



Fall 2010

In this Issue

Teaching families to beat the odds

Doreen Dawe was getting ready for her morning run when something felt wrong. Within 20 minutes she had lost function to both her legs and her pelvis. She was completely paralyzed from the waist down.

This health crisis was just one in a series that would change her life but not necessarily for worse. Continued on page 4.

- More nursing graduates stay in the province 2
- Thinking strategically..... 3
- Spotlight on students 7
- All about alumni 13
- Focus on faculty..... 15
- Research Matters 18

More nursing graduates stay in the province

Ninety per cent of recent nursing graduates are staying in Newfoundland and Labrador. According to the Department of Health and Community Services, of the 197 graduates from the BN (Collaborative) Program in May 2010, 176 of them were offered jobs in the province with the four regional health authorities. That's a jump of 25 per cent from 2003 when 65 per cent of nursing graduates stayed in the province. The graduates are from the Memorial University School of Nursing, the Centre for Nursing Studies and the Western Region School of Nursing.



Dr. Judith McFetridge-Durdle is the director of the School of Nursing. She thinks this increase is a result of a number of factors. "Eighty-eight to ninety per cent of our students are from Newfoundland and Labrador and most of them look for jobs in the province first before going abroad," she said. "Given the aging population and impending nursing retirements in Newfoundland and Labrador, I think the demand for nursing graduates will continue to increase across all four regional health authorities. Given the now competitive nursing salaries and benefits here, I also believe that if offered jobs, most of our graduates will continue to stay in this province." Nearly all of the new graduates were recipients of the provincial government's BN Bursary Program, which makes bursaries available to third and fourth year students as well as fast track students who enter into a one-year return-in-service agreement with a regional health authority in the province.

Jennifer Milmine is one graduate who stayed. She earned her BN this past spring and is now working in Clarenville. She says the main reasons she stayed in the province were family and better working conditions for nurses including competitive salaries. "Staying in Newfoundland and having a permanent, full time position is wonderful. It's great to be able to stay home and have enough money to live on, especially as a single mom."

Katie Costello also graduated this past spring. She says there are many reasons she stayed here. "I am so proud to be a Labradorian and have always known I would return here for a career. I feel privileged to have graduated from such an elite nursing program, and I want to return my professional abilities to the province in which I learned them."

"The Memorial University School of Nursing is committed to meeting the increasing need for nurses in the province," noted Dr. McFetridge-Durdle. "In 2010, we had a record number of applicants. However, due to constraints imposed by lack of space, we are limited to 85 new student admissions to our Bachelor of Nursing (Collaborative) Program each year. Our goal is to look at creative ways to expand our programs in the near future. We are also exploring ways to create more opportunities for students to practice in rural areas as part of their nursing education."

Thinking strategically

by Dr. Judith McFetridge-Durdle, director, School of Nursing

The School of Nursing (SON) has come a long way since 1966 when the first 38 students were admitted to the bachelor of nursing programs. Today, the School houses 46 fulltime faculty with 196 fulltime students in the BN (Collaborative) Program, 58 fulltime students in the Fast Track Program, 196 in the BN (Post-RN) Program, and 89 enrollments in the MN Program.

The common theme at Memorial's SON lately is: Change. Change in how we deliver our programs, what we deliver and who we deliver to.

Firstly, the demand for nurses is continually increasing in conjunction with what is expected of our graduates. At the same time, the way in which students want to be educated is changing. All of these considerations we must take into account when we look ahead to the future of nursing education in Newfoundland and Labrador. Our new strategic plan reflects this.

The ever increasing need to produce nurses and nursing leaders to maintain and, in some cases, improve our demanding health care system is a need that the SON is responding to. The SON is in an excellent position to fill these gaps with bachelor and masters-prepared nurses but we would like to do more. In addition, the critical shortage of doctoral-prepared nursing faculty is also growing. This provides us the impetus to launch a PhD program, plans that are well underway.

We also have to consider the average profile of our students. It has changed significantly over the last few years. Their ages and lifestyles vary. Statistics tell us that there are more mature students who require greater flexibility for when and how they complete their degrees. Any changes at the SON need to reflect this.

There are changes in what is expected of our graduates as well. In the near future, nurses will require expertise in chronic disease management, mental health and addictions, infection control, patient safety and in seniors care. This requires access to coursework and clinical experiences that develop the required nursing competencies.

