



Newsletter

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

JULIE'S KEY MESSAGES

ABOUT US

GNAO is proud to be RNAO's Interest Group of the Year in 2015!

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 meets gerontological nursing standards.

Website: <http://gnaontario.org/>

Social Media: Facebook & Twitter



Greetings colleagues. Spring is upon us. It is the time of year we think of renewal and possibilities. In that spirit, I bring you this column focusing on our fresh ideas and highlights of spring.

Highlight #1- Our Annual General Meeting

On Thursday, April 21 the Greater Toronto Area chapter will host members from across the province at our Provincial Annual General Meeting. The event will be held at Villa Colombo and will feature dinner, our AGM and, speaker Dr. Giovanni Marotta who will share insights about where Alzheimer Disease research and treatment may be going in the next five years. We are excited to offer students & new grads an opportunity to engage with a mentor as part of our 'Dinner with a Mentor' experience. This builds on the success of last year's mentorship program which saw three students sponsored by three members to attend the event. Interested mentors and mentees can contact me (julie.rubel@gmail.com) for further information. Sponsorship is awarded on a first come, first serve basis.

It is always very inspiring to gather with our members to learn of successes and innovations in practice, research, and policy. We, the GNAO board, plan to share further details of how GNAO will be reaching out to members and creating new ways to engage in our association.

Highlight #2- Our New Website Segment 'Geriatric Nursing Never Gets Old'

As a gerontological nurse, we have the opportunity to work with older adults in many ways to make a positive difference. Some of us work at the point of care and some of us work behind the scenes, we span all practice sectors and work collaboratively as nurses with different designations. Over the course of your career, regardless of the length, you may have found yourself explaining these facts to those who don't fully understand our practice or were unable to see its value. For those of you who passionately share your love of gerontological nursing, we bring you this new website segment. We hope it empowers you to share with others gerontological nursing is more than what they think and it fuels your pride for our chosen specialty. Check out our first segment here <http://gnaontario.org/gnao2013/events/>. It features Sarah Gibbens, GNAO Membership Co-Chair and GEM Nurse. If you would like to see yourself in this segment or know someone we should feature, please contact Student & New Grad Liaison Annie Lam a-nniie@hotmail.com.

Highlight #3- Educational Offerings are Adapting to Better Fit You

If you haven't been to a GNAO education event in a while, you might not recognize it! Our 11 active chapters have been working hard to provide top notch education offerings to our members in ways that meet your learning needs while acknowledging new platforms for delivery and preferred attendance methods.

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Both our North East and North West chapters have embraced OTN and webinar to deliver education to members across large geographic areas. In these cases, host sites may still offer an opportunity to socialize and discuss issues of importance to gerontological nursing, thus supporting our need to network. Other chapters have built partnerships to offer joint educational opportunities enabling a wider potential audience. Partners from across the province include community groups such the Alzheimer Society as well as other nursing organizations such as RNAO. You might also note a change in venue for some chapters. In the last year, the London and Area chapter hosted a weekend BBQ and the Greater Hamilton Area chapter hosted a public forum.

We at GNAO know you are committed to lifelong learning and improving your practice. Our mission is to continue to support your journey, by bringing you topics that are current and relevant to your practice. We strongly encourage you to connect with your local chapter if you have an idea for an education topic and/ or would like to become more involved in planning an event. If you are unsure how to do that, check out our website <http://gnaontario.org/gnao2013/>.

In closing, I want to thank you for your membership and encourage you to consider how you can help GNAO continue our renewal. There are many ways members can be involved in the work we do. I hope to see many of you in Toronto this April 21 so we can chat more about these opportunities.

Yours in Gerontological Nursing,

Julie Rubel,
President GNAO

RESOURCES

PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DEATH

Do you need to understand your professional accountabilities related to physician-assisted death? Read Physician Assisted Death – Interim Guidance for Nursing in Ontario by the College of Nurses of Ontario. It includes information about:

- The status of physician-assisted death in Ontario while we wait for laws to change on June 6, 2016
- How patients may apply to have access to physician-assisted death before June 6 and what you should know and do if asked to participate in the process
- Other resources that will guide you and help you determine your accountabilities as a nurse...

For more information, please click onto this [LINK](#).

