

Nurses' Lounge

A Meeting Place for News & Views

Spring 2004

Issue One



Every Nurse is a Magnet Champion! How to get involved...

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- ★ Data Collection - Keep meeting minutes and document changes as they are made on your unit.
- ★ Communicate and Educate - Spread the word about the MAGNET program with enthusiasm to other departments, committees, patients, and families. Discuss standards and "Best Practice" with fellow nursing professionals in various specialty areas.
- ★ Participate in research and other scientific inquiry.
- ★ Celebrate Successes as they occur - Capture these in photos, scrapbooks, poster presentations, etc. and share with others.
- ★ Support your fellow professional nurse as he/she continues his/her educational career.
- ★ Celebrate the diversity of the employees of the VAPHS.
- ★ Assist during the site visit—make a presentation, participate in the interview.

WELCOME...

to the first issue of *Nurses' Lounge, A Meeting Place for News & Views*. We are proud to present it and hope you will find it interesting. This will be an avenue for you to express yourself. Each issue will keep you up-to-date on the latest happenings at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System. This newsletter will be published quarterly. Comments and suggestions are encouraged.

An Interview with...

Ira J. Richmond, RN, MS, CS, CNAA

Associate Director for Patient Care Services

by Janet Rattay, VAPHS Volunteer

Finding one's career can sometimes be quite a challenge. You may start out with a dream and find out later that something else suits you better. What road you choose to take in life charts your course. You may be blessed with multiple talents, which are yours for the taking. Ira J. Richmond certainly did take the road of her dreams and it has made all the difference in her life and those whose lives she touches.

A unique name, Ira Jo, (Could her parents have wished for a boy?) and unique accent (from Tennessee) make Ira J. Richmond an interesting person at first meeting. Her Southern hospitality shines through.

The military and veterans administration are no strangers to Richmond. Her father was in the Army and also worked in the VA as a nursing assistant. Perhaps he was instrumental in being her guiding star or maybe "it was all in the genes."

Richmond worked in the private sector as a staff nurse for one year. In 1975 she joined the Department of Veterans Affairs in Memphis, Tennessee. Thus began her life's work.

Having the opportunity to be mobile, she set about to be the best that she could be. She stated, "If you are mobile, you can gain additional experience. You can broaden your experience from small VAs to large VAs. There are many choices." Texas and Washington were her duty stations for a while, as she worked for the Army Reserve Nurse Corp.

After starting out with an associate degree, she went back to school. Since the VA wasn't sponsoring benefits as they do today, she paid for herself – working full-time, and thus beginning the evolution from staff nurse to nursing instructor to clinical specialist to head nurse to assistant chief nurse to Associate Director for Patient Care Services.

In 2002 Richmond joined the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System. Among her many duties are the overall responsibility for the full clinical, administrative, and ancillary functions of the Patient Care Service Line, including its component programs: nursing, recreation, and voluntary.

A typical day starts at 7:15 a.m. with the morning report teleconference from all three VA divisions regarding the last 24 hours of activity. Next, a larger report is given with the Nursing Director and stakeholders of the hospital, and the activity is viewed as an organization. There are appointments, meetings with staff, service lines, projects, and more to fill the day. Richmond does not leave for the day, sometimes into the evening, until all three empty. After all, tomorrow is another day, and the baskets will be filled again.

Richmond also works as a coach with staff within VAs across the country, helping them to develop their leadership strategies. "You keep learning by sharing thoughts and issues," she said.

The up and coming Journey to Magnet Accreditation at the VAPHS has everyone excited. Richmond is no exception. She speaks highly of her staff. She feels the Magnet program will create a positive environment about nurses doing their best. She feels Magnet Status will give the nursing staff the recognition they rightly deserve. "We have goals and objectives," she expressed. "We learn to be good stewards, providing the best care possible, and also finding ways to be creative with taxpayers' money. There are many opportunities within nursing. The rewards are hundred-fold."

In closing, Richmond declared, "Veterans deserve the very best. They proudly served, now we proudly serve them."



"We learn to be good stewards, providing the best care possible, and also finding ways to be creative with taxpayers' money."



