



Highlights

Lori's Key Messages

Launch of New GNAO Website

Special Student Edition

Shadowing GEM Nurse

Our Mission: To make a positive difference in the lives of older people and the nurses who care for them.

Our Vision: All older people in the province of Ontario are cared for by nurses whose practice is evidence-informed, relationship-centered and



Launch of New GNAO Website!

www.gnaontario.org

On Dec. 7th our new website went live! We hope you enjoy the updated and stream-lined design.

New features include an online membership process and student discussion forum.

Darlene Legree
Communications Director GNAO

From the President: Lori's Key Messages

Well, where did 2013 go! Our Fall 2013 GNAO Newsletter is devoted to Issues related to Students.

Key Message #1: Dear Students – It is clear that most of you will be providing important health care services to older people. By 2036 the number of Canadian over the age of 65 will more than double, and there are projections that the most rapid growth will be in the demographic older than 75 years of age (Statistics Canada, 2010). What does this mean for you and your future career?

You will be working with older adults who will be living with a cluster of common chronic illnesses. Not only will you need to develop an understanding of the long-term management of diabetes mellitus, stroke, congestive biventricular failure, dementia, and other neurodegenerative disease, you will need to understand the complexity of these as co-morbidities. You will need to understand how to care for these older people in the context of their wonderful life histories and their family and community relationships. You will need to understand syndromes and assessment related to frailty and various

states of vulnerabilities such as elder abuse. Most of all, you will need to recognize that there is a vast amount of specialized knowledge that gerontological nurses must hold in order to be effective in caring for this group of our population. Indeed, there will be tremendous career opportunities in this area in Canada, but also global opportunities to influence the direction of health care for the aging world population.

Key Message #2: And More, Dear Students – Think about the opportunity to lend your own voice to issues of importance related to care of older people in your early career stages. In this issue you will hear from Christy Whitby, a nurse now working as a member of the Nursing Resource Team in a hospital in the GTA. Christy is contemplating graduate education and a career in end-of-life care for older adults. Her contribution to this Newsletter related to her experience following the Geriatric Emergency Management (GEM) Nurse in her place of employment. Read her account to learn more about this important role. This could be an advanced



Lori Schindel Martin,
President, GNAO

practice role that you could prepare yourself to take on in your own future career. You will also hear from Kevin Hong (4 Yr. BScN program, McMaster University) who also has a passionate interest in gerontological nursing. Read about Kevin's account of how attending the Gerontological Nursing Association Ontario's provincial conference in September 2013 helped consolidate his clinical learning experiences. There are many more of you out there who are learning a lot about gerontological nursing. Why not contact Tina Leung, our Student/New Graduate Liaison Officer and talk about your learning needs and experiences in gerontological nursing. We are interested in your stories.

Key Message #3: And Read This Article, Dear Students – Cambell-Dextrixhe, D. Grassely, J., Zeigler, V. (2013). Gerontology Found Me: Gaining Understanding of Advanced Practice Nurses in Geriatrics. Cont'd page 2

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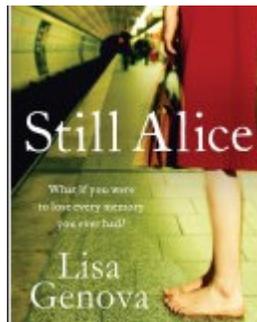
From the President: Lori's Key Messages (cont'd from Page 1)

Western Journal of Nursing Research, 35(9), 1153-1170. Please read this, and you will understand why over 1100 nurses in this province belong to Gerontological Nursing Association Ontario (GNAO). We are passionate about caring for older people. We BELONG to Gerontology, and we are all answering the call to BRING others to Gerontology. Indeed, for many of us, Gerontological Nursing CLAIMED US!

