Nursing
For Hartford Hospital nurses and alumnae of the Hartford Hospital School of Nursing

Spring 2020

Hartford Hospital
HealthCare
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Hartford Hospital’s Nursing Professional Practice Model

The Nursing Professional Practice Model was developed by nurses from across Hartford Hospital. It is a visual representation of the scope of nursing practice and nursing’s role in enhancing the human health experience.
Dear Colleagues:

As the coronavirus pandemic grips the world, we are facing a marathon fight like we’ve never experienced before. While the challenges of this pandemic may seem insurmountable, I am certain history will remember how nurses—our healthcare heroes—rose to the occasion, leading us on the frontlines to win the battle. Future generations will see that the virus was no match for the resolve, ingenuity and commitment of the nurses who worked tirelessly to cut it short, combat it, and treat those infected with compassion and expertise.

Each day as you leave your families and loved ones at home—themselves living a new reality of remote learning and social distancing—you remain laser-focused on healing and the task at hand even in the face of this horrific virus. As you’ve witnessed through the countless donations of food and supplies and comments on social media, the community is so grateful for your heroic efforts.

I am sure that as you read this today, there have been developments in this crisis that the world could not have anticipated. I know in my heart, that whatever you have faced in the last several weeks, you have exhibited a rare kind of resilience, one that inspires those around you. I am proud and humbled to call you my colleagues.

Sincerely,

Bimal Patel
President, Hartford Region
Senior Vice President, Hartford HealthCare

Resilience [ri-‘zil-yen(t)s] NOUN “the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.”

Many of us demonstrate resilience every day. We show that capacity by not just how we handle the large crises that arise as well as how we show up and manage the stresses and pace of our everyday.

At any time, on any unit, we can see the results of our resilience. It manifests itself at Hartford Hospital in the exceptional care, job satisfaction and increased patient safety you provide our patients each day.

Our resilience has never been tested more than during the coronavirus pandemic. While uncertainty grips our state, nation and world, nurses are facing the challenges head-on, helping and healing at work, while at the same time, navigating personal upheaval of household routines, childcare, and social distancing at home.

In an almost prophetic twist, the World Health Organization named 2020 the Year of the Nurse and Midwife. Now, more than ever, that recognition is being played out across the globe and right here at Hartford Hospital, as nurses take charge on the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis, leading the way to care for and treat sick patients.

Long before this historic time in healthcare history, we recognized the need for informal, unit-based programs designed to promote resilience and prevent nursing burnout. As skilled health practitioners, we’ve always understood that how we take care of ourselves is just as important as how we take care of others.

Earlier this year, however, we decided to make our commitment to nursing resilience more formal by launching a “Wellness & Resilience” initiative. This is a model for nurses and other caregivers designed to put into practice both Nursing Leadership’s and Hartford Hospital’s desire to ensure that our nurses are safe and adequately supported.

It’s important we show that commitment to you. The entire issue of this Nursing Magazine is dedicated to resilience. We share stories that show how this model is designed to keep our nurses strong in body, mind and spirit. You’ll see how our employees, managers, and the organization overall can better create a culture of resiliency, safety and satisfaction, understanding the need for our nurses to be well cared for so they can well-care for others.

You’ll also read how even before this “Wellness & Resilience” program officially launched, staff on units throughout the Hospital were having conversations about how a healthy, more resilient work environment could lead to more engaged nurses, decreased burnout, lower turnover, and better patient care.

As the Model illustrates, each of us has a role to play in ensuring our own personal wellness, the wellness of our team, and our overall ability to provide the most exceptional care.

Each of us has a role to play in ensuring our own personal wellness, the wellness of our team, and our overall ability to provide the most exceptional care. We want our patients to thrive. But for that to happen, our nurses must thrive too!

Cheryl Ficara, MS, RN, NEA-BC
Vice President, Patient Care Services
Hartford Region, Hartford HealthCare

Note: This message was composed in late March, to meet the print deadline for this magazine.
Today, nearly one year after Hartford Hospital’s new “Wellness & Resilience” model was introduced during the 2019 National Nursing Week, staff isn’t just continuing to learn about it. They’re living it.

Posters featuring tips for self-care hang in employee break areas. Colleagues are reminding each other not to work through lunch or breaks. Managers are encouraging nurses who’ve experienced a high stress situation to take a few minutes for themselves, whether to say a prayer, take a walk, or just close their eyes and breathe.

Some units now have staff serving as volunteer Wellness Champions. Other units have made out-of-work activities like bowling or book clubs regular happenings, so they can get to know each other better as human beings and build stronger relationships over mutual interests.

The model is designed to help nurses develop a set of discrete skills and behaviors to better manage how they handle stress and other events that can lead to fatigue, irritability, lack of concentration, and unhappiness, among other negative physical or emotional effects. The model also identifies those organizational and leadership factors that are key in creating a positive work environment, and that empower and motivate nurses.

Collectively known as burnout or nursing fatigue, there are many factors that may contribute to a nurse feeling overwhelmed including traumatic situations like patient death, conflicts with families or coworkers, greater patient acuity, feelings of powerlessness, work overload, poor time management, feelings of disconnectedness, and lack of time for self-care or self-reflection. Unmanaged burnout has been demonstrated to affect the ability of a health care professional to care for others resulting in negative impact on patient satisfaction, poor patient outcomes or increased rates of safety events, and even increased patient mortality.

Hartford’s commitment to investing in worker wellness and fostering resilient environments and individuals puts it at the forefront of a national trend that’s growing … along with evidence on how nursing burnout is a preventable healthcare risk factor. Highly resilient nurses are better able to take on challenges, bounce back from difficulties, and thrive at work. Perhaps the most important result of this for nurses is a greater capacity to provide the safest, most appropriate care—no matter the challenges or circumstances.

“Designing this model has been evolutionary, integrating many elements related to wellness and resilience with our existing leadership behaviors and operating model,” said Regulatory Readiness and Nursing Operations Director Gail Nelson, RN, MS, NEA-BC. “The model is just a beginning … a point of reference for discussions with our staff as we move forward in creating a more resilient workforce. We expect to achieve this by focusing on wellness practices and ways resilience can be incorporated into the workday, encouraging ways that individuals can take personal responsibility for their well-being and professional growth, and similarly identifying the organization’s responsibility in shaping a nurturing environment and ways that nursing leadership can provide support to both the individual and to the team.”

The idea of creating workplace wellness originated from our participation in the Connecticut Hospital Association’s (CHA) development of the Safer Hospitals Initiative and from best practices presented by the Nursing Executive Center of the Advisory Board on rebuilding the foundation for a resilient workforce. The CHA Initiative focused on assisting hospitals to establish their own worker safety and worker support programs, including a specific focus on developing a standardized peer-to-peer program for healthcare workers who experienced psychological and/or physical trauma so that they may continue to work and thrive in their healthcare careers. The Advisory Board work grounded our discussions on the need for wellness and resilience through their identification of “four cracks” in the foundation of today’s healthcare environment:

- Violence and point-of-care safety threats that have become all too common
- Nurses feeling as if they have to make compromises when delivering care
- Caregivers having no time to recover from traumatic care-related experiences
- Nurses experiencing feelings of isolation caused by new technology, responsibilities or protocols

Conversations on how these cracks specifically contribute to feeling overwhelmed or burned out led to work supported by Vice President of Patient Care Services Cheryl Ficara, MS, RN, NEA-BC and headed by Nelson and Palliative Care, Social Work & Spiritual Care Director Colleen Mulkerin, MSW, LCSW, ACHP-SW, APHSW-C. “Wellness and resilience aren’t just states of...
Resilience: At The Heart Of Excellent Patient Care

continued from page 2

mind,” Mulkerin explained. “They’re skills and strategies that can be developed, practiced and refined. Developing resilience is an intentional and ongoing process … It’s work all of us have to do together,” Mulkerin said. “It’s about every nurse bringing her or his best self to work to care for our patients.”

