

# Newsletter

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

### JULIE'S KEY MESSAGES



Greetings GNAO Colleagues!

**Change.** This idea has been top of mind recently. Certainly, I look outside and see summer finally giving way to fall. Personally, I had a change in schedule when I decided to return to school. Most importantly for us as GNAO members, I have been reflecting on the changes shared with me by GNAO members across the province. These reflections were discussed in detail with the GNAO Provincial Board at our meeting on November 4, 2016.

Let me begin by discussing our 2016 Provincial Conference which was to be held in Kingston this month. We were saddened to announce that the conference would not proceed as planned due to a limited response. The South East Chapter Planning Committee had worked tirelessly, giving countless hours and so much heart to the planning of this event, and we at GNAO are truly grateful for their efforts! It is important to note, this cancellation occurred in time where many other organizations are also struggling to bring providers together for dedicated learning and networking opportunities. This cancellation in no way indicates GNAO is giving up on bringing members and non-members together to celebrate and grow in our appreciation for gerontological nursing. Instead it has encouraged us to explore how we can do this in ways that better align with today's health care climate. We recognize many of you may have less flexibility in your schedule to attend conferences and when you do, there is less available financial support. We also know there are many competing educational opportunities, this makes your decision of what to attend that much more important.

In acknowledgement of the above changes, the GNAO board has elected to move to a biennial conference format. The conference will run in the spring in the opposite year of the CGNA conference meaning GNAO will next offer our provincial conference in 2018. **GNAO will continue to hold our AGM in April in Toronto.** This decision respects that members may find it difficult to choose between the CGNA and GNAO conferences, particularly when the conferences are both in Ontario. For now, GNAO will continue focusing our energy on our April 24th, 2016 AGM and on our co-host duties for the 2017 CGNA Biennial Conference in Ottawa ([cgna2017.ca](http://cgna2017.ca)). Come 2018, we hope you will join us in Niagara as we celebrate gerontological nursing with colleagues from across Ontario!

## ABOUT US

**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

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## JULIE'S KEY MESSAGES CONTINUED

I'll continue on the theme of education. We understand, as stated above, the time you have to partake in education is limited, though we know the need for continued learning and support from peers is no less important. Caring for older adults in every setting is a complex, knowledge-intensive, and hugely impactful job. We believe the educational opportunities GNAO provides is a major benefit of GNAO membership and as such, we are committed to providing these opportunities to members across Ontario. To do this, GNAO needs to get even more resourceful. We understand the importance and value of partnerships. Many of our chapters are already maximizing existing relationships with community organizations, hospitals, long term care homes, and educational institutions to organize and deliver education sessions, and you can expect this will continue to grow. To account for the vast distance between members in many of our chapters, electronic means of connecting have been vital to meet the education needs. We see the need for electronic connection to move beyond remote areas into other areas of the province. This is an area of focus for our GNAO board, something I hope to be able to share more about in the coming year. Lastly, we know in addition to GNAO educational offerings, many of you look to GNAO to share relevant education opportunities offered by other groups who promote excellence in practice related to older adults. To make this search easier and to enhance your experience in navigating our website, we are pleased to announce a website revamp will soon be undertaken. Again, stay tuned for more on this in the coming year.

Lastly, I want to speak about the importance of change when it comes to GNAO membership and leadership. Many service organizations, in and outside of nursing, are needing to look at new and creative ways to spark an interest in membership. Organizations are looking at what aspects of their service are of greatest value to their current and potential members. We at GNAO have also been asking these questions; why do members join GNAO and what leads GNAO members to maintain their membership? We believe education, networking, and a connection to the larger gerontological community are primary benefits. We know that achieving these benefits in current times involves embracing technology, providing opportunities for mentorship, and, continuing to engage new voices. This engagement may mean being open to new partnerships with community or nursing groups. It may mean strengthening our advocacy position to speak up about issues of importance to gerontological nurses, and it certainly means, engaging students.

Please consider asking your colleagues what they appreciate about GNAO membership. You can also ask, why they have not yet joined us? Continuing to listen to these voices will only help us grow and improve. Building a membership that is active and engaged is an important part of our work as the GNAO Provincial Board. This work would not be possible without the efforts of our Chapter Presidents and GNAO executive, their leadership and commitment to gerontological nursing and GNAO is truly inspiring! Board positions offer members a great chance to be a part of shaping our future. The energy and creative ideas new board members bring to the board is infectious. Our future success depends on current leaders mentoring incoming leaders to ensure we are always moving ahead. Members, we need you! You have the knowledge, skills and abilities to join us. Please reach out to your local **chapter leaders** or to any one of our GNAO executives to learn more.