INTERESTING READ



GRANDPA'S GREAT ESCAPE

DAVID WALLIAMS

Grandpa lives in a Maximum Security Twilight Zone, and his Grandson attempts to set him free.

Jack's Grandpa...

wears his slippers to the supermarket

serves up tinned tongue for dinner and often doesn't remember Jack's name

But he can still take to the skies in a speeding Spitfire and save the day...

The story is all about one special family relationship - the bond between a young boy and his beloved grandfather. Jack is a twelve-year-old boy who manages to get along best with his Grandpa suffering from dementia. Grandpa was a Second World War fighter pilot and because of his disease, he regresses more and more back to his days in WWII. This book takes readers on an incredible journey with Spitfires over London and Great Escapes through the city in a high octane adventure full of comedy and heart. Illustrated by the award-winning Tony Ross

CALENDAR

GERIATRIC NURSING NEVER OLD



The Gerontological Nursing Association Ontario is pleased to present our new segment titled...

Geriatic Nursing Never Gets Old... Highlighting Nurses in Gerontology!

Gerontological nursing is a unique and diverse field of nursing that focuses on the care of older adults. Many geriatric nurses provide care to these older people in various different settings. Although we all have specialized knowledge and training to effectively educate, assess, and care for this population, the way in which we go about it is slightly different and unique. This new segment highlights nurses working in the field of gerontology and introduces you to their world! We invite you to read up on our nurses and to engage in discussion with them via the Student Discussion Forum, Social Media (Facebook or Twitter) or directly through the contact information that they provide. As we move into the month of March, please join us in highlighting and celebrating Sarah Gibbens!

SARAH GIBBENS (GEM RN)



Please describe to us your current role and what it is that you do in gerontology.

I currently work as a Geriatric Emergency Management Nurse (GEM RN) at Northumberland Hills Hospital in Cobourg. I provide clinical, gerontological, consultation in the Emergency Department (ED) as the primary component of my role, but concurrently work on several organizational projects as they fit with bettering the care of older adults and also on several community committees that focus on the needs of seniors. The clinical role consists of targeted gerontological assessments in order to quickly

decipher what's new and what's not, with a strong focus on the identification of geriatric syndromes. Some examples of geriatric syndromes are delirium, depression, falls/mobility issues, caregiver stress, cognitive impairment, pain, and polypharmacy. Assessments include, but are not limited to: deciphering if delirium is present or not; investigating cause(s) of falls; looking at mobility and activities of daily living; and screening for medications deemed high risk. It very quickly provides a good picture of new versus chronic conditions. From this, the GEM can link seniors with community resources and support, or advocate for a hospital admission. I also work with seniors' right in the ED in order to prevent any cognitive and functional decline from occurring in

MARCH 31, 2016
GNAO Hamilton Chapter

Advance Care Directives: Who Will Speak for Your Care Needs?
Burlington, Ontario
To register, please email Dianne Thompson
di.thompson@hnhb.ccac-ont.ca

APRIL 21, 2016
GNAO Provincial Annual General Meeting

Presentation Title - Let's Talk About Alzheimer's: Where may we be going in the next 5 years?
Election of Board Members
Mentorship Opportunities!
Toronto, Ontario
Click [HERE](#) for more information.
Please RSVP to Donna Locke at dlocke@belmonthouse.com

NOVEMBER 4, 2016

42nd Annual GNAO Conference
The South East Chapter is excited to welcome you to Kingston, the Limestone City, on November 4, 2016 for the 42nd Annual GNAO Conference! Our focus this year is aging across the health care spectrum – “Gerontological Nursing is more than you think! Nursing & Aging Across the Continuum” .

We hope to have piqued your interest enough and that you will consider joining us on November 4, 2016 in Kingston. Stay tuned to the GNAO website, newsletter and email for further details!

such a high speed, chaotic environment. This includes getting older adults up and walking – it is the number one way to prevent hospital admissions and decline in my books! Other initiatives are essential like: getting an older adult with dementia engaged in activities like music therapy right in the ED; calling in the support of family to bring in dentures, hearing aids, and glasses of the vision and hearing impaired; and encouraging food and fluid intake while waiting many hours for tests and results.

Why did you decide to pursue gerontological nursing?