The Model developed from the understanding that ongoing resilience requires the engagement and incorporation of five key domains: the employee, manager and organization, along with cultures of safety and resilience. “What these domains constitute and cultivate,” Mulkerin said, “is both personal and professional wellness.” As Figure 1 illustrates, personal well-being, professional well-being, personal responsibility and organizational responsibility all come in to play. “In simplest terms, “Mulkerin said, “this means everyone has a role to play in ensuring nurse resilience.”

The draft of the model was initially readied for presentation during the May 2019 Nurses Week Program. Staff were very receptive in hearing how and why the model was developed and provided voluminous feedback on further refinement of its elements as well as identifying priorities to better support nurse self-care, decompression and resilience.

Creating a culture change where staff is more comfortable talking about nursing burnout has been fundamental to the rollout of the model. Equally important is discussing how we can counteract that burnout and develop resilience skills. A tangible outcome of this is developing and sharing personal wellness strategies and self-care plans reflecting the elements of the model (see Figure 2). Action plans have also been established to address some of the higher priority items identified by nurses during our Nurses Week discussions. These include adding non-violent crisis intervention to nurses’ training; developing behavioral response teams; incorporating resilience concepts into nurses’ professional advancement and development plans; and more widely using storytelling and debriefing to help nurses connect, decompress and receive needed support. Read more about facilitated

continued on page 4
Our plans for 2020 focus on further integrating the Wellness and Resilience Model into our everyday nursing practice by connecting aspects of the model with our Nursing Councils’ work and responsibilities and on standing up the Nursing Peer Support program. The latter is a collaboration across all Hartford HealthCare hospitals and is the first priority for implementation by the newly established Wellness Council.

“Removing the stigma that can be associated with stress and burnout will always be a priority,” Nelson said. “Nurses are people too, and what we want everyone to see is that it’s OK to take a 5-minute break or to walk away after a patient dies; that no one is so busy that it’s better to work through lunch, rather than take that time to recharge and refocus.” Self-accountability is also a part of the model, with staff being supported to use their personal self-care plan strategies.

“While what constitutes wellness is pretty straightforwardly defined, how people achieve and maintain that wellness is a very personal thing,” Nelson said. “One of the many great things about this program is that through conversations, our nurses will discover new ways to connect with each other on meaningful levels—through shared interests and opportunities to get to know each other outside of work, for example—which will only strengthen our teams and care. Liking the people you work with, and knowing that they will help get you through the day, are important aspects of resilience.”

### Hartford Hospital’s Nursing “Wellness & Resilience” Model

Hartford Hospital’s Nursing “Wellness & Resilience” model takes an intersectional approach, balancing personal well-being with professional well-being and personal responsibility with organizational responsibility. Improved quality of patient care, increased joy in work, more meaningful manager support, and a more cohesive workforce are all measurable outcomes that can be achieved.

The Model depends upon the following to reach these accomplishments:

- **Organization**: Shows a commitment that ensures employees feel connected and provides the needed support and structure.
- **Culture of Resilience**: Provides the means for nurses and other caregivers to recover from challenging work events and remain engaged, as well as provides an early warning system for burnout.
- **Culture of Safety**: Provides a safe environment for nurses, patients, physicians and other employees through group values, attitudes, perceptions, competencies and behavior patterns.

### Table: Wellness and Self-care Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional</th>
<th>Financial</th>
<th>Intellectual</th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Spiritual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write a gratitude list</td>
<td>Identify financial goals</td>
<td>Read a book</td>
<td>Take a walk, take a hike</td>
<td>Create time for play &amp; leisure</td>
<td>Meditate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal-thoughts, feelings &amp; insights</td>
<td>Start an emergency fund</td>
<td>Learn a new skill</td>
<td>Dance it out</td>
<td>Small acts of kindness</td>
<td>Set an evening ritual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have a good laugh</td>
<td>Plan for future purchase</td>
<td>DIY Project</td>
<td>Yoga</td>
<td>Play with a dog</td>
<td>Attend a religious service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surround yourself with green space/nature</td>
<td>Strategy for groceries &amp; meal planning</td>
<td>Turn off tech</td>
<td>Swim, Gym work out</td>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>Create a full day of rest &amp; contemplation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Life-cycle appropriate finances-save for day care, college retirement</td>
<td>Take a class</td>
<td>Wellness, preventive health care</td>
<td>Plan meals with friends &amp; family</td>
<td>Healing prayer</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rest, sleep</td>
<td>Reflect on meaning, purpose &amp; connection</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nourishment</td>
<td>Join a spiritual community</td>
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**Figure 2 WELLNESS AND SELF-CARE PLAN**
Monthly Facilitated Debriefings For Reflection, Peer Learning And Support

One of the many ways Hartford Hospital nurses are living the Wellness & Resilience model is through facilitated debriefings.

Focused on the challenging nature of nursing in general, the reflective sessions take place monthly and give nurses the opportunity to vent, share stories, or just sit and listen.

Unlike didactic huddles, which occur immediately after an event and are designed for practical learning—such as ways to improve patient safety or system processes—debriefing sessions are designed for social support. Having an opportunity for nurses to share their experiences with each other helps to decrease a sense of isolation, allows sharing of what works to lessen stress—and what doesn’t—and creates a supporting and accepting culture among colleagues.

Facilitated debriefings started at Hartford Hospital after Colleen Mulkerin, MSW, LCSW, APHSW-C, Director of Palliative Care, Social Work and Katie Lepak, MSW, LCSW, APHSW-C, Palliative Care Consultant, participated in a seminar at the annual Social Work Hospital and Palliative Care Network Conference.

Debriefing was presented as a wellness initiative piloted at Duke University and both Mulkerin and Lepak thought it would fit nicely into our developing wellness model in Nursing. With Administrative support, our pilot program began in August 2019 on Bliss 5, a large 42-bed surgical inpatient unit. With Lepak as coach and mentor, staff nurses were recruited to participate in the Debriefing Facilitator Training with the goal of developing a nursing peer to peer driven program. Amy Demoranville, BSN, RN, and Hayley MacDonald, BSN, RN, both clinical leaders, completed the training program and now facilitate the monthly unit-based informal discussions.

Please read on! Stories throughout this issue feature the many ways staff, nursing leadership, and the Hospital itself are supporting and cultivating resilience as a way to strengthen nurses and the outstanding patient care they provide.

