonzo Johnson '64 B.S.N., R.N.** was given the 2005 Outstanding Trustee of the Year Award by the Association of California Healthcare Districts. She has served on the Sierra Kings District Hospital board for more than 14 years and also established a health care interpreters program at Reedley College. **Susan Chianese Slaninka '69 B.S.N., Ed.D., R.N.** was granted professor emerita status at West Chester University. She recently retired as professor of nursing and assistant chairperson of the nursing department there, but serves as an adjunct faculty member at Villanova's College of Nursing.

### 1970s

**Gloria J. McNeal '70 B.S.N., Ph.D., APRN,BC, FAAN** in November was inducted as a Fellow into the American Academy of Nursing. She is an associate professor and assistant dean of the School of Nursing at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. The New Jersey State Nurses Association honored Dr. McNeal with its C.A.R.E. Award for Excellence in Education, and the Association of Black Nursing Faculty in Higher Education presented her with a Johnella Banks Award. The Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey awarded her a \$250,000 grant to establish a nurse-faculty managed mobile health-care project. For Newark Mayor Cory Booker's transition team, Dr. McNeal was appointed chair of the Senior Well-Being Issues Committee. **Joanne Gurney '71 B.S.N., '88 M.S.N., R.N.** in September became the administrative director of perioperative services for Fox Chase Cancer Center in Philadelphia. **Maryann Sheridan '72 B.S.N.** graduated from Virginia Tech in 1997 with an M.S. in Family and Child Development and Marriage and Family Therapy. In Oakton, Va., she is in private practice as a licensed marriage and family therapist with a specialty in couples and family relationships, trauma recovery and spiritual healing. **Kathleen Mulcahey '73 B.S.N., '86 M.S.N., R.N., CNAA** turned what she termed a "catastrophic disability" into a

positive by starting her own small business in 2004. Called RN in the House Tutoring Services, her business facilitates NCLEX success for candidates who have failed on multiple attempts at the licensure exam. She is celebrating a 100 per cent success rate. **Linda Carrick '75 B.S.N., Ph.D., R.N., CNAA** in August joined the New Jersey-based Kennedy Health System as vice president for patient care services/chief nursing officer. Dr. Carrick has more than 25 years of nursing experience in academic and leadership positions. Over the past six years, she has been both associate director of healthcare/nursing administration and health leadership at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School, and a healthcare consultant for Genesis HealthCare. At Penn, she is a Wharton J&J Nurse Executive Fellow and a faculty mentor for the 2006-07 National Maternal-Child Health Nursing Leadership Academy. At the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, she served for 19 years in progressively responsible nursing leadership roles, and at Mercy Health System in Scranton, Pa., she was executive vice president. **Regina Miecznikowski Phillips '76 B.S.N., Ph.D., R.N.** is an associate professor of nursing at Villa Julie College in Stevenson, Md. She graduated in August with a doctorate in public and community health from the University of Maryland. **Angela Coladonato '77 B.S.N., M.S.N., R.N.** in September became the senior nurse executive of The Chester County Hospital in West Chester, Pa. **Marcy E. Dienno '79 B.S.N., R.N.** is a perioperative nurse at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. She is certified as an operating room nurse and in plastic surgery nursing. A frequent speaker at conferences in this area and abroad, Dienno has received numerous grants and awards.

### 1980s

**Elizabeth A. Loeper '80 B.S.N., '96 M.S.N., R.N.** last April received the Excellence in Nursing Award from Delta Tau Chapter-at-Large, Sigma Theta Tau International, at Immaculata University. She is a lecturer at Eastern University's department of nursing in St. Davids, Pa. **Donna Zimmario Bliss '81 B.S.N., Ph.D., R.N., FAAN, FGSA** is a co-author of the article "Prevalence and Correlates of Perineal Dermatitis in Nursing Home Residents" in the July/August *Nursing Research* 55 (4) 243-251. Dr. Bliss is Professor of Long-Term Care of Elders at the University of Minnesota's School of Nursing. **Michele Fiore '81 B.S.N., R.N.** in September was promoted to director of

**Alice Vautier '83 M.S.N., Ed.D., R.N.** retired in July as associate administrator for patient services and chief nursing officer at Emory Healthcare in Atlanta. A profile in the April *Pulse*, a publication of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, noted how she helped to



create an eight-week refresher course for licensed nurses who had been out of hospital nursing for more than four years. Her many other successful initiatives to address staff shortages included a nurse residency program in 12 specialties. Dr. Vautier will teach online courses for the University of Texas Medical Branch's nursing administration graduate program.