I worked as a dietary aide at a retirement facility for a summer job during university, and quickly saw how such small interventions can make such amazingly positive impacts in people's lives. Not knowing at the time, but I worked with one man in particular who had dementia and was non-verbal. He would only point or grunt until we could all understand his routine. One day I began to sing while cleaning up the dining room and his voice boomed out as he finished the chorus of Somewhere over the Rainbow. I will never forget the person I saw behind the dementia, the sound of his voice, and the smile on his face. I wanted to continue to pursue this passion with more depth in the nursing field. Once in the field I saw just how much specialty is required for gerontological nursing, and wanted to become as strong an advocate as I could so I completed a Master of Nursing from the University of Toronto. I strongly pursued the GEM RN role as it seemed to fit all my interests and offered me an opportunity to continue to grow throughout my career.

Many of us have been mentored or inspired by another nurse at some point in our nursing journey. Is there one person in particular who has helped you along the way in becoming a gerontological nurse?

There is a very special mentor in my life and has made a significant difference in my clinical practice and in my confidence in myself as an advocate for this vulnerable population. I met Maryanne Brown almost 4 years ago and have since made leaps and bounds as a gerontological nurse. Maryanne pushed me to take on challenging opportunities and supported me during some of the most difficult years as a new GEM RN. Maryanne Brown is an Advanced Practice Nurse Consultant who I am so lucky to have met and without her, I am uncertain where I would be in my career. I encourage anyone to reach out and develop mentorship relationships if possible. They are invaluable and, at times, career saving! I want to take this opportunity to thank Maryanne from the bottom of my heart for her guidance and support, and tell her that I will find success if I am able to mentor someone else in the future with even half the wisdom that she provided me.

What is one of the most fulfilling aspects of being a gerontological nurse?

The most fulfilling aspect of gerontology is that every single day, when I look into the eyes of an older adult, I am trusted to hear their life stories, their memories, their worries and fears, their secrets, and their hopes and dreams.

What is one thing you would want to share about gerontological nursing that most people might not otherwise know?

There is a massive community of nurses interested and passionate about gerontology out there! You are not alone!

Do you have any advice for nurses or students interested in pursuing gerontology as a specialty?

Never give up. You will hear things from others like, "you need to build your skills first on the medicine floors" or, "you don't want to lose your skills", and I have even heard, "so you don't want to do real nursing?" Never give up — the older adults require your advocacy, your passion for change, and your expertise. Reach out to a mentor for support, and keep your head high during those times when others challenge you with comments rooted in stereotype.

If anyone is interested in connecting with you further, how can they reach you?

Please feel free to do so at sgibbens@nhh.ca – I look forward to any connections that can be made!

NURSING STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES



Left to right: Amy Ludolph (Rec Therapist); Ellenore Thomas; Yingying Tong, Monica Closs; Sarah Gibbens (GEM RN)

We, as second year nursing students at Trent University, are very excited to have the opportunity to share the experience of our

gerontological focused community nursing placement at Northumberland Hills Hospital's (NHH) Emergency Department (ED), in Cobourg. This was a placement that had us assess the needs of an incredibly vulnerable, elderly population, in an acute/fast-paced, and sometimes chaotic, environment. We knew quite quickly into the placement that frail seniors in the ED are at extremely high risk of developing delirium or experiencing functional decline.

Working alongside Sarah Gibbens, the Geriatric Emergency Management nurse (GEM RN) and Amy Ludolph (Recreation Therapist/Elder Life Specialist), we developed our own "ED version" of the Hospital Elder Life Program (HELP). Starting where previous students left off, the interventions we have implemented and trialed have been coupled with a brief screening/documentation tool to keep track of our HELP patients during their ED stay. The evidence-based interventions we incorporated into the ED setting include orientation to the department, early ambulation, range of motion exercises, encouraging food and fluids, as well as many friendly visitor components that can include social reminiscing, relaxation techniques, music therapy, and other purposeful activities that match the needs of our patients. All of these interventions have been proven to reduce the incidence of delirium and functional decline for frail seniors.

Working with seniors in the ED has been an intriguing and eye opening experience to the complexities of gerontological nursing. The work we did in the ED was also incredibly rewarding! We literally saw the immediate impacts of our work with these interventions. This placement has definitely given us a learning opportunity that we will be able to pull from in our future nursing careers.