The following strategic directions reflect our commitment to meet the needs of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador:

- To consolidate nursing education within Memorial enabling us to respond to nursing education with a coordinated, strategic and innovative approach. This allows us to introduce new models of nursing education that meet the needs of rural and urban communities while embracing and enhancing the use of technology, and leveraging our collective strengths, to ensure that we have greater capacity for leadership in research and in the formulation and realization of healthy public policy.
- Expand and strengthen our Fast Track Nursing Program to take advantage of new blended learning pedagogies.
- Secure adequate space and resources to accommodate our faculty and staff.
- Assertively pursue and implement the nursing education programs that respond to the needs of the health care system and foster faculty development and scholarship.
- Strengthen our visibility and credibility among stakeholders to foster a stronger environment of understanding and support.

Teaching families to beat the odds



Doreen Dawe was getting ready for her morning run when something felt wrong. Within 20 minutes she had lost function in both her legs and her pelvis. She was completely paralyzed from the waist down. This health crisis was just one in a series that would change her life but not necessarily for worse.

It started earlier in 2002 when one of Dawe's son became critically ill and was not expected to survive. He did recover after intensive medical treatment. A few weeks later, Dawe suffered a spinal cord infarction caused by a spontaneous blood clot, which resulted in the paralysis. Over the next few years, she went through intensive rehabilitation. Four years after this, Dawe was diagnosed with breast cancer, undergoing surgery, chemotherapy and radiation.

"I never liked hearing any doctor or therapist say 'You can't do it'. I would always turn that around in my mind and say 'You wait and see'," said Dawe, who is an associate professor with the School of Nursing. "After the infraction, I was given encouragement about getting some function back but no one could totally predict what my recovery would be. A physiotherapist told me I had beaten the odds."

Dawe said her experience with the challenges of recovery made her to want to give back so others could benefit from her experiences. So, she and a colleague, Doreen Westera, applied for an Instructional Development Grant through Memorial to make a video about resilience and how health professionals can foster resilience in patients.

The official definition of resilience is "the ability to recover quickly from setbacks". Dawe (*above*) and Westera (*right*) developed Resilience in Health Care Crisis to show students and health care workers how a family like Dawe's could maintain healthy levels of psychological and physical functioning when faced with what would likely be the most difficult time of their lives. "Resilience can be a family and community event. My colleagues and others at Memorial were and continue to be part of my resilience," said Dawe. "They provide incredible support physically, emotionally and spiritually."



"When health professionals focus on resilience they focus on strengths and possibilities, and what a profound affect these things have on positive health outcomes," explained Westera. "This model of care rejects the concept of damaged, which emphasizes deficits, dysfunction and deficiencies, instead embracing strengths, competencies and resources."

According to Westera, resilience requires perseverance, determination, and the ability to envision possibilities and attack obstacles. Qualities, she says, everyone is born with. "We felt it was so important for health care professionals to realize that everyone has the power within themselves to adjust to adversity and that this can be fostered," said Westera. "They need the tools to show clients that health problems should be secondary to living life to the fullest."

Westera has been producing videos that link nursing theory to practice since 1990 and they have been distributed around the world. “Today’s students have grown up in an environment of television, movies and video games. They seem to learn much better with visual images and those learning experiences are even better when connected to real life experiences,” said Westera, who sees the 29 minute Resilience in Health Care Crisis video as a resource for departments such as nursing, social work, education, medicine, women’s studies, and psychology.

Resilience in Health Care Crisis is available on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CCdAtbG14fU>.

Meet our director



Why did you become a nurse?

Because I wanted to make a difference in people’s lives.

And did you?

Yes, I really think I did.

What was your first nursing job?

I started in pediatric nursing at the IWK Hospital in Halifax. I worked on a surgery and burn unit floor and learned quickly how children can suffer and what a

difference nurses can make. I’ve always been attracted to critical care nursing and, even though it was a difficult place to work, it was one-on-one care so you had the opportunity to know your patient and know your patient’s family.

What was the most memorable thing about that first job?

What I learned from more senior nurses. You really learned quickly that the nurses who knew what they were doing were the ones who have experience and have been there a long time. There’s a scholar named Patricia Benner and she wrote a book called From Novice to Expert and in that book she describes the senior nurses as ‘grey gorillas’ and the nurses I worked with that first year were grey gorillas and from them I learned so much more that I had in the four years before that. You learn a lot because you’re ready to learn.

Do you miss practicing as a nurse?

I consider education a part of nursing. In administration, I miss the student contact. As a faculty member you get to look in their eyes and see their excitement and take them into clinical and it makes you feel like part of a team. I definitely feel a bit more removed now.

When did you know you had chosen the right career path?

I started off in physical education, actually but I had always wanted to be a nurse. So, that first year, I had gotten injured while in phys ed and was in the hospital and I thought, this is where I want to be. I really liked the action and the atmosphere and the buzz. I'd always wanted to be a nursing educator too. It wasn't long – I was in practice for maybe five years – before I decided that education was where I wanted to be. I like sitting in libraries and odd things like that. I used to love going to the library to sit and read. That was my idea of a great afternoon. It was something about the university and academia. I'm just well suited to this environment, I think.