hospice, palliative care and private services for New Jersey's Moorestown Visiting Nurses & Hospice, where she was instrumental in developing the Living Life program. She joined the agency in 2005 as a clinical team manager. **Susan Crowe Foley '81 B.S.N., R.N.** is a pediatric operating room nurse in Milwaukee at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin. She was recently honored with the hospital's Nurse Excellence Award. **Helen J. Streubert Speziale '83 M.S.N., Ed.D., R.N.** in September was appointed as College Misericordia's first associate vice president of Academic Affairs. At the Dallas, Pa., college, she will oversee the Writing Center, Alternative Learners Program, Assistive Technology Research Institute, Office of Sponsored Research, Service Leadership Center, Circle of Friends, Learning Resource Center, and internship and international programs of the Insalaco Center for Career Development. Dr. Speziale joined the faculty in 1992 as a professor of nursing and chairwoman of the nursing department. She has served in various capacities since then, including chairing the Health Science Division and as director of national programs. **Pamela Zurkowski Cacchione '84 B.S.N., Ph.D., R.N., CS GNP** is an associate professor and coordinator of Saint Louis University's Master's in Gerontological Nursing Program at the School of Nursing in the Doisy College of Health Sciences. In addition to her academic and clinical activities, Dr. Zurkowski is researching the impact of a nursing intervention program on the quality of life of nursing home residents with vision or hearing loss. Her work is supported by a \$1.47 million grant from the National Institute of Nursing Research. **Michele Campbell '84 B.S.N., '90 M.S.N., R.N.** is vice president of patient care services at Lancaster (Pa.) General's Women and Babies Hospital. She is the former executive director

of the Pennsylvania State Nurses Association. **Teresa Murphy '84 B.S.N., R.N.** is the senior director of patient care services at Graduate Hospital in Philadelphia. **Julia Henderson '84 M.S.N., R.N., CSN** since 1995 has been a certified school nurse with the Camden City Board of Education. The third publication she authored is Chapter 37: Seizure Disorders in the *Textbook of School Nursing* (2006, F.A. Davis Publishing, edited by Janice Selekman, D.N.Sc.). Publication was sponsored by the National Association of School Nurses. **Maggie Cunningham Swietlik '86 B.S.N., M.S.N., R.N., CRNP** directs the Pediatric Research Consortium (PeRC), a Practice-Based Research Network at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). She is an alumni ambassador at CHOP for Villanova's College of Nursing.

### 1990s

**Mary McCormick '90 B.S.N., '98 M.S.N., R.N.** in August was promoted to emergency department nurse manager at Kennedy Health System's Washington Township Campus in New Jersey. She had served as interim manager. **Mary Thomas '92 B.S.N., R.N.** was honored in May with the Phoenixville (Pa.) Hospital 2006 Patient Choice Award. The second employee to win this award, Thomas was chosen based on a patient's description of how she had helped him in The Cancer Center. **Janice Delgiorno '96 B.S.N., R.N.** is a clinical nurse specialist in trauma critical care at the University of Maryland Medical Center's R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center in Baltimore. **Jennifer Frey Specht '98 B.S.N., M.S.N., R.N.** in May earned her master's degree in nursing education from DeSales University, where she is a nursing instructor teaching foundation courses in the traditional and accelerated programs. She also teaches the senior integrating seminar and medical-surgical clinical rotations.

## 2000s

**Catherine Loper McDonald '00 B.S.N., R.N.** published the article "Self-Mutilation in Adolescents" in *The Journal of School Nursing*, 22 (4), 193-200. **Eileen Farley '02 M.S.N., R.N., CNA, BC** is the new director of nursing at Bryn Mawr Rehab Hospital. The hospital in Malvern, Pa., is part of the Main Line Health System. Farley has many years of experience in nursing management and is a clinical associate for Villanova's College of Nursing, precepting students in the Health Care Administration track. She was nominated for the Florence Nightingale Achievement Awards for Nursing Administration in 1997, 2005 and 2006. **Stephanie Beamer '04 B.S.N., M.S.N., R.N., CRNP** earned her master's degree in women's health nursing from the University of Nebraska Medical Center's College of Nursing. She passed her nurse practitioner certification exam in September. **Colleen Gruffi '05 B.S.N., R.N.** this fall started her graduate studies in the Pediatric Nurse Practitioner program at New York University's College of Nursing. **Jenna Viani '06 B.S.N.** in July won a gold medal in the Empire State Games' open division-women's basketball. She played on the Hudson Valley, N.Y., team that defeated the New York City team, 77-57. At the tournament, she and her sister Julianne