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Since the debriefings have started, Lepak has overheard staff planning to bring issues to the meeting to discuss. “If they feel it’s working, that’s the goal. The metric is that they are feeling it’s beneficial … to me that is what matters,” Lepak said. “The debriefings provide another opportunity for staff to come together to build professional connections, learn from each other, nurture each other, and build an environment of supportive collaboration. They’re a place where nurses can find a range of opportunities to foster their individual wellness, as well as be reminded that the path to resilience is not a one-size-fits-all strategy.”

Bliss 5’s Way to Wellness
Participating as the pilot unit in the Debriefing Facilitator Training Program was just one example of the unit’s commitment to translating the Nursing Wellness and Resilience Model into practice. Chris Darin, MSN, RN, NP-BC, and Tara Eshoo, MSN, RN, collaborated with Patricia Veronneau, MSN, RN, to challenge each nursing staff member to develop their own personal wellness and resilience plan. Using the elements of the Nursing model, staff members identified how they commit to their self-care and then were asked to share with each other – creating opportunities to connect people in a meaningful way with each other on common interests. “This shows we’re all human beings with lives beyond our everyday work,” Darin noted. These commitments were then memorialized on the unit’s “Wellness Board.”

With leadership from Sarah Hong, MSN, RN, CNRN, BC, B5 created a unit-based Wellness Committee in November 2019. Supported by clinical leaders including Demoranville and MacDonald, the Committee acts upon suggestions to nurture each staff member’s commitment to their wellness and resilience. Creating a “Restoration Room” on the unit is a highly visible reminder of this commitment. The room provides staff with a quiet place to take a moment away from their work assignment. The room is designed to meet staff’s requests for comfort items including a sound machine, aromatherapy, relaxation tips, and even assorted teas!
2020 Nightingale Awards for Excellence in Nursing

The Visiting Nurse Association of South Central Connecticut created the Nightingale Awards for Excellence in Nursing in 2001 as a gala program to celebrate and elevate the nursing profession. The Nightingale Awards pay tribute to Florence Nightingale for her dedication and service to her patients. She devoted her life to nursing and improving the quality of life for those she treated. Nightingale’s lasting contribution has been her role in founding the modern nursing profession by setting an example of compassion, commitment to patient care and thoughtful hospital administration.

- Laura Albert, MSN, RN
  Perioperative Services – Cardiovascular OR
- Sarah Auperin, MSN, RN
  Cardiology
- Kathleen Burton, RN
  Critical Care
- Sonia Cagianello, BSN-BC, RN
  General Medicine
- Jill Cardone, BSN, RN
  Emergency Department
- Morgan Delton, BSN, RN
  Bone & Joint Institute
- Cassandra Eilers, RN
  Ambulatory Surgery
- Lisa Enslow, MSN, RN
  Nursing Education
- Tari Ferguson, BSN, RN
  Heart & Vascular Institute
- Karina Gonzales, MSN, RN
  Case Coordination
- Maura Kenny, BSN, RN
  Cancer Institute
- Rebecca Kritzer, BSN, RN
  Women’s Health
- Christopher Mann, BSN, RN
  Surgery
- Cynthia McGarvey, BSN, RN
  Specialty Medicine
- Sonia Rivera, AS, RN
  Community Health Specialty Clinic
- Amanda Terranova, BSN, RN
  Institute of Living
- Jennifer Warren, BSN, RN
  Ayer Neuroscience Institute
When earlier this year a group of Hartford Hospital Institute of Living (IOH) staff and clinical leaders began discussing whether some kind of program related to Burnout Syndrome might be welcomed by staff, it quickly became clear it was actually needed.

The term “burnout” wasn’t always being used by those working on Hartford Hospital’s Adult Inpatient Psychiatric Unit. However, during unit and individual discussions, the topic of burnout emerged as a common theme, and a team was developed to address this important subject. The team consisted of Nurse Manager Barbara Emery, PMH CNS, APRN; Clinical Nurse Leader Marilyn Newman, RN; psychologist James DeGiovanni, Ph.D.; Agnes Arhin, RN, BSN; Loubet Budd, RN; and Clinical Nurse Leader Rhonda Dean, RN.

As Emery explained it: “We didn’t know exactly how to address it. We just knew that we needed to.”

To get more than just an anecdotal understanding of how Institute of Living caregivers might be experiencing it, a survey was conducted on the unit. Conducting the survey was one of the first steps, Dean said. Staff identified themselves as being one of six categories of caregivers: RN, psych tech, clinician, MD, specialty role or not identified. Questions then asked them to use a predetermined scale to rate their emotional energy levels, feelings of personal accomplishment, and overall feelings about coming to work and caring for patients.

Unlike many previous staff surveys, which sometimes garnered an underwhelming number of responses, this one resulted in an enthusiastic pile—a signal, said Newman, of the interest and need for the unit to continue this work.

Results of the survey showed that more than 40 percent of RNs on the unit said they were “somewhat overwhelmed” by emotional exhaustion related to work, as were 30 percent of psych techs, 20 percent of clinicians and 20 percent of caregiving specialists. Roughly 5 percent of RNs and 10 percent of techs described themselves as “overwhelmed.”

The survey also showed that while more than 30 percent of RNs who responded said they enjoyed their work and patients, more than 20 percent said they only “somewhat” enjoyed their work and patients, while approximately 5 percent had “lost interest.”

The team also reviewed the literature. Psychiatric nurses—similar to those who work in oncology, the ICU, the ED, and other units where intense emotions and traumatic events regularly occur—are among health providers most commonly affected by Burnout Syndrome, also known as Compassion Fatigue. A 2018 Press Ganey Nursing study found that as many as 78 percent of nurses described burnout as a “serious risk.”

Among those key to the process was Budd, at the time a Nursing student at Capital Community College, and Arhin, who then was a student at the University of Texas at Arlington. Self-awareness about nursing resiliency and burnout were part of both of their studies. Institute of Living team members infused what Arhin and Budd were

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learning at school into the project they were developing.

“At school, we’d have Fresh Check Days, which focused on ways to identify stress and anxiety related to school, and then offered students tools and strategies to manage and prevent it,” said Budd, who graduated in May. “So why not do something like that here in our department, too? Caregivers at every level can experience burnout. And it’s important that when nurses, doctors or any caregivers feel the symptoms, they know what to do.”

Team members wanted to share what they were learning with the rest of the unit, and they decided to do a series of presentations. Arhin shared a project about compassion fatigue and resiliency that she had done for school. The team incorporated Arhin’s work into an evolving PowerPoint that resulted in the collaborative presentation “Recognizing, Understanding and Preventing Burnout.”

The presentation provided education and information from literature, the findings of the unit survey, the impact of burnout syndrome, and how to build resiliency through self-care and CBT concepts. Also included were suggestions on how burnout might be addressed “from every level,” with specific ideas for individuals, units and colleagues, managers and the organization overall.

Among the suggestions from the group is a need to destigmatize and change the way caregivers think about compassion fatigue to make it something people readily acknowledge, rather than something they try to hide.

“It can be hard to say you’re ‘When we help each other as individuals be stronger, we’re also helping our team be stronger.’”

– Marilyn Newman, RN Clinical Nurse Leader

struggling, no matter what field you’re in,” Emery said. “But experiencing burnout has nothing to do with weakness. It’s part of being human and working in a field where we give our all to take care of others. But in order to be able to take proper care of others, we first need to take proper care of ourselves.”