Key Message #4: And, Lastly, Read This Novel, Dear Students – We are learning so much more about the importance of

the Arts and how it offers us a glimpse into the worlds of older people, their experiences, their joys, their delights, their needs as members of their communities and families. This past summer we had a Gerontological Nurses Read exercise. All of the gerontological nurses who responded to me each stated unequivocally that if you haven't yet read *Still Alice*, you were missing out on an opportunity to understand what it means to be diagnosed and live with Alzheimer Disease. Read the novel, students! It is very powerful and will help you enter that space where your moral imagi-

nation will grow, and help you understand what it means to be person-centred in your delivery of care.



Key Message #5: TO ALL OF US IN GERONTOLOGICAL NURSING – Lend an ear, lend a hand, help leverage our professional specialty by pulling

students up with you into the area of Gerontological Nursing! Be a mentor to a student when you see their interest in gerontological nursing during clinical placements. Most importantly call their attention to the unique opportunities in our specialty - This is YOUR opportunity to serve, and pass the torch to the next generation.

All the Best to you and yours over this holiday season.

Yours in Gerontological Nursing,

Lori Schindel Martin,

President, GNAO

Nursing Student Community Open House a Success Submitted by Darlene Legree

GNAO was invited to participate, as a RNAO Interest Group, at the RNAO Interest Group Open House presented by the University of Information and Technology (UOIT) and Durham College (DC) Nursing Student Community. With the support of the Durham/Northumberland Chapter of the RNAO, the students hosted an extremely well organized and worthwhile event. The open house was held at UOIT Oshawa campus on November 7, 2013 and was very well attended (40-50 nurse student participants). The purpose of the open house was to familiarize nursing students with the diversity and scope of specialty nursing practice within our profession. The event also provided networking opportunities, as well as an educational component with Dr. Irmajean Bajnok (Director of the RNAO Centre for Professional Excellence) who spoke on Excellence in Nursing Leadership and Best Practice Guidelines.

GNAO was represented by Darlene Legree (GNAO Communications Director) and Sarah Gibbens (GNAO Durham Chapter, Membership Chair). The nursing students browsed the approximately 14 Interest Group tables and displays, as they enjoyed refreshments and appetizers. The discussions we had with the nursing students who visited our table were animated and relevant. Many nursing students were not familiar with GNAO and were surprised with the leadership opportunities and educational events we offer. We heard many comments about gerontology such as, "I really enjoyed my 1st year placement" and "I found the geriatric course interesting – not boring or depressing!" Nursing students were also very interested in learning about job opportunities and the GNC (C) certification process. Many of the students expressed an interest in palliative care, long-term care and community nursing, and they recognized that understanding care for the older adult was fundamental to their success as a nurse. One student commented, "Even in ICU I need to know about gerontology!"

By the end of the evening Sarah and I left feeling inspired and energized! I garnered a great deal of respect for the nursing students and given their level of enthusiasm and commitment, I believe that the future of gerontological nursing is in good hands.

Nursing Student Community Interest Group Open House — Photo posted on Facebook DC- UOIT Nursing



GNAO Conference Truly Amazing! Submitted by Kevin Hong BScN Student

My name is Kevin Hong. I am currently a level 4 accelerated BScN student at McMaster University. I had the opportunity to attend the **38th Annual GNAO AGM & Conference in North Bay**, and the experience has been truly amazing.

Walking into the lobby of the Clarion Resort Hotel, I had mixed emotions of excitement and nervousness. I had no idea what to expect since I have never attended a professional conference before. After signing in and receiving all the material provided, I began my three-day journey of listening to amazing speakers, networking with passionate healthcare professionals and exploring the world of gerontology. My brain was stretched in so many different ways and I have to say that it was the most educational, thought-provoking three days of my life. I know it sounds cliché but it truly was. Thus, I feel very lucky to have won the draw. I would also like to thank the lovely GNAO Hamilton chapter for making it possible.

The speakers were all superb; each one was able to engage the audience and inform them of the many happenings in the geriatrics field. There were “lived experience” speakers, health care practitioners from different disciplines, researchers as well as administrators.