National Nurses Week Awards and Recognition

On Tuesday, May 4, an Awards and Recognition Ceremony was held in the Highland Drive Auditorium in honor of National Nurses Week. Salutations were made by Pat Nealon, Acting Associate Director, and Dr. Rajiv Jain, Chief of Staff. The awards were presented by Ira Richmond, Associate Director of Patient Care Services.

The following nurses received awards:

Hands and Heart 2003

Barbara Hester, RN - UD
Kathleen Moore, LPN - HJH
Nancy Kennedy, LPN - HD

Cameos of Caring

Margaret Connolly, RN - UD
Jane McClelland, RN - HD
Mary Lou Bossio, CRNP - UD
Vicki Suchar, RN - HJH

Pennsylvania State Nightingale Award

Julie Robotham, LPN

A **Special Tribute** was made to Frank Santucci, RN, for contributing over 40 years of service to the Highland Drive Division.

Secretary's Award for Excellence in Nursing

Staff Nurse Category: **Julianne Smith**, RN - HD
Non-Staff Nurse Category: **Patricia Davies**, RN - UD
LPN Category: **Donna Harris**, LPN - UD
NA Category: **Robert Cottingham**, NA - HD

Chosen and Called



*Chosen and called
You light the way
Minister to the sick
Day after day
Your flame burns bright
Such a wondrous sight
Angels without wings
Your profession doth bring
Hope to the living
You just keep on giving
You shine
So divine
Nurse!*



Slogan Winner —
Lori Cianelli-Heasley



Journey to Magn

by Janet Rattay, VAPHS Volunteer and She

Approximately eight months ago, it was suggested that the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System consider gaining certification for nursing excellence. It was decided that striving for Magnet status would be in the best interests of the VAPHS. A small committee, which included representatives from each service line, was formed to begin the long journey to reaching Magnet certification.

The complete history and explanation of the Magnet Recognition Program can be found in the "Magnet Recognition Program, Recognizing Excellence in Nursing Service – Health Care Organization Instructions and Application Process Manual," compiled by the ANCC. The Magnet Recognition Program was established in 1993. It is the highest level of recognition that the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) can grant to organized nursing services in the national and international health care communities.

The ANCC was established as a separately incorporated center through which the American Nurses Association (ANA) could offer credentialing programs and services.

The Magnet Accreditation program began to be developed in 1983 when the ANCC completed a study at 41 hospitals. The study looked at the nurse practice and patient care environments that were the most successful in attracting and retaining well-qualified nurses who promoted quality patient care through providing excellence in nursing services. These hospitals became known as "magnet" hospitals, serving as "magnets" to attract and retain nurses who experienced a high degree of professional and personal satisfaction through their practice.

The Magnet Accreditation program was established to further the nursing profession's commitment to the American public by ensuring a high quality of nursing care at each of its

designated hospitals. To achieve Magnet status, a hospital must fulfill a number of strict criteria based upon the practice of skilled bedside patient care and continuing nursing education. This program is the only national system for accreditation and approval of continuing education in nursing and thereby supports a philosophy of continued competency in nursing practice.

The primary goals of the Magnet Recognition Program are to:

- identify excellence in the delivery of nursing services to patients/residents/clients;
- promote quality in a milieu that supports professional practice; and
- provide a mechanism for the dissemination of "best practices" in nursing services.

Magnet status is awarded for four years (but can be revoked). Magnet organizations participate in annual surveys that are designed to ensure continued compliance with Magnet Recognition Program Standards.

In the past eight months, work has begun at the VAPHS to become Magnet certified. The committee that was formed has doubled in size.

It usually takes organizations two years from the time they apply to be awarded Magnet Recognition. The VAPHS has not yet submitted the application, but is getting ready to. The target date to receive Magnet status is October 2006.

The application process to becoming a Magnet organization will be a rigorous journey filled with adventure, determination, hard work, and courage. In the desired end, the rewards will be great.

In an effort to keep all nursing staff involved in the exciting journey, motivational Magnet bulletin board posters and flyers will be distributed throughout each division.