I always find pleasure in encouraging people to hold onto the fort and never lose hope,” Arhin said. “Positive attitude always yields inner satisfaction and success. It was a pleasure for me to be part of this great project.”

Posters about the need for self-care and prevalence of burnout have been hung in staff areas of the IOL, reminding caregivers about the benefits of wellness and resilience. Next steps for this team have yet to be determined. But already, Newman said, there are signs that unit caregivers are paying greater attention.

“There seems to be a different mindset taking shape that we can hear when staff members talk to each other, such as reminders about taking breaks,” Newman added. “When we help each other as individuals be stronger, we’re also helping our team be stronger.”

The ADVOCACY Of Nursing

New CB2 Wellness Champions Program Sends A Message: You don’t have to sacrifice yourself as a person to be a good nurse

One of the things that excites 35-year Hartford Hospital nursing veteran Mary-Kate Eanniello, DNP, RN, OCN, about CB2’s “Wellness Champions” program is that it shows how brand new nurses can positively advocate for themselves, fellow nurses, and even the practice of nursing itself.

Part of the unit’s ongoing efforts to address the emotional exhaustion and burnout that affect such high numbers of both inpatient and outpatient oncology nurses, the program calls for nurses to serve as Wellness Champions who commit to providing their co-workers with the tools and techniques needed to:

• Conduct wellness self-assessments.
• Act when they see signs of compassion fatigue in themselves or others.
• Perform the kind of simple, but proven, self-care activities that lead to both the nurse’s better mental and physical health, and the ability of that nurse to better care for patients.

Inspiration for the program began in part three years ago, when CB2 staff nurse Maura Kenny BSN, RN, did work on nursing resiliency at a Susan D. Flynn Oncology Student Nursing Fellow as a junior at UCONN. Ashley Shelden, MSN, RN, OCN, a radiation oncology nurse at Hartford Hospital’s Helen and Harry Gray Cancer Center, then continued this important work as continued on page 10
part of her graduate work at Sacred Heart University. Supported by Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute Hartford Region Director Abbi Bruce, Oncology Nurse Manager Lanetta Gann, BSN, RN-BC, MSSW, LCSW, and Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute Medical Director Andrew Salner, MD, CB2 staff members collaborated and used Kenny’s and Sheldon’s work to roll out the Wellness Champions program earlier this year, in advance of Hartford HealthCare’s system-wide initiative. Sheldon, Kenny, Eanniello, and Anna-Rae Montano, PhD, RN-BC, also presented a poster on the CB2 team’s efforts at the 23rd annual Connecticut Nursing Research Alliance in October.

Titled “Wellness Champions: A Quality Improvement Project to Address Compassion Fatigue Among Oncology Nurses at Hartford Hospital,” the poster outlines the necessity of educating inpatient and outpatient oncology nursing staff about signs and symptoms of burnout and compassion fatigue, along with how easily and accessible simple wellness interventions—such as breathing techniques, smartphone meditation apps—can make a difference.

Eanniello, director of nursing education and professional development for the HHC Cancer Institute stated, “The good news, is that there are many resources available to treat this condition, and it’s exciting that this newest resource was suggested by a new nurse, who came to work here knowing that burnout was an issue and wanting to make a difference to help prevent it, right from the start. All of our nurses, whether they’re new or veterans, have the power within them to help and advocate for each other.”

Seeing the program’s inception and tract as a true collaboration between nurses of all experience levels, Eanniello also credits the data and research strategies Montano brings to the team. Montano recently earned her PhD from UConn.

“The poster was a culmination of many of the quality improvement efforts we’ve been working on within the unit,” Montano said, “as all the data proves how greatly your ability to care for others can be affected when you are repeatedly exposed to tragedies, like death, or consistently need to provide empathy. How can these emotional experiences not take a toll?”

Already implemented on the unit are simple, but effective tools that staff can use to decompress, feel more balanced, or find inspiration. The CB2 wellness group has implemented a “word wall” that provides empowering quotes and sayings that regularly change, and there is a board for staff, patients and family members to post pictures of their pets. Gentle yoga specifically designed to help relieve the body of stress and tension, and clear the mind, is also something that Maura Kenny teaches as a trained yoga instructor.

Also in the works are plans for Wellness Champions to create and organize an off-campus wellness retreat for nursing staff, as well as establish more unit-based relaxation and self-care options.

Once more interventions are established, CB2 staff will be resurveyed to measure the program’s effectiveness.

“Keeping highly-competent nurses at the bedside has been a focus of my career, so I love that this program will not just help make our nurses happier and healthier, but help ensure that they provide better care,” Eanniello said. “Being healthy and present is such a big part of the art of oncology nursing—and all nursing today. At one time, it was primarily oncology nurses who regularly saw death. But now that lifespans are longer, and patients are coming to the hospital older and sicker, palliative care is something nurses on all units are dealing with more regularly, and it’s not easy. But programs like ours show that you can be good to yourself and good to your patients and their families. You don’t have to sacrifice yourself as a person to be a good nurse.” •
Becoming parents didn’t just brighten the lives of a wife and husband who chose to give birth to their first child at Hartford Hospital. It brightened the experiences of all new parents who chose to do the same after them.

To thank Labor and Delivery staff for the excellent care they and their new baby received in 2017, the couple—who prefers to remain anonymous—made two $15,000 donations to replace old and outdated lighting in several Hospital labor and delivery rooms, and one birthing surgical suite. The result is a safer, higher quality and more comfortable experience for patients, along with more ease and ability to provide the best possible care.

The new surgical lights mounted on swinging arms are brighter, cleaner, have greater range, are easier to move, and give providers a better view, said Labor and Delivery Nurse Manager Michelle Walsh, RN, BSN. Replacing lights on wheels with cumbersome cords that often get in the way, they also provide anesthesiologists with better light to place epidurals and spinal anesthesia.

The new lights in labor and delivery rooms are recessed, but can be moved horizontally or vertically, as well as be brightened or dimmed.

In making the donation, the parents said they were “so glad to provide Hartford Hospital staff with better tools. ... We are very thankful to be able to help such amazing people do such an important job.”

Walsh, in turn, expressed the gratitude of all Hartford Hospital care providers who work in Labor and Delivery for having the opportunity to “care for people who would then be so generous to us.”

“Our team’s goal is always to provide the best experience for the patient,” Walsh said, adding that some of the replaced light fixtures were more than 20 years old. “When our staff is able to provide the best care, along with having the best equipment and tools, it makes the experience better for patients and more rewarding for staff. To have a patient give back so generously also shows the tremendous amount of care and effort our team puts in to every one of our patients. It’s also a tremendous gift, because it continues to give 24/7. Giving birth to babies is a 24/7 business!”

Like others who have had their first babies at Hartford Hospital, these philanthropic parents have also shown their belief in Hartford Hospital by coming back—to have their second child here in 2018, and their third in 2019.

Said the couple: “We are very happy to support Labor and Delivery and to help make their jobs more enjoyable and efficient.”

‘When our staff is able to provide [the] best care, along with having the best equipment and tools, it makes the experience better for patients and more rewarding for staff. To have a patient give back so generously also shows the tremendous amount of care and effort our team puts in to every one of our patients.’

