THE ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION OF THE SCHOOL OF NURSING ENDOWMENT FUND 2021 IMPACT REPORT

Nursing Alumnae



A CHAT WITH ERIN VANDEVEN, **ASSOCIATE CHIEF OF NURSING**

DESPITE comprising nearly 50 per cent of the global health workforce, nurses are often thought of as the unsung heroes of health care. However, when the COVID-19 pandemic swept the globe, the unsung heroes suddenly became widely celebrated heroes. In awe of their bravery and dedication, people were showering nurses with messages of appreciation. Social media channels were flooded with videos of people clapping on their balconies and banging pots and pans in their driveways to show support for frontline health care workers, like nurses.

Erin Vandeven, the Associate Chief of Nursing Practice at SickKids, explains that the work nurses do has been "invisible" for hundreds of years. Now, more people than ever have needed a nurse and the work has become more visible. This has allowed the public to better appreciate the incredibly important work nurses do. Erin notes that sometimes, nurses have a hard time defining their work because the scope of what they can do is so vast. This pandemic has brought more clarity and definition to the profession, and this has led to an influx of nursing school applications. Earlier this year, the Ontario Universities' Application Centre reported that in January, the total number of nursing applications submitted reached 22,533 - a 17.5 per cent increase over the year before. Erin believes the influx of nursing school applications speaks to how people feel compelled to help in a time of strain. The pandemic has acted as a call to service.

Although more people are studying to become a nurse, many nurses have left the profession throughout this pandemic. Erin explains that for many nurses, their cups were already full. When the pandemic hit, they spilled over. The demands became too much. Although nurses have been praised for their efforts throughout this pandemic, they have also experienced more threats to their safety.

Even before this pandemic, an alarming number of nurses were experiencing burnout. Now, the problem of burnout is even greater.

"You can't leave work at work anymore," explained Erin. "The pandemic lives at home as it does at work. When nurses hand over their work and head home, the pandemic still rages on."

Last year, with the 2019 funds from the Alumnae Association of the School of Nursing Endowment Fund, the hospital created the Innovation Wellness Strategy, which included wellness workshops for nurses. These workshops have been extremely successful, and the focus has now shifted from

wellness to recognition. Erin explains that to support

the nurses at SickKids. senior leaders are determined to improve recognition and make sure the hospital is celebrating their incredible contributions to patient care. The goal is to make sure nurses feel valued. To do this, executive team members have been visiting all the frontline patient care areas. These interactions allow the nurses to raise any concerns and also celebrate wins. It is an opportunity for senior leaders to say thank you in a meaningful way.

Donor support is hugely important for nursing at SickKids, explains Erin. In the past, she benefitted from a donor-funded award. She used it to pursue training in public speaking and is now able to use her voice to influence others to think about nursing and to motivate people to feel more empowered. But the impact goes far deeper than financial support.

"There is a sort of affirmation from people recognizing the value of your work," said Erin. "It brings a sense of visibility and worthiness to the forefront."

When people see money being donated to a cause, many take a step back and think the work being done must be important. And when people think your work is important, that is affirmation. This is the ripple effect that donors like you cause.

2021 NURSING AWARD WINNERS

Assessing the Healthcare Transition Needs of Parents/Caregivers of Adolescents with **Congenital Heart Disease Navreet Gill and Sandra Aiello**

Development of an Emergency Preparedness Champion Program Katherine Cheug and Michelle Kerrigan

Erin Vandeven. Associate Chief of Nursing Practice





Emergency Department Nurse Caitlin Ross



Emergency Department Nurse Amanda Cooney

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT SAFETY OFFICER

IT'S A KNOWN FACT that nurses are problem solvers, critical thinkers and, incredibly versatile. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, those qualities have proved to be invaluable. The face of the Emergency Department (ED) has changed drastically-even veteran nurses have found themselves in unfamiliar territory. Nurses have had to make countless adjustments and adapt to a great number of ever-changing protocols and practices. As more information about how COVID-19 is spread came to light, Caitlin Ross and Amanda Cooney quickly realized how essential it was to have a nurse on the ED team whose job it was to know these protocols and practices inside and out. They wanted nurses to be better protected so they pitched the idea of creating a Safety Officer role. To realize their vision, the two nurses were given a grant through the Nursing Alumnae Association award, made possible thanks to your generous support. We're delighted to report that the Safety Officer role is already making a huge impact in the ED.

On both the day shift and night shift, there is one nurse who acts as the Safety Officer. The Safety Officer advises ED staff on everything from PPE to best practices for infection control. To be eligible for this role, a nurse must first complete their Team Leader training. Once this training is complete, they can be trained to be a Safety Officer. With the funds from their award, Caitlin and Amanda developed and formalized a 1-hour training course and a resource binder that is housed in the ED and referenced daily. They have trained over 50 nurses and plan to continue training more as they become eligible. It was important to Caitlin and Amanda that the training process be formalized so everyone could experience the same training to apply at the bedside.

Caitlin, Amanda, and all the ED staff are extremely grateful for your support of this important initiative. Times have been tough in the ED and the dangers of COVID-19 are never far from nurses' minds. The threat of infection is ever-present, and they have been feeling uneasy knowing they could bring the virus home to their loved ones. The Safety Officer role has helped staff feel more confident that they are both providing safe care and returning safely to their families at home. There was a great need for this role, and it is truly making a difference in the ED. Caitlin explained that nurses are very well trained to do everything they can to swiftly help patients, but they very seldomly think about their own safety. This role helps keep staff safe, which tremendously improves patient care. Your support has made a true difference in the lives of the ED nurses, their patients, and their families.

ARCHIVES UPDATE

It's been an unusual but eventful year for the SickKids Archives. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our archivist, David Wencer, has remained unable to have outside researchers visit in person. However, service has been provided remotely, when possible. David has generally been on-site weekly and has been working to assist people by accessing the resources manually and when possible, digitizing and sharing the contents.

The biggest ongoing project for the Archives, however, remains planning for the future. The Archives will soon be physically moving to its new home in the Patient Support Centre. The estimated move-in date is currently early 2023. Over the past year, they've developed and started implementing a plan to make the move to the new home as smooth as possible.

The SickKids Archives is currently deciding how to best use your generous gift. They want to make sure it is used on a project that will have a major impact. Meanwhile, they remain very grateful for your support.

THANK YOU

Every day, SickKids works towards improving the lives of children, and our success depends on the generosity of donors like you. Your commitment to nursing at SickKids ensures that we can continue to offer the best possible health outcomes for children. Thank you for your remarkable generosity.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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