**Magnet Changes
Attitudes with...**

**Guidance
Communication
Culture
Involvement**



Magnet Values

**Respect
Teamwork
Integrity
Pride
Mentoring
Nurturing
Empowerment**

Benefits of receiving Magnet recognition may include:

- ★ Publication and use in marketing strategies to increase utilization by health care consumers and health care networks
- ★ Enhanced recruitment and retention of highly qualified professional nurses
- ★ Increased stability in the workforce (which decreases costs)
- ★ The creation of an environment which is efficiently structured, with a collaborative, influential nurse administrator, using unit-based problem-solving and decision-making processes which promote autonomy at the bedside

and more...!

The characteristics that seem to distinguish "Magnet" organizations from others became known as the "Forces of Magnetism." They are:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| ★ Quality of Nursing Leadership | ★ Consultation and Resources |
| ★ Organizational Structure | ★ Autonomy |
| ★ Management Style | ★ Community and the Hospital |
| ★ Personnel Policies and Programs | ★ Nurses as Teachers |
| ★ Professional Models of Care | ★ Image of Nursing |
| ★ Quality of Care | ★ Collegial Nurse-Physician Relationships |
| ★ Quality Improvement | ★ Professional Development |

**The "Magnet Recognition Program, Recognizing Excellence in Nursing Service – Health Care Organization Instructions and Application Process Manual," 2003 – 2004 edition, compiled by the ANCC in Washington, D.C., was used as a resource for the Magnet information in this article.*



A Nurse's Welcome to the VAPHS

by Shelley Long, VAPHS Editorial Assistant

Suzanne Catalina used to work at a small community hospital. There was a family feeling between the patients and nurses there that she loved. When she began working at Presbyterian hospital, she discovered that this feeling was lost. She was excited when she began working at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System and rediscovered a family-oriented atmosphere.

Catalina, a registered nurse, has been a Gastroenterology (GI) nurse for ten years. She came to the VAPHS on March 22 of this year.

Prior to coming here, she worked in the GI Lab at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center Presbyterian.

"I love the patient care," said Catalina of the VAPHS. She went on to describe a fast-paced environment at UPMC, where there was no time to interact with patients. "There was no time for little things, like just talking." She continued, "Here you have that extra time. You have that time to listen to them and talk to them. That's important to me. That's what nursing is all about."

Catalina fondly remembers her first impressions of the VAPHS. "There's a warmth here – a friendliness, a camaraderie – that definitely did not exist [at UPMC]."

As Catalina compared her current and former



employers, she stated that the jobs are a lot alike. The procedures and equipment are the same, although she has observed that educational opportunities are better, as well as encouraged more, here at the VAPHS.

The most major difference that Catalina has found is that she has more autonomy here to be able to make her own decisions and act on them. The VAPHS offers a much more workable atmosphere.

Catalina noted a difference in the structure. "With the management we have [at the VAPHS], I feel comfortable in going to them with concerns and questions. I feel that support is available – I didn't feel that hardly at all in the private sector. Here there is a strong person you can go to so you don't worry."

She also noted advantages in employee communications here. "That was always lacking in the private sector," she said. "Things would change and you wouldn't know. You would keep doing things and find out a month later that it had been changed. Here the e-mail and one-on-one communication is better."

Communication is important to Catalina. "Communication is the key to performing your job well. When left in the dark, how are you going to perform your job well? You can't."

Catalina is glad that she has come to the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System to serve veterans. While growing up, Catalina's father was a veteran. The only family vacation was a trip to his army group's reunion. These trips placed a soft spot in her heart for veterans, which she is delighted to use to serve veterans better. "Being here is like being with the military people that I grew up with. These are my dad's friends."

After working here for a few months, Catalina is still glad that she made the choice to come here. "Everything I have seen has been positive – the staff I have worked with, the orienting, the welcoming. It has made the transition so much easier," she noted with a contented smile.



Contributions, Suggestions and Announcements are welcomed and appreciated. What do you want to see in this newsletter? Please submit personal and inspirational ideas or requests for articles. Are you moving? Do you have any new additions in your family? Would you like to share the good deed of a colleague?

Please send idea & contact information to Kelly Starver at 118N-H or Kathleen Blumer at 003-U.