You seem to have a strong connection to Memorial and a passion for what happens here. Where does that come from?

I am from Atlantic Canada. I grew up in Nova Scotia and there's a sense of pride and energy about the East. I've travelled to quite a few conferences, nationally and internationally, and sometimes, at least on the national stage, there's sense in nursing that when people talk about east, they're talking about Montreal. It's getting better but there was a time when we were left out of the conversations and sometimes just not thought of. That just reinforces your pride and your concerns about the East because we are different in Atlantic Canada and our issues are different. So, the stronger our faculty are here, the more visible we'll be nationally.

I also sense a tremendous sense of pride in the university on the part of people who live here. When I first got my tour, there was the explanation of why this was called Memorial University. So, right away there's that sense of meaning. This is where everyone here puts their hopes and dreams and their support. And they're very responsive here to the students. I like that. There's no sense of elitism. There's a commitment to keeping tuition down so all students can attend and I like that. Even though we open our doors to international and national students, there's still a commitment to the citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador and that's unique.

If you had to choose one word to describe the School of Nursing, what would it be?

I'd say ready. Because we're ready for change and we're ready for consolidation and we're ready to look differently at how we educate our nurses and to look at new ways of doing business. But we need support to really be the best we can be.

What makes you most proud of our students and our alumni?

Their commitment and their enthusiasm. I've met with a lot of students and they're very excited about their careers. I'm also proud of their willingness to look abroad.

Who inspires you?

I think back to practice to some of those grey gorillas and how they do the best they can to prepare our nurses to be really excellent in practice because nurses have everything to do with how the health care system rolls out. So, they still inspire me. There are also some scholars that inspire me that have really made a difference with their research and those who have been independent nurse scientists. I've been fortunate to have colleagues like that here and in the United States and I think of them sometimes and their work ethic and their drive. Then there are always the stories of nurses that you read who've made a difference internationally and here too, with their caring work and their work in palliative care. That makes you feel proud of nursing.

Spotlight on students



Hat's off!

Fall 2010 graduation saw the first graduates of the Bachelor of Nursing (Post-RN) Nurse Practitioner Primary Health Care Option Program. More than 30 School of Nursing students completed their degrees: Twenty-one from the BN (Collaborative) Fast Track program, two from the BN (Collaborative) Program, four from the BN (Post-RN) Program, six from the BN (Post-RN) Nurse Practitioner Primary Health Care Option Program, as well as two students from the MN Graduate Program.

The graduation and awards ceremony was held on October 22 where graduates also received their Professional Pin. The pin, which was presented to the graduates by Dr. Judith

McFetridge-Durdle, is a symbol of transition from nursing student to beginning professional in a career dedicated to service to the community. In addition, numerous awards were handed out at the ceremony to undergraduate and graduate students.

Spring 2010

Forty-two graduates from the Bachelor of Nursing Program graduated on May 28. As well, seven graduates from the Bachelor of Nursing (Post-RN) Program received their Professional Pin. Six Master of Nursing graduates were also in attendance to announce their practicum topics. In addition, numerous awards were handed out at the ceremony to undergraduate and graduate students.



Congratulations to all of our 2010 graduates!

Rising researcher

Gina Colborne was chosen for a national training opportunity that took her to Winnipeg, Manitoba this fall. The third year BN student was picked for the Rising Researcher Support Program, one of four training awards with the Canadian Child Health Clinician Scientist Program (CCHCSP). The Rising Researcher Support Program gives those who are training towards certification as a child health clinician an opportunity to engage in research career planning.

The nomination came from her supervisors this past summer when Colborne worked as a research assistant under the Summer Undergraduate Research Award (SURA). She worked on a project with Newfoundland and Labrador's Provincial Breastfeeding Coalition Research Group. A position she's very proud of. "I was given the opportunity to help out with breastfeeding research projects relevant to Newfoundland and Labrador. Despite the evidence showing the many benefits of breastfeeding, Newfoundland and Labrador shows the lowest initiation and duration rates of any province in Canada."

Part of that project looked into why women choose not to breastfeed and their overall infant feeding decision-making process. Colborne says her interests in nursing have always leaned towards maternal and child health and during a maternity clinical placement she was exposed to a lot of new mothers. "Some immediately chose to breastfeed while some did not even consider breastfeeding and went straight to formula feeding," she explained.