– Michelle Walsh, BSN, RN
Labor and Delivery Nurse Manager
Nursing News & Notes

We congratulate these Hartford Hospital nurses on their recent achievements.

Nursing Administration

- Christine Waszynski DNP, RN, GNP-BC, (left), was inducted into the American Academy of Nursing in October.
- Ellen Blair, DNP, APRN, PMHCNS-BC, NEA-BC, was named to a one-year renewable term on the American Psychiatric Nurses Association (APNA) Council for Safe Environments Steering Committee.
- Ellen Blair, DNP, APRN, PMHCNS-BC, NEA-BC, and Jennifer Ferrand, PsyD, ABPP, presented “Suicide Prevention in Hartford HealthCare: Our Journey to Zero” at the Veteran’s Administration Mental Health Summit in Middletown in June.
- “Can an Inter-Professional Prospective Patient Review Process (PPRP) Reduce Length of Stay and Post-Operative Complications Following a Total Joint Arthroplasty (TJA)?: a Retrospective Review” by presenters Karen Livingston, APRN, ONC, and Amber Monson, MSN, RN.

Critical Care

- The following nurses passed the CCRN exam to become certified in critical care:
  - Jessica Phinney, BSN, RN, from C8 I
  - Roxana Murillo, MSN, RN, from C8 I
  - Ashley Duncan, BSN, RN, C8 I
  - Sandra Palmer, RN, from B10 I
  - Justyna Bieszczad, RN, from B10 I
  - Caroline McManus, RN, from B10 I became a Geriatric Resource Nurse (GRN).

Nursing Education

- Lisa Enslow, MSN, RN, earned ANCC Nursing Professional Development Certification in August. Her dedication and innovative teaching methods have brought the Hartford Hospital Nurse Residency program to a higher level of participant engagement, as well as increased rigor in the program’s research topics. Enslow is an expert in women’s health and labor and delivery. Most recently, she participated in a violence prevention initiative for Hartford teenagers.
- Sarah Hong, MSN, RN, earned the designation Certified Neurology RN (CNRN) and is now certified by the American Board of Neuroscience Nursing.

Bone & Joint Institute

- Iris Hence, BSN, RN, received her Certified Nurse of Operating Room (CNOR) certification.
- Bone & Joint Institute nurses attended the week-long annual National Association of Orthopaedic Nurses Congress in May in Atlanta to present five posters. The presentations consisted of:
  - “Does an Opioid Exit Plan (OEP) Reduce 60-day Opioid Use in Total Knee Arthroplasty (TKA) Patients: A Historical Control Comparison” by presenters Donna Jones, MSN, RN, and Sherry Stohler, MSN, RN.
  - “Orthotic Related Pressure Injuries: An Inter-Professional Team Employs Lean Methodologies to Close the Gaps” by presenter Donna Jones, MSN, RN.
  - “Using a Four Phase Back-to Basics Peri-Operative Audit to Reduce Total Knee Arthroplasty Surgical Site Infections” by presenters Jennifer Hehl, RN, PhD, CNOR, and Sherry Stohler, MSN, RN.
  - “Is There a Need For Standardization Of Venous Thromboembolism (VTE) Prophylaxis In Total Shoulder Arthroplasty (TSA) Patients?: A Retrospective Review” by presenter Sherry Stohler, MSN, RN.

Cardiology/Cardiovascular Surgery

- Nurses from Bliss 9 East walked in the American Heart Association Heart Walk on October 19, 2019. Left to right: Laura Miller, BSN, RN, Diane Bagioni, BSN, RN, Sabrina Santos, BSN, RN, and Angela Bride, BSN, RN.

Medicine/IV Therapy

- Jill Porto, RN, from H12 earned Medical-Surgical Certification in April.
- Anne Minar, RN, Jeff Bergeron, RN, Kyle Malan, RN, and David Tincopa, RN, earned Vascular Access Certification this past year.
- Lee Steere, RN, CRNI, VA-BC, Unit Leader of IV Therapy Services was published by the Journal of the Association for Vascular Access for “Lean Leadership: Transforming Infusion Therapy for Savings, Efficiency and Better Patient Outcomes.”
Nursing News & Notes

continued from page 12

Speciality Services

• Amy Lynch, RN, formerly a CB2 PCA, graduated with her BSN from UConn in May and is now a CB2 staff RN.

• Emily Cyr, RN, formerly a CB2 PCA, graduated with her BSN from the University of St. Joseph in May and is now a CB2 staff RN.

• CB2 Nurse Educator Anna-Rae Montano, PhD, RN-BC, graduated with her PhD in Nursing from the University of Connecticut in May.

End-of-Life Nursing

Six nurses complete the End-of-Life Nursing Education Consortium Certificate Course: Trystan Allen, BSN, OCN, RN; Dorothy Smyrak, BSN, RN; Blaire Herter, BSN, RN; Anna-Rae Montano, PhD, RN-BC; Erica Swanson, BSN, RN; and Karen Malecki, BSN, RN.

ONS/ONCC Chemotherapy Immunotherapy

Four nurses completed the ONS/ONCC Chemotherapy Immunotherapy Certificate Course: Katarzyna Cw alina, Sara Fontaine, Nicole Crapser and Rebecca Budarz.

Oncology Certified Nurse

Luke Lamarre, BSN, OCN, RN—shown here in a lighthearted moment with colleagues—earned the designation of Oncology Certified Nurse.

Publication


Women’s Health Services

• Jennifer Moller, MSN, RNC, has earned a seat on the Connecticut Maternal Mortality Review Committee, which is comprised of a diverse group of healthcare providers, public health professionals, mental health workers and others outside the medical field. The committee reviews all maternal deaths in the state to determine contributing factors, identify potential causes, and develop better prevention strategies.

• Labor & Delivery’s Alexis Oseiwusu, RNC, received her External Fetal Monitoring Certification.

• Mary Marshall-Crim, MSN, FNP-BC, IBCLC, and Deborah A. Gingras, MS, RN, CNS, gave a poster presentation on “Use of Lean Process to Increase Early Pumping in NICU Dyads” in June at the 50th Anniversary Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric & Neonatal Nurses Conference in Atlanta.

• Joan Esper Kuhnly, NNP-BC, APRN, IBCLC, DNP, CNE—who works at Hartford Hospital as a lactation consultant and community patient educator—has had multiple publications and poster presentations over the past year.

Maryann Steed has been named an an End-of-Life Nursing Education Consortium (ELNEC) Award Winner for 2019

Maryann Steed, MSN, RN, CHPN, has been a member of the palliative care team at Hartford Hospital since 2005, and currently serves as the Palliative Care Educator and Quality Coordinator. She initiated ELNEC Core training in 2018, offering the modules over a two-day, 12-hour course which has been enthusiastically received. Currently, almost 200 nurses, nurse practitioners, social workers, music therapists, case coordinators, and nurse educators have received ELNEC training. Ms. Steed strives to empower nurses to find their voice in advocating for patients facing serious illness. Many participants, once they experience the quality and depth of this curriculum, quickly become advocates for spreading this content throughout the healthcare system. Two additional programs are in the planning phase to extend both the audience and the ELNEC content; one that focuses on nursing assistants, recognizing the vital contributions they bring to providing quality palliative care, and another centering on the critical imperative to improve clinical communication.
Congratulations to all who presented posters in October at the 23rd Annual Evidence-Based Practice Conference at Hartford Hospital, which followed the theme “What Does It Mean to be a Nurse: Finding Joy in Work.” Hartford Hospital nurses who presented included:

• “Can An Inter-professional Prospective Patient Review Process (PPRP) Reduce Length of Stay and Post-operative Complications Following a Total Joint Arthroplasty (TJA)? A Retrospective Review” by Karen Livingston, APRN, ONC; Sherry Stohler, MSN, RN; Amber Monson, MSN, RN; and Donna Jones, MSN, RN.