Meet the Magnet Journey Chairperson

by Shelley Long, VAPHS Editorial Assistant

"Nursing excellence really speaks to the staff nurse – They should be included in the [Magnet] process," said Joan Garloff. Ms. Garloff is the Nurse Manager of the VAPHS Communication Center and Chairperson of the Magnet Task Force. She hopes that all nursing staff at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System will become involved and excited about the Journey to achieving Magnet recognition. Ms. Garloff heads up a committee of approximately 31 members and backups from each service line who are working to ensure that VAPHS meets the Magnet qualifications.

The committee has been networking with other Magnet facilities to share ideas and learn from each other. They are looking to get as much information as possible from those who have already achieved Magnet status. They have made contact with the VA hospital in Tampa, Florida, the only VA that currently has Magnet status. Several other VAs are in the process of the Journey. The task force has also visited the Cleveland Clinic, a Magnet hospital, for helpful hints.

Ms. Garloff is confident that achieving Magnet status will be very positive for the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System.

"It's important for anyone to be recognized for what they

do. The VAPHS does provide excellence in nursing. This award gives them that little piece of recognition that they can be very proud of."

However, Ms. Garloff adds that there are areas that need to be "polished." A lot of Magnet qualities already exist at the VAPHS, but it is important to identify things that need corrected and correct them.

Ms. Garloff is confident that the Journey to Magnet will improve nursing recognition as well as evolve and improve the partnership and working relationship with physicians. She believes that because of the Journey, nurses will feel a greater value due to increased involvement in unit-based activity and presenting results.

Ms. Garloff also believes that additional benefits of achieving Magnet status will include better recruitment and retention, bringing recognition of the VAPHS to a different level, becoming a consultant for other Magnet-destined facilities, and even improved patient outcomes. Because, after all, "the center of the nurse's world is the patient," said Ms. Garloff.

However, Ms. Garloff warns that this is a long process that the VAPHS is just beginning. "We still have miles to go before we sleep," she said.



MAGNET Nurses' — Retreat – April 30, 2004

by Janet Rattay, VAPHS Volunteer

Nurses Have "Patience" Patients

The Holiday Inn on Lytton Street in Oakland was the meeting place for the MAGNET Nurses' Retreat, which was held April 30, 2004. "Hello's and How are You's?" were exchanged by over 20 people in attendance. Joan Garloff welcomed everyone and officially started the agenda at 9:00 a.m. A mock copy of the *NURSES' LOUNGE* Newsletter was passed out along with MAGNET magnets and nametags. Everyone present was enthusiastic about the Journey to Magnet Status. Thus the retreat began in full swing.

The presentation consisted of 14 Standards to be outlined and discussed; of which 7 were examined in full detail. They are: Assessment, Diagnosis, Identification of Outcomes, Planning, Implementation, Evaluation, Quality of Care and Administrative Practice. Paper posters were hung throughout the room with key criteria that was being discussed. The remaining 7 standards will be detailed at Part 2 of the Magnet Nurses' Retreat to be held June 11, 2004, at Squaw Valley Park, Fox Chapel. They include: Performance Appraisal, Education, Collegiality, Ethics, Collaboration, Re-

search, and Resource utilization. Also to be included that day are Nursing Philosophy and Evidence-Based Practice Council.

Other topics discussed throughout the day were:

- ★ Data: What is Collected?
- ★ Central Clearing House
- ★ An informative talk of the recent site visit to the Cleveland Clinic.

All in all, the Magnet Nurses' Retreat proved to be a success in bringing thoughts together.

**"Feel the magnetism,
the force, the attraction"**

"Let No Nurse Be Left Behind!"



National Nursing Education Initiative

by Kelly Starver, Patient Care Coordinator

The National Nursing Education Initiative (NNEI), is a national VA scholarship program established in response to the increased educational level requirements in the revised VA Nurse Qualification Standards, published in November 1999. This program supports the opportunities for VA's registered nurses to complete or expand their formal educational. Detailed in VHA Handbook 1020.2, this program has **specific** eligibility requirements, application and selection processes, and funding allocation processes. It is designed with the expectation that the applicant has planned a definite course of study, with definite time frames for completion, and is willing to support those costs for which they might not be covered under the NNEI.