***Change is not only inevitable, it's necessary and, dare I say, exciting!*** GNAO is embracing the need for change to improve members' experience today and in the future. I know we can do this if we work together. I would really love to hear your thoughts, feel free to contact me [julie.rubel@gmail.com](mailto:julie.rubel@gmail.com).

Yours in gerontological nursing,

Julie Rubel

# EVENTS RECAP

## STRENGTHENING PALLIATIVE CARE IN LONG-TERM CARE

### GREATER HAMILTON AREA CHAPTER AGM



By Priscilla Bowler

On October 27th, the Greater Hamilton Area Chapter hosted their AGM at the Waterford Centre in Hamilton. The event brought together a cozy and mighty group of gerontological nurses. It featured powerhouse nurse researcher, Dr. Sharon Kaasalainen and passionate Executive Coach of Shalom Village (Gould LTC), Priscilla Bowler.

Dr. Kaasalainen started the speakers event off by discussing ***Strengthening Palliative Care in Long-term Care (SPA-LTC)***. Priscilla Bowler engaged audience members in her presentation about the ***Namaste Care Program for Persons with Dementia***.

The projects include several core interventions: 1) developing a champion team; 2) holding Comfort Care rounds to debrief following a death; 3)

holding Family care conferences to explore residents' end of life wishes; and, 4) assessing residents using the Palliative Performance Scale (PPS) to trigger the need for the family palliative conferences; and - conduct post bereavement follow-up.

These core components are to support staff's capacity to identify key transition points along the living/dying continuum, activate critical communication with families and other members of the interdisciplinary team, relieve resident suffering, and attend to issues of loss and grief. With the support of the research team Shalom Village has been successful initiating and learning ways to support our residents and families during palliative and end of life care. We developed a form for PSWs to use when providing one-to-one care. With the research team we have many pamphlets about different illnesses and palliative care, as well as grief and post bereavement care.

It has been so exciting to be a part of a research project with McMaster University, McGill University and several LTCH in Ontario and the best part is, we have really strengthened our palliative care program to be inclusive of the resident and families values, preferences and goals of care.

For further information about the project, please contact Sharon at [kaasal@mcmaster.ca](mailto:kaasal@mcmaster.ca) or Priscilla at [priscilla@shalomvillage.ca](mailto:priscilla@shalomvillage.ca).

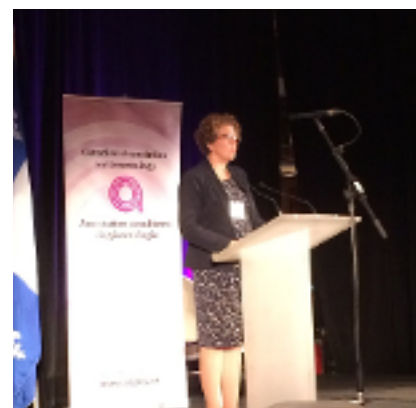
## CANADIAN ASSOCIATION ON GERONTOLOGY (CAG) CONFERENCE

### FOSTERING INNOVATION IN RESEARCH ON AGING

By Annie Lam

In October, the Canadian Association on Gerontology brought over 650 stakeholders together in beautiful Montreal, Quebec. This year's theme, *Fostering Innovation in Research on Aging*, provided an enriching and wonderful opportunity to learn about the latest progress in gerontology and to engage and contribute to the discussion on innovative solutions in the field. The conference had three stellar keynote speakers.

Dr. Nir Barzali provided the opening keynote with insight into how to die young at a very old age. Why not delay aging altogether rather than treating each disease separately? He engaged audience members by describing recent drugs used to prevent aging, particularly, the use of metformin to target a number of aging-related mechanisms. Dr. Deborah van den Hoonaard challenged the audience to think about the engendered social meanings of widowhood. Why is it that women have longer life expectancies than men, but are considered 'old' sooner? She also emphasized the important... [see next page >>>>](#)



Dr. Suzanne Dupuis-Blanchard welcoming CAG delegates. Image from <https://twitter.com/cagacag>

# EVENTS RECAP CONTINUED

... role of qualitative research in aging. She asserted that researchers should consider both the spoken word and the use of interaction as compelling data. Dr. Sue Yeandle spoke about the role of technology in caring and aging well in later life. She urged us to see older persons within the context of their connected lives, and described the use of innovative in-home technologies that promote the principles of active aging, that is, meaningful social interactions and aging successfully at home.