Not only did I learn about specific medical and nursing knowledge, but also I learned about the current research topics, and most importantly, I was able to perceive the passion from everyone at the conference. I was particularly touched by Dr. James Chau’s personal story about his relationship with his mentally ill grandma, which led him to eventually become a geriatrician. It was such a funny, heart-warming and emo-

tional speech, and I was convinced by him that the field of gerontology is a perfect balance between science and humanity, which is exactly what I am looking for.

The most interesting part of the conference for me was actually the “see me, hear me interactive workshop”. There was a game during that workshop where everyone in the room was blindfolded, except for 3 volunteers. The volunteers were asked to guide the blindfolded group and successfully navigate everyone to the other room across from the building. This game was intended to mimic the transitioning process of those clients being discharged from hospitals to LTC facilities. I was one of those being blindfolded. I felt anxious and helpless at first. The 3 volunteers came up with an idea that all of us should hold on to a rope and they provided guidance for every step we took. It was a long way out of that room. But I felt more and more comfortable knowing that someone behind me was looking out for me. This activity made me more sensitive to the needs and feelings of those clients transitioning into LTC facilities. It also showed me the significance of collaboration, communication and validation between clinicians and clients.

The above experience has strengthened my desire and my interest to work in the geriatric field. What’s more, when I shared what I saw and learned at the conference during my PBL discussion and paper, my tutor and peers were simply blown away. To be quite honest, as a student who had not had much clinical experience, I was not able to comprehend the contents of several presentations or to participate in “deep and meaningful” conversations with delegates at the table.

However, from a student’s perspective, attending a conference like this can benefit us in many different ways. First of all, we can gain a better understanding about the field that we might be interested to work in. The conference experience can further guide our decision

about whether this area is the right choice for us. Second, the networking experience is invaluable. I enjoyed net-

working with different people at the conference. I was able to talk to several researchers about their current research projects and about opportunities to get involved. I connected with a geriatric emergency management nurse practitioner at Mount Sinai hospital, and was permitted to shadow her for some shifts. I also exchanged contact information with several LTC facility and retirement residence managers. Last but not least, it is a good way to consolidate and integrate what we learned in class. For example, I was looking up drugs on my iPad’s drug guide after the new Beers list presentation. I was saying to myself, “ This is embarrassing! I should know these drugs inside and out! How did I even get an A in pharmacology”.

To sum up, this conference was an eye-opener for me. I have gained a greater knowledge and respect for gerontology. I would definitely recommend that my peers attend the conference, or any other GNAO educational events, if the opportunity arises.

Thank You. Hanyang Kevin Hong

Student explains GNAO Conference educational and thought-provoking

My Experience Shadowing a Geriatric Emergency Management (GEM) Nurse

Submitted by Christy Whitby BScN, RN

Hello fellow GNAO nurses. Over this past year working on a nursing resource team in a Toronto hospital, I have developed an interest in working with older adults. I recently shadowed Stella Cruz, in her role as our GEM nurse. Older people present with unique challenges in disease management and social issues, that require the GEM role to bridge the gap between acute and community resources.

I spent the morning with Stella in our hospital's extremely busy emergency department. We were responsible for the initial assessment of the client and making recommendations for consultations with other specialties, nursing care and prioritizing the needs of the patient. We then met with the geriatrician who could investigate further into our concerns of things such as medication reconciliation, symptom management and diagnosis. We shared a cozy corner of the department with an occupational therapist, a social worker and a CCAC representative, where constant communication occurred to ensure that each patient received the proper transition home, follow up in the community, or acute care that included a focus on prevention of functional decline.

I enjoyed the feeling that our nursing knowledge was valued and had impact with other members of the interprofessional team. I also enjoyed the amount of time we had to explore each client's unique experience, leading to individualized care plans for each patient. In my future career as a gerontological nurse, I hope to inspire nursing students to embrace their clinical placements in long term care and see older adults as a challenging population with complex needs. I want nurses to recognize that they can pursue careers in all specialties of nursing while maintaining a geriatric lens.