"I thought this was very interesting and jumped at the opportunity to work on research regarding breastfeeding. I learned a lot more about the benefits of breastfeeding and feeding decisions of new mothers. This knowledge and understanding can definitely be transferred to my clinical nursing practice."

Colborne says the Rising Researcher Support Program will no doubt benefit her career. "It was an opportunity to learn new research skills and keep up to date on pediatric research. It was also a chance for me to network with other students and professionals who are working in research."

"I find research fascinating. There are so many research areas in which to become involved. I can't say for sure where I'll be in five years or what exactly I'll be doing, but I know research will definitely be a component of my future career." The CCHCSP is a national network of 13 Canadian Child and Youth Health Research Centers dedicated to training the next generation of clinician-scientists of which Memorial University is a part.

Raising the bar



Two fourth year students helped organize a successful benefit for Shinerama for cystic fibrosis, a disease that attacks the respiratory system and debilitates people suffering from it. Megan Hudson and Jessica Hunt have been

involved with Shinerama: Students Fighting Cystic Fibrosis for the past three years in St. John's. When it began in 2008, volunteers raised \$7,000. Last year they helped raise \$18,000 and this year the total was \$21,000.

Jessica got involved after her first year of nursing when she devised a system to encourage more involvement from students as volunteers. "It's easy to help a patient with a disease on the floor as a nursing student," said Jessica. "It makes your day knowing that you helped in some way but it is even more rewarding when you feel as if you can help these patients outside of the hospital setting. It is even inspiring to see fellow students go through so much to reach a goal and who are so dedicated to a cause. Just to be working with those individuals who are behind putting it all together is rewarding." Nationally, the event raises almost \$1 million each year.

First years get a warm welcome

Seventy-five first year BN students were officially welcomed into the profession of nursing in the second annual School of Nursing Crest Ceremony on September 23. The students, who were accompanied by proud family and friends, were presented with the crest by Dr. Judith McFetridge-Durdle.

The crowd heard encouraging words from Dr. McFetridge-Durdle; the associate director of Undergraduate Studies, Karen Webber; Debbie Forward, president of the NL Nurses Union; Pegi Earle, executive director of the Association of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador; a representative from Eastern Health; and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Hurricane help

On September 29, two students in the Class of 2013, Erin Evans and Bethany Rideout, announced they wanted to contribute to the Help for Home Radiothon, to aid the victims of Hurricane Igor. The class executive supported the idea and they passed around a cup, asking for anything that the class was willing to give. Later that day, they dropped off an even \$200, contributing to the \$1 million raised.

After Hurricane Igor, the Student Nursing Society also felt they needed to contribute to those in our province who were affected.

"The Health Sciences parking lot was flooded and we even witnessed two students coming to school in a canoe. We thought if it was that bad here in the city, what were the rest of the outposts in Newfoundland suffering? We had originally planned a nursing social event with the intention of funds going back to the nursing society. However, we thought that our efforts would be much more appreciated if we helped those in need," said Catherine Burt, president of the society.

So, on October 1 they held a pub crawl and dedicated all of the proceeds of the social event to Hurricane Igor relief. In addition, the society is passing out donation sheets to each year, both regular stream and fast track classes, to add to their Hurricane Igor Relief Fund.

“The speakers aimed to instill a sense of pride in the students for choosing nursing. As well, it was a time to bring together family and friends - people who will play a very important role in the students’ success throughout their program,” said fourth year student Megan Hudson, one of the organizers of the event.

“The ceremony is a chance for fellow students, faculty and staff, and other professionals to welcome the students to the professional school and congratulate them on choosing such a special profession,” said Hudson.

“It’s an initiation ceremony and a chance for them to meet people in their class, meet faculty and staff and get them excited about the program.” The School has 85 first year BN students in total - 53 in the four year regular stream program and 32 in the two year fast-track program.



Heart and Sole



A few of our BN fast track students volunteered at the annual walk and fundraiser for the Heart and Stroke Foundation back In June by setting up a blood pressure clinic.

Photo: Students Catherine Barnes and Sarah Douglas, faculty member April Manuel, and student Victoria Wells.

Nursing students launch first student chapter of Kidney Cancer Canada

Students from the School of Nursing have launched the first student chapter of Kidney Cancer Canada. The initiative came about after a recent talk from a cancer patient who inspired senior students to do more than just listen to his story.

Dan Mosher (*pictured right*) is a patient with terminal kidney cancer. He became involved with KCC one year after his diagnosis because he made a commitment that if he lived another year, he would do something to make it better for those coming after him. Mr. Mosher has since become the volunteer director of Kidney Cancer Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador. He gave students a different perspective during a recent visit to the school and the students were quite moved by his story.