Other interesting tidbits from the three day conference included:

- ▶ The shift towards the "Third Age", where the focus is on successful aging and older adults are seen as active in civic engagement
- ▶ The focus on the psychosocial impacts of retirement, and how older workers continue to reinvent, reimagine and redirect into new types of work and contribute to society
- ▶ In exploring the meaning of life, older adults with disabilities defined quality of life as being well-surrounded by those you love
- ▶ In finding deep connections between death and nature, we find that people are very well-connected to their environment during EOL and more people would like EOL experiences in parks and nature

As a nurse, CAG is one of my favourite conferences to attend. The research shared by gerontologists among many others always brings me back to the very human aspects of life and aging. If this little recap has sparked your interest in any way, be sure to look out for the CAG conference next year which will take place in Manitoba! (<http://www.cag-acg.ca/>)

## HONOURING AND LEARNING FROM DICK MOORE

### NIAGARA REGION CHAPTER

By Michele Bliss

In late October, GNAO Niagara Chapter hosted an evening of dinner, networking and learning together featuring Mr. Dick Moore, a longtime leader and advocate for senior members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer (LGBTQ) communities. Mr. Moore has been recently recognized with an Ontario Senior Achievement Award - the highest provincial honour for seniors - for all of his contributions. Niagara Gerontological Nurses, Nursing Students and Allied Professionals were enthralled by the powerful and often painful stories of indignities suffered by LGBTQ persons at the point of care, where one deserves to feel safe. Mr. Moore inspired participants to be agents of change and allies of the community by considering and using respectful, person-focused language and terminology, avoiding assumptions, asking questions, and being open to LGBTQ Seniors who will require care within our system and settings. To learn more, we recommend visiting the following websites:

**Rainbow Health Ontario** - A province-wide program which works to improve the health and well-being of LGBTQ people in Ontario and to increase access to competent LGBTQ friendly health care services across the province (<http://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/>).

**Senior Pride Network** - An association of individuals, organizations and community groups focused on expanding services and programs for 50+ LGBTQ persons throughout Canada (<http://seniorpridenetwork.com/home.htm>).

**The Toronto Senior Pride Network** - A City of Toronto agency committed to the health, happiness and full participation of the LGBTQ community. ([www.the519.org/sp](http://www.the519.org/sp)).

**The Gay and Lesbian Aging Research Project** - ([www.mcgill.ca/interaction/aging](http://www.mcgill.ca/interaction/aging))

FOREWORD BY ABRAHAM VERGHESE

# WHEN BREATH BECOMES



air  
PAUL KALANITHI

## WHEN BREATH BECOMES AIR

BY: PAUL KALANITHI

A very powerful autobiography outlining a young neurosurgeon who is faced with a terminal cancer diagnosis. As he faces the diagnosis, he attempts to answer a question that has undoubtedly passed our minds from time to time, "What makes a life worth living?"

Paul Kalanithi was only thirty-six years old, and about the complete his training as a neurosurgeon when he was diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer. One day, he was a doctor making a living by treating the dying, and the next, he was a patient struggling to live.

This powerful memoir takes you along with Paul as he questions: What makes life worth living in the face of death? What do you do when the future, no longer a ladder toward your goals in life, flattens out into a perpetual present? What does it mean to have a child, to nurture a new life as another fades away?

*When Breath Becomes Air* is an exquisitely moving exploration of mortality that you must check out.

## EXECUTIVE BOARD VACANCIES

The GNAO Executive Board currently has several vacancies, including (1) Student & New Grad Liaison, (2) Professional Advocacy Chair, and (3) President-Elect.

If you are interested in becoming part of a dynamic and passionate group of gerontological nurses, please email Julie Rubel at [julie.rubel@gmail.com](mailto:julie.rubel@gmail.com) for more information.

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### GNAO Greater Hamilton Area Chapter Education Fund

We encourage our chapter members to apply for education awards through the Greater Hamilton Area Chapter Education Fund. This fund was developed to "enhance the scholarships and clinical capabilities of Greater Hamilton Area Chapter GNAO members." The three categories of awards include: individual awards, funding for an educational program or resource, and registration for the GNAO Annual Conference. You can access the application form and full details by contacting Maureen Montemuro ([mmontemuro@gmail.com](mailto:mmontemuro@gmail.com)) or Esther Coker ([ecoker@cogeco.ca](mailto:ecoker@cogeco.ca)).

The next deadline for submissions is **April 28, 2017**. Please submit your application to Karen Bakker-Stephens (Greater Hamilton Area Chapter President) at [Karen.Bakker-Stephens@reveraliving.com](mailto:Karen.Bakker-Stephens@reveraliving.com).