played for their father and coach, Alan Viani. A Poughkeepsie native, she was a guard on the Villanova women's basketball team (see the Fall 2003 *Villanova Nursing*).

## In Memoriam: Former Faculty

**Kathy Lee Folk, M.S.N., R.N.** of Collegeville, Pa., died on May 20. Folk, who taught in the College of Nursing more than 20 years ago, remained a valued friend and colleague of many people. She received her diploma in nursing from The Bryn Mawr Hospital School of Nursing in 1961 and her B.S.N. (1971) and M.S.N. (1978) from the University of Pennsylvania. During her career, Folk held faculty positions at other area nursing programs, including those at Temple, Thomas Jefferson and Hahnemann universities and at Chestnut Hill Hospital.

Dedicated to community service, Folk participated in health screenings in the Philadelphia area, as well as Special Olympics. A two-time kidney transplant recipient, she was a member of the Public Education Committee of the National Kidney Foundation of Delaware Valley and received its volunteer service award in 1995. Her public service continued even after a leg was amputated due to cancer in 2000. Folk's spirit and sense of humor will be missed.

## In Memoriam: Alumni

**Cleo Bloom Levinsky '75 B.S.N.,** of Philadelphia, died on February 13.

## Greetings from the Alumni President

Dear Fellow Alumni:

My thanks to the many of you who responded to the Nursing Alumni Society (NAS) membership drive earlier this year. It's never too late to join! Please contact me at [HannanMM@aol.com](mailto:HannanMM@aol.com) if you are interested. Because of your generous contributions, we will be able to continue to support undergraduate and graduate students, the College of Nursing and Villanova University. For those who provided e-mail addresses, you will be receiving e-mail updates from the NAS board about upcoming events and opportunities to reconnect with the College. This year, we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the inception of our association.

Villanova nurses gathered at an alumni reception prior to the annual Distinguished Lecture in Nursing on November 15. This year, Stephen Lewis spoke on the "Race Against Time: Finding Hope in AIDS-Ravaged Africa." Lewis is the U.N. secretary-general's special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa (see page 23).

In an environment where nurses are called upon to support so many organizations, I sincerely thank you for your support of the Nursing Alumni Society.

My best wishes to all,



Margaret M. Hannan '84 B.S.N., M.S., R.N.  
President, Nursing Alumni Society

## Call for Nominations to the Nursing Alumni Society — and Send Us Your News!

To nominate yourself for the following positions in the Nursing Alumni Society, please complete this form and mail for receipt by **February 8, 2007**.

### I wish to be nominated for:

- President
- Treasurer
- Board member

Use this form as well to send us your news for the next *Villanova Nursing* magazine and to receive future College of Nursing e-mail newsletters.

### Mail this form to:

Nursing Alumni Society  
College of Nursing  
800 Lancaster Avenue  
Villanova University  
Villanova, PA 19085-1690

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# In Gear for Bike Safety

Two students round up fun activities to guide children on a safer course.

By Ann Barrow McKenzie '86 B.S.N., '91 M.S.N., R.N.

**Bicycling is** the leading cause of recreational sports injuries treated in hospital emergency departments. This popular form of exercise can pose a health risk for the estimated 30 million American children (ages 5-14) who ride bikes. Last summer, to steer children away from becoming part of those injury statistics, two College of Nursing students planned a bike rodeo.

Susan Holmes '06 B.S.N., R.N. and Seth Robbins '06 B.S.N. undertook the bike rodeo as their community health project while students in the College of Nursing's *BSNExpress* program. They offered the bike rodeo as a community event on August 18 at the North Light Community Center in Manayunk, Pa. Local print and television media covered the event.

Holmes is a former police officer in West Philadelphia and youth social worker, and Robbins is a marketing communications specialist. They drew from their backgrounds, combined with their nursing health promotion knowledge and skills, to develop a bike safety program. They also authored a comprehensive manual for the North Light staff.