“He made the concept of kidney cancer real with his personal story. His story touched me and made me feel that I could be that person to help and make a difference,” said Lana Mercer, president of the new chapter. “It made me realize that compassionate nursing care does not only happen at the bedside but includes creating awareness and advocating, as well. I want to make a difference, spread the word to colleagues and health care professionals, and most importantly improve the quality of life for, not only patients living with kidney cancer, but their families, as well.”

Mr. Mosher wanted to open the eyes of future health care professionals before they have a heavy workload and get them thinking before they are practicing. “I wanted to show them through my eyes what a patient sees and reinforce the positive role of the nurse,” he said. “They need to know that a cancer diagnosis is a family diagnosis, not an individual one. They need to know why patients and their families are angry and scared. The student nurse plays a very unique role as the conduit between the patients and families, and the doctors and nurses taking care of them.”

Mr. Mosher is hoping this new student chapter will expand awareness among students and patients, and become a role model for other chapters across the country.

Dr. Judith McFetridge-Durdle said she’s constantly amazed and impressed by the students. “Our students are responding to the needs of our communities even before they are practicing. They don’t just listen to other people’s stories. They are moved and they take action. All of our nursing students are truly inspiring.”

Graduate profile

"Nursing school likes to throw you out into clinical situations and see if you sink or float. Most of the time, you float, of course."

- Laura Downing, BN (2010)
Valedictorian for the Class of 2010,
BN (Collaborative) Program
Hometown: Harbour Grace, NL



Why did you choose nursing?

I always wanted to work in health care and I wanted a profession that was intriguing, involved critical thinking, and allowed me to have a high level of independence. I also wanted a diploma that I could build on that would allow me to work in many different areas doing many different things. I'm a fairly practical person, so it was nice to have a degree that was hands-on for the majority of the four years.

How was your experience with the School of Nursing?

It was a tough going, to be honest. They definitely don't make it easy on you, nor do they baby you. It's a hard program, but that's understandable since nursing is definitely one of the more challenging professions out there. If you were interested in the classes, hungry to learn about what the program had to teach you, teachers would pick up on that and give you all the support that you needed. The people that I met, as both classmates and professors, were absolutely amazing. Our class was fairly small, so you had the opportunity to get to know everyone quite well. There was plenty of support and encouragement, and I'm very grateful for it.

Where do you work?

I'm currently employed with Eastern Health as a continuing care nurse in the home and community care program but I just took a position with the Nunatsiavut government as a public health nurse in Nain. For the next little while, I hope to hop between the two to get a good feel for the different aspects of community health.

Did you have any interesting experiences during your time at the School of Nursing?

Most of the funniest times came from clinical experiences during all four years. Nursing school likes to throw you out into clinical situations and see if you sink or float. Most of the time, you float, of course. But you're always sweaty and nervous and afraid you'll say the wrong thing to clients, when of course, they're trying to hold back laughter because you've dropped the medication all over the floor, knocked over the garbage can or, heaven forbid, you put the johnny coat on backwards.

What advice would you give students who are considering nursing as a career?

Make sure you're doing it because you want to do it. It's honestly more of a lifestyle than a job, and you have to bring a lot of realness and heart to the table. It's okay to be scared and it's okay to not like needles. Eventually all that stuff will come and you'll master it. It's a lot of work, but it's worth it when you realize that you're constantly impacting lives for the better each day you step into your uniform.

All about alumni

Alumnae memory donation enhances learning opportunities at the School of Nursing

by Jenn Deon



Classmates and colleagues joined the family of Donna Howell on April 12, 2010 to celebrate a special donation made in her honour to the School of Nursing.

Donna's fellow alumnae from the class of 1978 raised the funds to purchase a mobile technology cart for the touch-screen monitors and computer that accompanies

"Noelle", the female maternity patient simulator at the school's Learning Resource Centre.

Donna Howell, who passed away in the fall of 2009, was a maternity nurse for almost 30 years. Her classmates felt it was only appropriate that their gifts go towards helping educate new nursing students in maternity techniques.

"Donna was an incredible woman and a true bedside nurse," said Donna Hutchens, one of Donna Howell's classmates who helped organize the initiative. "We started nursing together years ago in labour and delivery at the Grace."

Brenda Oldford, a former nursing clinical instructor at the Learning Resource Centre, outlined how the mobile technology cart will enhance learning opportunities for students at the school. "Now we can monitor Noelle's maternal and neonatal vital signs anywhere and for any size of audience," she said.

Ms. Oldford enraptured those in attendance by demonstrating the full capabilities of the patient simulator. Assisted by Donna Hutchens and Christine Castagne, Ms. Oldford delivered Noelle's simulated baby boy while guests and family members looked on.