### Funding for Students to attend CGNA in 2017

Were you planning on attending the CGNA conference? GNAO is extremely excited to be partnering with its eleven Chapters across Ontario to provide funding for students to attend the CGNA conference in 2017! Make sure you follow us on our **website** or **Facebook** or **Twitter**. Contest details will be revealed in the upcoming months!

## IT'S THAT TIME OF THE YEAR... RENEWAL TIME!

Have you renewed your GNAO membership yet? GNAO continues to partner with RNAO and RPNAO for their continued support of our organization. You can fill out the form [HERE](#), or email us at [info@гнаontario.org](mailto:info@гнаontario.org). Please note that students can join as a Student Associate for **FREE!**

## CALENDAR



## DECEMBER 2016

December 1st & 8th, 2016

RNAO Skin and Wound Care: Resources/Tools in the LTC Toolkit

**Date:** Two free webinar sessions:

- December 1, 2016 - 2:00 pm EDT
- December 8, 2016 - 12:00 noon EDT

Please visit RNAO for more information and registration information [HERE](#).

## SAVE THE DATES!

April 24th, 2017

GNAO's Annual General Meeting  
Villa Colombo in Toronto  
More details TBA!

May 4-6th, 2017

CGNA Biennial Conference  
Ottawa, Ontario  
Click [HERE](#) for more information.

# GERIATRIC NURSING NEVER GETS OLD

The Gerontological Nursing Association Ontario is pleased to continue the segment, "Geriatric Nursing Never Gets Old... Highlighting Nurses in Gerontology!"

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. In November, we wanted to change things up by highlighting a promising and passionate young nursing student who is interested in gerontological nursing.



## PATRICIA JULIAN



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

I am a current fourth year student at Ryerson University. I am completing my pre-consolidation and consolidation placements at St. Michael's Hospital Heart and Vascular Program. Majority of the patients I care for at placement are older adults and to provide the best care for my patients, I often consider age-related changes when I assess and deliver nursing interventions at the floor. For example, we regularly complete the confusion assessment method for all patients over 65 so we can detect any cases of delirium early on!

I also work as a research assistant for Dr. Lori Schindel Martin, an Associate Professor at the Daphne Cockwell School of Nursing at Ryerson University. We are currently completing a project aiming to explore emergency department staff's learning needs with regards to caring for patients exhibiting responsive behaviours. We hope that the project can lead to an educational program on person-centred dementia care tailored for the emergency department.

**Why did you decide to pursue gerontological nursing?**

I volunteered at a long-term care home five years ago. My observations of the nursing staff and the residents left me with a deep impression. I falsely believed that seniors living with dementia and multiple comorbidities experienced poor quality of life. Yet my conversations with the resident changed my mind. I was impressed by the optimism and wisdom many residents held about life. I also admired the excellent nursing care the staff provided and the therapeutic relationships they formed with the residents. It was clear that the care staff provided enabled the residents to maintain their health or delay any complications from their disease. Desiring to give back to the previous generation and looking for a fulfilling career with a positive impact, I decided to pursue nursing with the aim of working with older adults.

**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?**

Dr. Lori Schindel Martin, who I mentioned earlier, has made a positive impact on my education and clinical practice. Lori has encouraged me to enrich my gerontology knowledge and has given me many learning opportunities to do so. She has also kindled my interest in research, which I hope to pursue one day to make an impact on gerontological nursing care. I am thankful for the learning opportunities Lori has provided and I am not sure if I would have gained so much experience in gerontological research without her help!

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

The most fulfilling aspect of caring for an older adult is knowing that I am caring for someone with rich life experiences. I am caring for a person, who has lived a life, has seen a lot and has stories to tell.

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

Any nursing specialty (except maternity, pediatrics, neonatal ICU) is part of gerontological nursing! There is a common misperception that gerontological nurses only work in long-term care. I disagree. With the aging population and increasing incidences of disease as people age, a substantial number of patients that nurses will encounter would be older adults. Thus, it is imperative for all nurses to learn about gerontological nursing.

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

My suggestion is to become involved in professional gerontological nursing or interprofessional organizations (e.g., Gerontological Nursing Association of Ontario, Canadian Association of Gerontology). Becoming involved will allow you to network with like-minded professionals and learn about the current trends in the care of older adults. I also suggest pursuing opportunities to be a research assistant in a gerontological nursing or geriatrics-related project. This experience will help you become knowledgeable in best practices in gerontological nursing care.

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

If you have any questions about joining GNAO or getting involved, you can email Patricia Julian at [patricia.julian@ryerson.ca](mailto:patricia.julian@ryerson.ca).