• “Finding Improvement Opportunities in Transition Teaching for Total Hip and Knee Arthroplasty Patients: The Role of the Transition RN Navigator” by Charles Johnson, BSN, RN; Lorraine Achiles, BSN, RN; Carol Ghergurovich, MSN, RN; Victoria Freed, BSN, RN; and Sherry Stohler, MSN, RN.

• “Using Humor to Enhance the Nurse-Patient Relationship” by Donna-Ree Beckford, BSN, RN; Anifatu Kasanga, BSN, RN; Matthew Padykula, BSN, RN; and Chrissy Pikos, BSN, RN.

• “Gestational Carrier Pregnancy: Beginning of a New Life and New Family” by Deborah A. Gingras, MS, RN, CNS.

• “Implementing a Multidisciplinary Shared Governance Model to Improve Early Ambulation in Fragility Hip Fracture Patients” by Erica Braudrick, BSN, RN, ONC; M. Anderson, DPT; Victoria Freed, BSN, RN; Carol Ghergurovich, MSN, RN; Kim Hayes, RN, MS; and Sherry Stohler, MSN, RN.

• “Outcomes Demonstrated by the Clinical Documentation Specialist Nurse: Ensuring Integrity of the Medical Record” by Chi D. Nguyen, MSN, RN, CCDS.

• “Wellness Champions: A Quality Improvement Project to Address Compassion Fatigue Among Oncology Nurses at Hartford Hospital” by Ashley Shelden, RN, MSN, OCN; Anna-Rae Montano, RN-BC, BSN, MS; Maura Kenny, BSN, RN; and Mary Kate Eanniello, DNP, RN, OCN.

• “Is There A Need For Standardization Of Venous Thromboembolism (VTE) Prophylaxis In Total Shoulder Arthroplasty (TSA) Patients?: A Retrospective Review” by Nicole LaVette, APRN; Sherry Stohler, RN, MSN; and Jannat Gill BDS, MPH.

• “Reducing Time to Operating Room (TTOR) for Fragility Hip Fractures: Implementation of an Orthopedic Trauma Nurse Navigator” by Erica Braudrick, BSN, RN, ONC; Kim Hayes, RN, MS; and Sherry Stohler, MSN, RN.

• “Tell me in your own words: The teach back method improves nurse’s ability to teach about heart failure” by Cathryn Broadwell, MSN, RN; and Dr. Cherry Karl, PhD, RN, CNE.

• “Fall Fridays: A Creative Strategy for Patient Safety” by Nicole DeNapoli, BSN, RN; and Laura Lessard, BSN, RN.

• “Sustaining Unit-Based Skin Champions to Reduce Pressure Injury: Outcomes From 8 Years of ‘Champ Camp’” by Lisa Q. Corbett, DNP, APRN, CWOCN; Kimberlee Cheney, BSN, RN, CWON; Barbara Falkowski, BSN, RN, CWCN; Carol Lightbody, BSN, RN, COCN; Suzanne Miller, BSN, BA, RN, CWCN; Nancy Ough, LPN; and Lisa A. Smith, BSN, RN, CWON.

• “Is Experience the Best Teacher for Repeat Total Joint Replacement Patients?: A Prospective Cohort Analysis” by Lorraine Achiles, BSN, RN; Charles Johnson, BSN, RN; and Sherry Stohler, MSN, RN.

• “What is the Effectiveness of a Customized Patient/Family Stroke Education Guide on Patient Satisfaction?” by Judith Greco-Dugan, BSN, RN, CNRN, SCRN.

Christopher Mann, BSN, RN, from Bliss 8 leads a breakout session.
Isn’t it amazing how quickly time passes as we grow older? It seems like just yesterday that I was a new graduate. Yet it was 1969 when I first began my career. At that time, we were introduced to the concept of “team nursing.” The model placed the doctor at the top, followed by the charge nurse and then team leaders, who were given different sections of the unit. Each team included LPNs and aides to help deliver patient care.

This model was quite familiar to us. As students, we were expected to take charge nurse positions prior to graduation. As new HH graduates, we were ready to handle most anything. As one of our alumni recently said: “You didn’t graduate from this nursing school without being polished into some kind of gem.” We rose to the team leader position and, in an amazingly short time, we became charge nurses. Through this process, the needs of our patients were always our first priority. We developed strong relationships with fellow team members, gained self-confidence, and developed strength and resilience. We then carried these characteristics throughout our careers.

Over the past 50 years, nursing models have changed their titles and tweaked their formats. However, the essence of nursing has really not changed. The characteristics we developed are still at the core of good nurses today. Each is a true gem.

As you’ll see on the following pages, 195 of our “polished gems” from all over the country gathered in May 2019 at the Sheraton Hotel in Rocky Hill, Conn., for our 126th Annual Alumnae Banquet. It was a day of sharing love, laughter and memories with representatives from 29 classes—the largest class present being the Class of 1969, which included 32 attendees to celebrate their 50th reunion.

Turn the page for photos and more details of this wonderful event.

Proudly standing at the front entrance of Hartford Hospital, our student nurse statue is a way to ensure that the legacy of the Hartford Hospital School of Nursing—and the excellent care our nurses provided—continues to influence future generations of nurses.

Also, in October, ground-breaking for another memorial took place in the Springer Garden: a commemorative fountain representing our beloved “Hepatitis.” The fountain was made possible by the largest monetary donation ever made by the Alumni Association.

We will continue to brainstorm ways to ensure the HHSN lives on. Permanently etching our footprints will allow a new generation of nurses to more easily find their way.

Mary Jane Densmore MS, BA, RN (HHSN ‘69)
President, Alumnae Association
of the Hartford Hospital School of Nursing

The Board Of The Alumnae Association
Of The Hartford Hospital School Of Nursing

Join Your Alumnae Association
Become one of the more than 600 HHSN graduates who belong to the Alumnae Association of the Hartford Hospital School of Nursing. Membership dues are only $10 per year and include membership in the Alumnae Medical Fund. Members are allowed to apply for scholarships.

To join, simply mail your $10 non-tax deductible check (payable to the Alumnae Association of HHSN Inc.) to the address below. Include your full name, class year, mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address.