Darcy McMeekin, development officer for the school, gave special thanks to the Howell and Crewe families "for allowing us to share Donna's memory with the next generation of nurses."

"We will be attaching a plaque to the cart in Donna's memory, as a reminder that we care for and remember our students in every stage of their life."

2010 Alumni Tribute Awards

School of Nursing alum Vanessa Donnelly (BN'00) received the Horizon Award for Outstanding Achievement under the age of 35. In October, Memorial University's Alumni Association celebrated the achievements of some of its most accomplished members at the 29th Annual Alumni Tribute Awards.

After the Carbonear-native completed her bachelor of arts and bachelor of nursing degrees at Memorial, she headed to Halifax to complete her MN. While there, Ms. Donnelly learned about the Nova Scotia Gambia Association and the Canadian International Development Agency – and her compassionate quest to help those less fortunate began.

Ms. Donnelly discovered that when diabetes patients in Gambia run out of medications and supplies, they simply run out. She volunteered in the African country to establish a



The School of Nursing wants to get in touch with you!

Since 1965, the nearly **4,000 graduates** of Memorial's School of Nursing have been making a difference. The health of a community defines its success and Memorial's nurses play a vital role. You are leaders, innovators, advocates and caregivers in Newfoundland and Labrador and around the world.

No matter where you practice, you are always part of the Memorial community.

As alumni, you have access to a truly global network, with alumni outreach that connects you to events, networking opportunities, professional development workshops and many other benefits.

Visit munalum.ca and keep us up to date with your most recent email, address and any news you want to share. We will make sure that you stay informed about the latest School of Nursing news, events and benefits!

summer school to improve community health and governance through youth development and leadership. For five weeks, she focused on diabetes education and prevention and helped students develop greater communications and leadership skills so they could convey vital health information to their peers at school.

In 2008, Ms. Donnelly travelled to Tanzania with other healthcare professionals to develop and deliver diabetes education and best management strategies to health care professionals and educators at Mohimbili University and Ifakara International Health Training Institute. She has been invited to return to Africa in 2011 to continue her work.

In addition to her life-changing volunteer involvement, Ms. Donnelly works as a diabetes case management coordinator for Medicine/Geriatrics/Critical Care with the Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre in Halifax. She has presented at various national conferences to speak about her research in diabetes prevention and management. Most recently, she received the Eli Lilly Graduate Scholarship from the Canadian Diabetes Association, which recognizes outstanding individual efforts in diabetes care.

Focus on faculty

Teaching teamwork in patient safety



Dr. Anne Kearney and some of her colleagues have received an award for their interprofessional education module to improve patient safety. The Academy for Health Improvement (AHI) Duncan Neuhauser Award for Curricular Innovation encourages the development and dissemination of original curricular materials related to the teaching of improvement in healthcare.

Dr. Kearney and her team, which also includes Mary Bursey, Lynn Cooze and Ary Pevida from the School of Nursing as well as representatives from Pharmacy, Eastern Health, and Medicine, submitted the Patient Safety Interprofessional Education Module. They developed a case study of a pediatric medication error which students were asked to review and reflect on a series of questions designed to emphasize the importance of working together as a team and what was required to create a culture of safety.

This is the second year in a row that a team from Memorial has won the award, which was presented at the annual meeting of the AHI in Orlando, Florida.

A career built on pain research

Dr. Sandra LeFort has been studying pain for nearly 25 years. In fact, her masters thesis from 1986, which focused on the use of exercise to reduce low back pain, is still being cited in publications today. She has received more than \$1 million for pain-related research funding in her career, has had 56 peer-reviewed and book chapters in print (28 of these are related to pain), and has given over 100 presentations regionally, nationally and internationally on the subject of pain.

This year, she was given the Distinguished Career Award from the Canadian Pain Society; an award that recognizes longstanding service in pain research and/or management.



“Pain affects everyone at some time in their lives and chronic pain is estimated to affect one in five Canadians,” explained Dr. LeFort. “Persistent pain is a very disabling and a difficult problem to manage and can have devastating consequences for the sufferer, his/her family, and society as a whole. It’s costly - an estimated \$50 billion per year in Canada in both direct and indirect health and societal costs.” Dr. LeFort is currently a co-investigator on a \$5 million project Community Alliances for Health Research and Knowledge Translation on Pain, funded by CIHR.

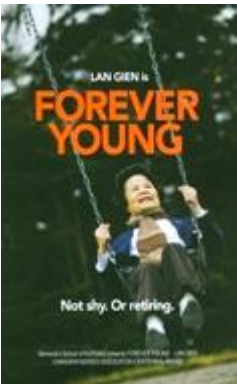
Nursing professor wins excellence award



Dr. Sandra MacDonald has received a prestigious award from the Association of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador (ARNNL). Dr. MacDonald, who is a professor in the School of Nursing, was given the ARNNL 2010 Award for Excellence in Nursing Education which recognizes registered nurses who demonstrate excellence in nursing by excelling on key criteria that contribute to improving the quality of nursing education in the province.