Among the eligibility requirements is that the candidate must have been *continuously* employed with the Department for not less than one year, they must agree to incur a service obligation, must not be obligated under any other federal programs to perform service after completion of the course of education, and must have a record of employment that demonstrates a high likelihood that the employee will be successful in completing the education and in acquiring employment in such field.

The following VAPHS employees have obtained higher nursing degrees using NNEI/EISP funds:

Elaine Bender, BSN
Alan Bernstein, MSN
Jacqueline Blake, BSN
Denise Boehm, MSN
Larry Bunch, BSN
Barbara Byrne-Fox, MSN
Mary Canada, BSN
Norma Cline, BSN
Greg Colella, BSN
Christa Culliver, BSN
Tammy Czarnecki, MSN
Eileen Darden, BSN
Suzanne Davis, BSN
Teresa DeCroo, BSN
Carolyn Dennler, BSN
Lisa DiBucci, BSN
Jo Anne Dietrich, BSN
Constance Elrick, BSN
Joyce Ewing, MSN
Lynda Formosa, MSN
Gail Greaves, BSN
Bonnie Greco, MSN
Karen Harrison, MSN
Dorothy Heasley, BSN
Maryann Hibbs, MSN
Marlene Hill, BSN
Carol Johns, RN
Danyelle Johnson, RN
Linda Killmeyer, BSN

Michaelene Kinser, BSN
Jewelene Kirkland, BSN
Thomas Kirsch, BSN
Michael Klugh, BSN
Leslie Koeper, BSN
Susan Lauris (Rose), BSN
Vanessa Logan, BSN
Martin Mains, BSN
Sharon Magan, MSN
Susan Marshall, MSN
Michael Masciantonio, BSN
Christin Mayo, BSN
Karen Mazza, BSN
Jane McClelland, BSN
Audrey McKinney, BSN
Olester McLain, BSN
Ellesha Miller, BSN
Sharon Moore, MSN
Marie Moreau, MSN/NP
Teresa Murray, MSN
Karen Nave, MSN
Judith O'Laughlin, BSN
Richard Pasinski, BSN
Helen Peitzman, BSN
Saundra Pennington, BSN
Mary Frances Pilarski, MSN
Shedale Pinnix-Tindall, MSN
Carol Reed, BSN
Melissa Rice, BSN

Jennifer Scott, BSN
Kelly Starver, BSN
Michele Stehle, BSN
Vicky Suchar, BSN
Susan Sunday, MSN
Kathleen Totef, BSN
David Tunney, BSN
Rody Weis, BSN

Charleen Welch, BSN
Sheila Williams, BSN
Rose Marie Williams, BSN
Debra Yockey, BSN
Ruth Young, BSN
Karen Yovick, BSN
Kari Zana, MSN

Scholarship funds are awarded based on the availability of funds. Facilities must submit a Facility Funding Request each year to the Health Care Staff Development and Retention Office (HCSDRO), which is responsible for managing the NNEI program. The request is only a *recommendation for approval* of those candidates whose applications have been screened by a facility selection committee and determined to meet the detailed criteria and priorities outlined for the NNEI program. Final approval is made by the HCSDRO after their review of the referred applications. Priority use of these funds is designated for staff completing their baccalaureate degree, though they can also be used for master's or doctoral degree programs or other mission-critical educational programs based on facility need.

Facility Education Managers act as their site's Program Coordinator. The local Selection Committee is a sub-group of the Nurse Professional Standards Board. RN staff who might be interested in seeking scholarship funds from this program to complete their degree should contact their Facility Education Manager, who can provide them additional information on the details and processes of the NNEI, answer their questions, and provide application or statement of intent

The dedication of the newly renovated Chemotherapy Unit was held on April 29, 2004.



Front: Pat Nealon, Becky Englert, Sandra Blakowski, Michallene Kinser, Michael Moreland, Timothy Carlos, Rajiv Jain, Frederick DeRubertis, Nichole Yon, Lois Brown
Back: Robert Monte, Khalid Matin, Marcia Park, Pamela Malicki