Submitted by: Monica Closs, YingYing Tong, and Ellen Thomas

YINGYING TONG'S EXPERIENCE

During my placement, there was a particular interaction with a patient that really stood out for me. When I met this patient, he was waiting by the phone for a call from his wife and looked a little sad. I found out that he liked to read the local newspaper

beforehand, so when I brought him one, he was very grateful. I stayed and had a good conversation with him for almost half an hour. We were only interrupted by a physiotherapist assistant who brought him down for exercises. I found out later when I was with him at lunch that his wife never did call him back after his exercises. This made me realize that if I wasn't there during that morning, he would've been just waiting by himself and might have made him a little depressed. Having another person to talk to would've taken his mind off of his expected phone call. After doing some self-reflection, I realized that the HELP means a lot for these patients. Even a simple interaction can make a difference for them.

MONICA CLOSS' EXPERIENCE

My experiences in this placement have been extremely memorable. Through our time spent at the Northumberland Hills Hospital, YingYing, Ellen, and I have been able to positively impact the lives of many seniors. The experience that I believe I will continue to take with me through my nursing career was so simple but so meaningful. The ED is a very fast paced environment, and with individuals suffering from illnesses such as dementia, it can be scary at times. A patient that my group was working with was having difficulty remaining calm while she was in the ED. By talking with the patient, we discovered that she enjoyed listening to music. So, we decided to retrieve one of the iPods that are kept in the ED for music therapy. Within minutes, she was calm and singing to us with a big smile on her face. This small act made the biggest difference for the patient and her experience in the ED. Something I will never forget.

ELLENORE THOMAS' EXPERIENCE

One of the most influential patient interactions that I had this semester was working with an elderly woman on the inpatient unit. She suffered from anxiety, as up until now she had been extremely active and independent, even in her advanced age. With the change in atmosphere and lifestyle, she was at high risk for developing a delirium during her stay. I completed relaxation exercises, some range of motion techniques, and adult colouring with her and as the time went on her smile grew immensely. I value this one on one time we are spending with patients as students, as the reality of nursing is that we may not get to with heavy patient loads and increased demands. I feel it is extremely important to treat your patients as you would a member of your family. She reminded me of my great grandmother, so I oriented my care in a way that I felt she would appreciate the most. In my opinion, this is one of the most enjoyable parts of nursing. Being able to see her feeling relaxed and at home after our visit brought me comfort to know that even the small things you do for a person, can make a world of difference.



THE GERONTOLOGICAL
NURSING ASSOCIATION
ONTARIO

PROVINCIAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HOSTED BY THE GREATER TORONTO AREA CHAPTER

Thursday, April 21, 2016

Location:

Villa Colombo
40 Playfair Avenue, Toronto

Schedule of Events:

5:30pm – Dinner
6:00pm – Annual General Meting
7:00pm – Presentation

Cost:

\$35 – GNAO Members
\$40 – Non-Members
\$25 – Students

Contact:

Donna Locke
dlocke@belmonthouse.com
Please RSVP by April 10, 2016

Presentation Title:

LET'S TALK ABOUT

ALZHEIMER'S:

Where may we be going in the
next 5 years?

Speaker:

Dr. Giovanni Marotta



Hotel Accommodations:

Holiday Inn Toronto-Yorkdale
3450 Dufferin Street, Toronto

A block of rooms has been reserved until **March 30**
Standard room charge: **\$134.95**

Please reserve directly with the hotel by calling
1 866-568-0046 and advise that you are with the
Gerontological Nursing Association Ontario.

MENTORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES!

We are offering members who would like to be a mentor of a student or a new graduate an opportunity to provide financial support for a student or a new graduate member's attendance at the AGM. Members can offer this support in 1 of 2 ways:

- 1) Offer to support a student or new graduate that is known to them; or
- 2) Offer to support a student or new graduate anonymously.

Members must state their intent to sponsor by **April 10, 2016** and can do so by contacting Julie Rubel at Julie.rubel@gmail.com.

Students and new graduates who register are asked to identify themselves as such. Anonymous sponsorship for students and new graduates will be given on a first come, first serve basis.