For more information, please contact Pat Ciarcia, executive director for alumnae affairs, at: patciarcia@snet.net or visit: www.hhsnalumnae.org. You may also write to the Alumnae Association of the Hartford Hospital School of Nursing, 560 Hudson St., Hartford, CT 06106.
Ardell Schmidt Patterson from the class of 1959 was the “go-to” person for planning class reunions. In the Spring of 2019 when it was her class’s 60th Hartford Hospital School of Nursing anniversary she made all the arrangements for the May celebration. She and her classmates were looking forward to the reunion festivities when Ardell passed away unexpectedly in April, a few weeks shy of the reunion she had planned.

Ardell knew she wanted to be a nurse when in high school. She was exceptionally bright and did what she accomplished. She loved nursing. While in high school she met the love of her life, Robert Patterson. After knowing each other for seven years, they were married, raised a family together and loved each other deeply for 57 years.

Ardell earned her diploma in nursing from the Hartford Hospital School of Nursing in Hartford, CT where she felt highly appreciated. At HHSN she believed she got a good initial background for nursing and loved it there. She had a lot of friends in that class and over the years kept in touch with several classmates. They even took annual trips together. Her husband asked her why she chose Hartford Hospital, and she said “because of its reputation as such a good school.”

At HHSN Ardell was the recipient of the Oliver J. Smith Award (highest ranking academic and professionalism award). Her husband says that “she was surprised to get it. I was there and I was pleased and surprised. But then I realized that she was modest, terribly bright and well respected by her colleagues. She loved being a nurse, so it seemed like a natural kind of thing.”

She then went on to become a nursing instructor. In that role Ardell assisted nursing students and patients during the deadly 1961 Hartford Hospital Fire. That fire changed safety standards for hospitals throughout the country.

Her husband says that “Ardell never spoke of the fire or what she saw but it had a dramatic impact on her.”

Ardell went on to receive her B.A. in Early Childhood & Family Intervention from Emmanuel College in Boston, MA, and then worked for 17 years at Tufts New England Medical Center as a nurse and licensed social worker. While at this job she participated in cutting edge care, nursing ‘failure to thrive babies’, while supporting their families. Later on, she was a program director for the early intervention services for Sullivan County, NH. Her husband describes Ardell as being “gifted at helping families in need.”

She was a self-actualized person who loved people as well as the medical aspects of nursing. She was able to combine the two and always felt nursing had many different aspects. Ardell enjoyed being a mother. She and Bob had 2 children, both of whom followed into the medical field. Their son Bobby is Vice President of Human Resources and Clinical Operations at the Central Vermont Medical Center Hospital. He is also a physical therapist by profession. Karen became a clinical psychologist, specializing in pediatric neurology. They both admit that they went into the medical field because of their experiences of listening and watching their mother. And that’s really special.

During her retirement years Ardell and her husband Bob moved to Perdido Key where they volunteered at Saint Vincent DePaul Society at the Holy Spirit Church assisting struggling families. She enjoyed working and, as Bob says, “she had more energy than five people.” As Ardell had done her entire life, she used her professional skills and her strong sense of caring to make a difference in other people’s lives.

And, she made a difference. She cared. She was very, very proud of her profession and was highly respected by her peers. Ardell enjoyed working with people and had a great deal of empathy and that meant so much to her and her family.
A Look Back

Hartford Hospital School of Nursing alum Ola Krasnoselsky Ferla never spent much time talking about why she became a nurse. Yet her daughter, Susan, has no doubt it was her calling. Using words like competent and unflappable to describe her mother Susan says she was a person who always put others first, oozed with compassion, and deftly tackled any challenge that came before her. Indeed, Ola didn’t need to talk about why being a nurse was right for her, because she practiced nursing values like integrity, autonomy, altruism, social justice and a belief in human dignity every day, Susan Ferla said, adding: “It’s who my mom was, and practices she embodied at home—and everywhere—every single day.”

The last surviving member of the HHSN Class of 1940, Ola Ferla made headlines in 2017 for celebrating her 100th birthday from a New Haven hospital bed. Local TV and newspaper channels covered the story of how this feisty centenarian had bonded with the nurses caring for her. Indeed, Ola didn’t need to talk about why being a nurse was right for her, because she practiced nursing values like integrity, autonomy, altruism, social justice and a belief in human dignity every day, Susan Ferla said, adding: “It’s who my mom was, and practices she embodied at home—and everywhere—every single day.”

The last surviving member of the HHSN Class of 1940, Ola Ferla made headlines in 2017 for celebrating her 100th birthday from a New Haven hospital bed. Local TV and newspaper channels covered the story of how this feisty centenarian had bonded with the nurses caring for her. “Most of her friends were nurses she met in nursing school, from when she worked at Hartford Hospital, or from when she served as an Army nurse during World War II,” Susan Ferla said. “Nurses are tough. They relate to each other. And most of my mother’s friendships with fellow nurses were life-long ones. My mother was a smart, independent woman who was drawn to other smart, independent women, and most of those types of people in mother’s life were fellow nurses.”

The daughter of Ukrainian immigrants, Ola was raised with her three siblings on a farm in Ashfield, Mass. It was her parents’ dream to be farmers, yet the Great Depression of the early 1930s helped ensure that life was not easy. Food and other necessities were often lacking, leading Ola to grow up with a focus on the need to be practical and resilient, and to never let anything that could be repurposed or recycled go to waste.

Throughout her life, Ola also showed the determination and drive she developed from watching her parents: people who were unable to read or write in English, yet were able to manage and sustain the farm that still is owned by family members today. Ola’s parents also encouraged her and her siblings to never allow anything to stand in the way of pursuing their goals or dreams. Valedictorian of her high school class, Ola began her career as a caregiver by working as a nanny for a prominent local family. She then entered the Hartford Hospital Nursing School. When she graduated in 1940, she was recognized as the top student in the class, as well as for earning that year’s highest score on the Connecticut Nursing State Board Examination. “She was a woman who could handle tremendous responsibility and was never an alarmist,” her daughter remembered. “I can’t tell you how many times our family got through challenges thanks to the calm, guiding hand of my mother, the nurse in charge.” Ola was also a woman whose beliefs in service led to her leaving Hartford Hospital shortly after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in December 1941 and entering the U.S. Army as a nurse. Stationed in England and Scotland, she served as a first lieutenant and, among countless other wounded, treated men wounded during the Battle of D-day.

“She experienced great companionship and pride from her comrades in the army nurse corps. All of their terrific gumption and unsung acts of bravery contributed immensely to the war effort,” Susan Ferla said.

After the war, she married fellow veteran Joseph Ferla who, according to their daughter, had a similar “sense of caper” and love of adventure. The two moved to Farmington, where she lived the rest of her life, raising Susan and her brother Paul. After Ola died in July 2019 at age 101, Susan found among her mother’s belongings the Hartford Hospital nursing uniforms and emblazoned wool cape Ola had worn 80 years earlier.

“My mother and the nurses she went to school and worked with were tough independent ladies” Susan Ferla said. “For my mother, working in a profession that dealt with life and death also gave her a sense of perspective when things went wrong. Her motto was ‘Don’t sweat the small stuff. Nobody died.’ Over and over, she showed just how important people were in her life.”