Dr. MacDonald is a member of the Community Health Assessment Team (CHAT) with the School of Nursing. The CHAT team has been working together for the past 15 years, conducting regional community assessments studies across the island and in Labrador. In addition, as the coach of four student teams, Dr. MacDonald recently led one of those teams to the final round of the Canadian Evaluation Society Student Case Competition.

Nursing professor is a shining star in the 2010 Research Report



Dr. Lan Gien is "Forever Young" in the 2010 research report released this past summer by the vice-president (research) at Memorial. The 50-page report, titled *The Shining: Research Stars 2010*, describes some of the significant university research projects of 2009-2010 and uses movie titles as an entree to the specialized worlds of Memorial's research "stars."

Dr. Gien has been with the School of Nursing for nearly 40 years and is the principal investigator on a three-year research project to identify why people retire by interviewing older workers all over the province. www.mun.ca/research/2010report/.

Visiting faculty

The School of Nursing had a special visitor in September. Dr. Steve Ersser was here from the University of Bournemouth, England as a visiting professor to talk about how his university and Memorial can work together. Dr. Ersser (pictured here with Dr. Judith McFetridge-Durdle and Dr. Sandra LeFort) is a professor of nursing development and skin care research, and director of



the Centre for Wellbeing and Quality of Life, School of Health and Social Care, University of Bournemouth. He met with interested faculty members in Nursing and Medicine about the possibilities of collaborative research. Memorial and the University of Bournemouth (BU) have an MOU that supports joint activities such as teaching and research. During his visit, Dr. Ersser presented to internal medicine residents on the Psychosocial Issues and Development of Effective Support for People Living with Psoriasis: Practice and Research Issues and met with dermatology clinic nurses in Eastern Health to discuss clinical and research ideas. Dr. Ersser also presented Dermis to Design in a Neglected Clinical Specialty: A Research Agenda for Skin Care/Dermatological Nursing.

Linking theory to practice

Associate professor Doreen Westera is the latest recipient of the Atlantic Region – Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (ARCASN) Educational Development Fund. Doreen received the \$2,000 award to develop a toolkit to enable nursing faculty to integrate the spiritual dimension of nursing practice into curriculum in nursing programs. The annual award was developed to enhance teaching skills for nursing students as well as faculty. As an award winner, Westera will present her toolkit at the ARCASN conference next year. Since 1990 and in partnership with some of her colleagues, she has been producing a number of educational videos aimed at linking nursing theory to practice (see [Teaching families to beat the odds](#) on page 4 for Westera's latest video project).

National and international presentations and publications

Faculty members **Jeanette Walsh and Marilyn Beaton** presented a poster and paper at the International Perspectives in the History of Nursing Conference in September at the University of London. The paper was entitled Experience of Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs) who Immigrated to Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. The poster, The Challenges and Rewards of the Internationally Educated Nurses (IEN) Acting as a Client Advocate in Rural Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. The conference was held to mark the 100 anniversary of the death of Florence Nightingale. Three hundred and fifty nurses from around the world attended. The two faculty also had a publication in the June issue of *Nursing Inquiry* recently, entitled Overseas Recruitment: Experiences of Nurses Immigrating to NL, 1949 - 2004.

Lorna Bennett recently presented Fostering Resilience in Children and Adolescents: Using Narrative Methods. A paper presentation at the Pathways to Resilience II: Social Ecology of Resilience Research Centre, Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia. She also presented a paper entitled Using Theraplay to Promote Health and Well-Being in Shelters for Women Experiencing Violence in the Home at the 4th International Theraplay Conference in Chicago, IL.

Research Matters

Research begins to unravel how to live long and healthy with Multiple Sclerosis

Assistant professor Dr. Anne Kearney is part of a research team studying health, lifestyle and aging well with Multiple Sclerosis (MS), the most common neurological disease affecting young adults in Canada. It is most often diagnosed between the ages of 15 and 40 and is characterized by a slow worsening of balance and coordination, paralysis, fatigue, pain, and other neurological symptoms. There is no cure and although there is increasing evidence that nutrition, exercise and social engagement improve quality of life, it is not well documented what people with MS can do to live long and healthy with their disease. To help fill this gap, an interprofessional research team is working together to understand health, lifestyle and aging well from the point of view of the MS patient.