Christy Whitby



Announcements



Chapter Name Change

Kathy King, President of the Nipissing Chapter recently announced that Nipissing Chapter has formally changed it's name to the **North East Chapter**.

The name change was voted and accepted at the chapter's recent AGM. The new chapter name is more inclusive and better reflects the geographical diversity of the members. Hopefully the new chapter name will encourage more participation from all areas throughout the North East region. Carol Cameletti and Monica Kollar of Sudbury have joined the chapter executive.

Membership Renewal

Membership renewal time is here!

You may renew your GNAO membership through one of these three routes: RPNAO; RNAO; or by direct registration through our website form.

[Direct GNAO Application Form](#)

New Student Discussion Forum!

The Student and New Graduate Discussion Board is a virtual community where students, new nursing graduates, educators, and experienced nurses gather to share their knowledge, insights, issues, and ideas.

Discussion Topics

- News—conferences, social networking events, workshops, links
- Novice Nurses—employment, interviews, resumes, discussion
- Nursing Students—scope of practice, volunteer & employment
- School Forum—start a discussion on your own page

New GNAO Board Members

The GNAO Board extends a warm welcome to its two newest members, who were acclaimed to their positions during the AGM: **Ryan Margaret Miller** has taken over the Professional Advocacy Director role from Melissa Northwood who is stepping down upon completion of her two-year term; **Julie Rubel**, currently Co-President of Niagara Chapter has assumed the role of President-Elect.



THE GERONTOLOGICAL
NURSING ASSOCIATION
ONTARIO

Student Members

The GNAO is an affiliate group with RNAO and a Special Interest Group with RPNAO. All nursing students who are members of their professional association have their GNAO membership fees waived.

FAST FACT

Did you know that every chapter has their own page with local events and news posted?

[Map & Chapter Link](#)

Contact us: admin.gna@gmail.com

Suggestions for newsletter submissions can be sent to dlegree@silvermeridian.com

Have you liked the CGNA Facebook?

[www.facebook.com/
CanadianGerontologicalNursingAssociation](http://www.facebook.com/CanadianGerontologicalNursingAssociation)

Meet the Board

Lori Schindel Martin - President

Julie Rubel - President-Elect

Susan Ward-Moser - Past President

Ryan Margaret Miller - Professional Advocacy Director

Darlene Legree - Communications Director

Gwen Harris - Treasurer

Tina Leung - Student/New Graduate Liaison Representative

Linda Galarneau and Karen Bakker-Stephens - Membership Co-Chairs

Lydia Saleh - Administrative Services

Bluewater President - Charlotte Bumstead

Durham Co-Presidents - Melanie Kelly and Kimberly Ritchie

Hamilton President (Interim)- Priscilla Bowler

Kingston President - Megan Hiltz

Lambton President - Holly Tesselaar

London President - Carol Miller

Niagara President - Maureen Shantz

North East President - Kathy King

Northwest President - Heather Woodbeck

Ottawa President - Linda Haley

Toronto President - Leila Carnegie

Visit our website at www.gnaontario.org to find email contact information.

Save the date!

2014 GNAO 39th Annual Provincial AGM & Conference

The **Lambton Chapter** is pleased to be hosting the GNAO Annual Provincial AGM & Conference.

Keynote Speakers

Dr. Paula Chidwick and Dr. Veronique Boscart

November 6 & 7, 2014 - Holiday Inn, Sarnia

Gwen Good, Conference Chair

Strathmere Lodge Holiday Video is Awesome!



[Click here to view video](#)

Strathmere Lodge's recreation staff and residents create an awesome Holiday Video to uplift the spirits of residents, families, staff and volunteers. Enjoy!

"I want a hippopotamus for Christmas"

Posted with permission from Strathmere Lodge