Bike rodeos teach safe bicycling skills through fast-paced, fun driving courses that simulate actual road situations. Their rodeo featured

10-to-15-minute stations, plus games and activities to reinforce the lesson plans. They focused on such skills as balance, control, steering and braking. Holmes and Robbins hope future rodeos will include an emphasis on how bike helmets are effective in preventing serious brain injuries. Most children do not regularly wear a helmet.

Holmes says she is "very much interested in working in the operating room." She wants to continue to volunteer for organizations such as the American Red Cross and Operation Smile.

Robbins is now a nurse in the Neurotrauma Surgical ICU at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. He plans to earn a master's degree in advanced practice nursing, and possibly continue on for a doctorate, with the hope of teaching. Robbins echoes Holmes' community service orientation: "I'm extremely proud to be a nurse, to provide a real and meaningful service to individuals and communities with needs," he says.

Earlier last summer, Holmes and Robbins had worked with Debbie Wimmer, M.S.N., R.N., P.N.P., assistant professor of Nursing and a pediatric nurse practitioner, to assess the health needs of the children at North Light. Their efforts led to bike safety promotion and other teaching there, plus the bike rodeo and plans to expand it in the future. "Our class was able to teach the North Light kids lessons ranging from cardiovascular wellness to environmental awareness," they summed up.

For more than 60 years, North Light has provided offerings from arts and recreation programs to employment services and emergency support. In 2004, the North Light Villanova Alliance (NOVAL) was established. This innovative partnership couples Villanova University's wide range of resources with the needs of this direct service community center.

"Working with North Light helped us realize the potential nurses have in positively affecting the community," Robbins and Holmes stated. "The opportunities are abundant for nurses."

(Left) Susan Holmes '06 B.S.N., R.N. demonstrates bicycle safety.



Seth Robbins '06 B.S.N. and his son, Ezra, always wear their helmets when riding their bikes.



## Be a Spokes-person for Bike Safety

Nurses can have a positive impact on bike safety for children, according to Susan Holmes '06 B.S.N., R.N. and Seth Robbins '06 B.S.N. They outline several ways nurses can help:

- During primary care visits, as you talk with children and their parents, encourage the use of bike helmets.
  - Act as role models for children by wearing a properly fitted helmet, using safety skills and regularly maintaining your bike.
  - Form partnerships with schools, businesses, community centers and organizations, and law enforcement.
    - Serve as community advocates for new or stronger bicycle helmet legislation and enforcement.
- Currently 21 states have bicycle helmet laws.





## Moving into the Future: Our Building Takes Shape

The College of Nursing is pleased to announce that our new home will be located near the main gate on Villanova University's central campus. The University's Board of Trustees gave final approval to the plans on December 12. Radnor Township has approved the overall plan.

During the design phase, Nursing representatives continue to meet with Villanova's Facilities Management staff; the architect, Jonathan M. Fishman of Richter Cornbrooks Gribble (RCG) Inc.; and representatives from the construction management firm Torcon Inc.

The groundbreaking ceremony at the construction site is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, April 10, at noon.

Through Villanova Nursing, e-mails and our Web site ([www.villanova.edu/nursing](http://www.villanova.edu/nursing)), we will communicate building updates and opportunities for you to support this great milestone in your College's history.

(Above) Architect Jonathan M. Fishman, AIA, who is RCG Inc.'s principal in charge, describes the model of the new College of Nursing building to (from left) John DeFazio, project executive, Torcon Inc.; John Cacciola, P.E., Villanova University's director of engineering and construction; George Kourides, Torcon's director of technical services; Colleen Avery, a Nursing sophomore and Presidential Scholar; Rose O'Driscoll '68 B.S.N., M.S.N., R.N., Nursing's assistant dean for administration; Mario H. Boiardi, FAIA, principal designer, RCG Inc.; M. Louise Fitzpatrick, Ed.D., R.N., FAAN, Connelly Endowed Dean and Professor; Lesley Perry, Ph.D., R.N., associate dean of Nursing; Marycarol McGovern '68 B.S.N., '86 M.S.N., Ph.D., R.N., assistant professor of Nursing; Marilou Smith, project manager, Villanova; and the Rev. Peter M. Donohue, O.S.A., University president.

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