Dr. Kearney is working with a team that includes, principal investigator Dr. Michelle Ploughman, who is a physiotherapist, a Memorial postdoctoral fellow and a clinical research scientist with Eastern Health; Michelle Murdoch, disability advocate and nurse; Dr. Mark Stefanelli, neurologist and director of the Provincial MS Clinic; and Dr. Marshall Godwin, director of the Primary Healthcare Research Unit at Memorial.

The researchers are analyzing interviews with 18 older people from the Northeast Avalon who are living with MS. Combined they have over 600 years of experience living with MS.

Early results from the study indicate that work and social engagement, as well as the ability to finance health related expenses are very important to healthy aging. Medications, use of complementary therapies, and degree of disability do not seem to be as important as social support and resilience when facing the long term challenges of living with MS.

“This study provides evidence related to the factors influencing long term adjustment to multiple sclerosis, even decades after diagnosis,” noted Dr. Kearney. “This information can be used by members of the interprofessional team who provide supportive care and anticipatory guidance to these individuals.”

Findings from this study will help physicians, nurses, social workers, physiotherapists and other health providers provide evidence-informed advice to people aging with MS. The project is supported by the Medical Graduates Student Society Dr. W. Ingram Award, Eastern Health and the Neurology Research Fund.

The four Cs: Clean, cover, contain and choose vaccination

An educational program that went province wide last year resulted in large increases in prevention measures and vaccinations against the pandemic H1N1 flu.

The program was developed by Dr. Donna Moralejo and a team of experts in Infection Prevention and Control and in Occupational Health and Hygiene, representing the different health regions of Newfoundland and Labrador. It was implemented province-wide in 2009 and included simple but effective infection prevention and control messages regarding hand washing, immunization, covering a cough and encouraging workers to stay at home if they were ill.

In early 2010, when the team evaluated the standardized influenza education program they found that with the education program and intense vaccination strategies, H1N1 vaccine uptake by health care workers in the province increased to 100 per cent in three regional health authorities and 82 per cent in the fourth.

Of the health care workers interviewed, over 95 per cent of those who gave feedback agreed that their knowledge and confidence increased when it came to precautions to take for a patient with influenza like illness, strategies to prevent transmission, and self-assessment/self care related to influenza like illness. Prior to the vaccine being available, about 75 per cent said that they planned to receive the pandemic vaccine and for those who had not previously received a flu vaccine, 37 per cent said they planned to.



“The annual seasonal influenza immunization of healthcare workers has traditionally been unacceptably low with rates of between 10 and 60 per cent with physicians and nurses being the lowest. Previous strategies aimed at increasing vaccine participation have had limited success,” explained Dr. Moralejo. The province wide program also promoted community based actions such as availability of hand sanitizers in banks and other businesses.

“It was a consolidated effort and our main goal was prevention so we used multi-media strategies because it gives the workers the choice in how to become educated and we think that helped,” noted Dr. Moralejo. “But collaboration was the key. We put a consistent message out there and now we have a template in place to carry out future educational programs around influenza.”



NURSING RESEARCH DAY 2010, hosted by Memorial University School of Nursing, the Centre for Nursing Studies, and Western Regional School of Nursing was a great success!

On October 2, students, faculty and researchers gathered for a day of presentations focused on some of the amazing research happening in the province at the 5th Biennial Nursing Research Day. Attendees saw research presentations through concurrent sessions or posters with a

good cross section of nursing research from education to practice.

Keynote speaker was **Dr. Kathryn King** (pictured here third from the left with Joanne Smith-Young, Dr. Judith McFetridge-Durdle and Dr. Shirley Solberg), who is a professor and Heritage Health Scholar at the University of Calgary. Dr. King is well known for her multi-methods program of research which focuses on cardiac recovery and determinants of heart health decisions. Her talk was entitled Ethnic Differences in Acute Coronary Syndrome Presentation.



Comments from attendees:

"First ever nursing research day and I really enjoyed myself – food provided was great, talks were kept short and to the point which kept interest up –also liked that some presentation were applicable to students – all in all the day was a success. Congratulations to all involved!"

"Excellent opportunity to have a look at current nursing research! Great opportunity for nursing students! Lots of great information."

"Excellent conference – it was a whole lot more interesting than what I had expected – great topics, excellent presenters."

Other presentations included:

- Achieving a Balance: Strategies to Improve Heart Health for Multi-Tasking Women
- Health Promotion Profile and Well-Being of Nurses in NL
- Psychosocial Needs of Women Who Have Surgery for Breast Cancer as an Out-Patient
- Trying to find peace in the war between beauty ideals and the sanctity of motherhood: The experience of low gestational weight gain
- From Institution to 'Home': Family Perspectives of a Unique Relocation Process