Ola Krasnoselsky Ferla, Hartford Hospital School of Nursing Class of 1940
126th Annual Alumnae Banquet Another Great Success

On a spectacularly sunny day in May 2019, graduates of 29 Hartford Hospital School of Nursing classes attended our 126th Annual Alumnae Banquet at the Sheraton Hotel in Rocky Hill, Conn. Joined by three of our five scholarship recipients and guest speaker Maria Tacket, EdD, RN, CEN, TCRN, CCRN, Hartford Hospital director of Professional Practice, alumni traveled from all over the country to attend the banquet and awards ceremony, which originally started in the late 1880s as a “tea party.”

The very first annual gathering took place in March 1893 at the Hartford home of Hannah Russell, a member of the Class of 1892 who decided to invite local alums for an afternoon of tea. The event was such a great success that the women decided to make it an annual event.

“And thus began our esteemed annual banquet,” current Alumnae Association President Mary Jane Densmore, MS, BA, RN (HHSN ’69) said simply.

Among those present this May were 101-year-old Stephanie Druzolowski Kaminski, a member of the Class of 1938, who attended to celebrate her 81st reunion, and Jean Landon Smith, from the Class of 1944, who was there to celebrate 75 years as a HHSN graduate. These two women, among many others, were lauded for the strength and resilience they demonstrated by attending this special day.

Sadly, this was to be Stephanie’s last banquet. She died in August, just two months after reaching the age of 102. At her funeral, two members of the Alumnae Association board attended her funeral gathering and honored her memory with the Nightingale Pledge.

Also at our banquet this year, the Alumnae Association awarded five scholarships for 2019, totaling $24,000. Recipients Amanda Sinkewicz, Suzana Kalanica, and Cheryl Mitchell attended the banquet. Not present were Megan Lauer and Michele Lalonde.

Each year at the banquet, the HHSN Alumnae Association awards scholarships to eligible individuals who are pursuing a degree in nursing. Please check our website, hhsnalumnae.org, for eligibility requirements and contact information.

We ask that the scholarship application and all necessary documentation for 2020 awards be submitted by April 1, 2020.

In Memorian

Stefanie Druzelowski Kaminski
June 10, 1917 – August 3, 2019

Stefanie was the oldest active member of the Hartford Hospital School of Nursing Alumnae Association. She attended the Alumnae Banquet each year, and this past May was honored for celebrating her 81st anniversary as a HHSN graduate. She passed away in August at the age of 102. A caring, competent nurse, she worked at Hartford Hospital until her retirement in 1982. She will be missed.
Included in this issue’s “The Pillbox” are those classes that celebrated “special years” at the 2019 Alumnae Banquet.

**Class of 1944**

Jean Landon Smith, Class of 1944, celebrated 75 years since graduation at the Alumnae Banquet.

**Class of 1949**

Jean Anstett Butterfield and Muriel Williams Lessner represented their class at the Alumnae Banquet, celebrating 70 years.

**Class of 1954**

Among those smiling at the Alumnae Banquet were Claire Gworek Eddy and Lois Roden Dragone, celebrating 65 years.

**Class of 1959**

Celebrating their 60-year anniversary at the Alumnae Banquet were 18 former classmates.

**Class of 1962**

Linda Arle Duval is working as a substitute nurse in the high school near her home in Westfield, Mass. Her great-grandchildren live next door and keep her young and entertained.

Carol Fafard Pagano has moved to Florida permanently. She was unable to attend the Alumnae Banquet but wishes her classmates a healthy and happy year.

**Class of 1964**

Joan O’Connell Guntulis was the only member of her class to attend the Alumnae Banquet, marking 55 years.
Class of 1967

Alicia Plikaitis Junghans recently participated in a study at Dana Farber in Boston, Mass., as—in her words—“a real guinea pig.” She made this creation and appropriately named it “Alicia the Guinea pig,” which she presented to her oncologist (who was speechless but loved it!).

Class of 1969

Members of the Class of 1969 celebrated their 50th anniversary with two special events. A group of 32 alum, shown at left, attended the Alumnae Banquet, and several attended a special luncheon and tour of Hartford Hospital, compliments of Nursing Administration. The tours were especially interesting, as some of these alums had not been back to the hospital since graduating.

Class of 1973

Barbara Biel Nowak was recently honored for 30 years of service at Hartford Hospital. She currently works in the cardiothoracic surgical unit.

Class of 1974

Twenty members of the Class of 1974, including the 14 shown here, were present at the Alumnae Banquet to celebrate 45 years since their HHSN graduation.

Nancy Bober Holyst is retired from nursing and medicine. She and her husband are now able to spend time with friends, family and each other while they are still healthy and young enough to enjoy life.
IN MEMORIAM
Stefanie Druzolowski Kaminski ’38
Mildred Broandt Holmes ’42
Miriam Shapiro Cohen ’45
Janet Prager Dunn ’46
Dina Vandermark Waker ’46
Barbara Carlson Wheler ’48
Mary Lou Healy Condon ’50
Marjorie Zenobi Spitzel ’50
Barbara Johnson Voskowsky ’50
Barbara Barton Camilleri ’51
Bertha Visnia Maroney ’51
Joanne Bergsten Milne ’55
Carolina Golet Armstrong ’56
Patricia Fitton Stone ’57
Margaret O’Hala Crombie ’59
Ardell Schmidt Patterson ’59
Geraldine Zelinsky Fowler ’65
Karen Amaio Hudson ’65

PHYSICIANS
Stanley A. Bartus, MD – General and Transplant Surgery
Mark W. Izard, MD – Internal Medicine and Nephrology
Stephen J. Kastoff, MD – Cardiology
William W. Zeller, MD – Psychiatry

Alumnae Comments

“...I would like to say how much I look forward to the annual Hartford Hospital School of Nursing Alumnae Banquet. Some of the happiest times of my life were spent at HHSN. My nursing years gave me a wonderful basis for the medical career I never dreamed of at the time. It provided me with a medical perspective on patient care shared with three other classmates in medical school.

– Nancy Bober Holyst, MD, ’74

The “A Look Back” article in your Spring 2019 issue, “She Was Part of The Greatest Generation,” was a beautiful tribute to my mother, Ruth Banfield Lowderback. The part about her returning to nursing at HH, and working in the blood bank in the late 1960’s, remains in my memory. She told me it was time for me to donate blood, and I might have been her first subject. They liked my “O-neg” “Low Tider”—whatever that means! More gallons later and still donating, I will never forget that day. Thanks for the memories.

– Gary Lowderback, son of Ruth Banfield Lowderback ’39

Let Us Hear From You!
We would love to receive photos and news from HHSN alumnae. Please mail information to the Alumnae Association of the Hartford Hospital School of Nursing, 560 Hudson Street, Hartford, CT 06106 or e-mail patciarcia@snet.net.

Give A Lasting Gift
Your contribution today will make a difference to our nursing education program. Mail your gift to Hartford Hospital, Fund Development, 80 Seymour Street, Hartford, CT 06102. You can act now and show your commitment to nursing education forever by including Hartford Hospital and/or the Alumnae Association of HHSN Inc. in your estate plans. For more information, please contact Carol S. Garlick, vice president, philanthropy, at 860.545.2162 or at Carol.Garlick@hhchealth.org.
There were only nine graduates in the Hartford Hospital Training School Class of 1881. Here, the students stand behind their superintendent and instructors. All of these resilient nurses paved the way for future generations.

Photo courtesy of The Hamilton Archives at Hartford Hospital