

University of
Southern Indiana

SUMMER 2020

Synapse

College of Nursing and Health Professions



**ANSWERING THE CALL:
COVID-19 RESPONSE**

Letter from the Dean



Because of COVID-19, working from home, online education and video conference calls have replaced our “normal” way of doing business in the College of Nursing and Health Professions. I am so appreciative of everyone working so hard to make online learning a positive educational experience. Our students are performing well, and that is a testament to the faculty and staff in our College.

Inside this issue of Synapse are examples of innovative teaching methods, student tenacity to adapt and achieve, and community spirit. Every day, our faculty, staff and students embody our College mission: *Advancing health and wellness through visionary leadership, dynamic learning and strategic partnerships.*

Take care and be safe... we will come out of this pandemic stronger and better prepared.

Ann White

Dr. Ann White
Dean, College of Nursing and Health Professions

Synapse

College of Nursing and Health Professions

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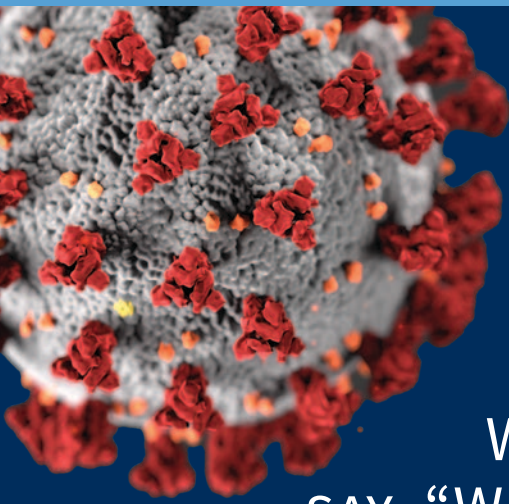
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ANSWERING THE CALL: COVID-19 RESPONSE

WHEN WE
SAY, “WE WILL
GET THROUGH THIS
TOGETHER,” WE DON’T JUST
MEAN WITHIN OUR CAMPUS.
WE MEAN EVERYONE.

Five ventilators in the USI respiratory therapy lab were sent to Ascension St. Vincent Evansville and Deaconess Hospital to assist the broader community with the COVID-19 pandemic response. The hospitals cleaned and calibrated the machines for possible use if a spike in cases results in a shortage of ventilators.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is in short supply for healthcare workers across the nation due to the staggering numbers of patients infected with the virus. In response, the University of Southern Indiana College of Nursing and Health Professions, Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education and Southwest Indiana Area Health Education Center came together to provide more than 1,500 masks and 400 isolation gowns to Deaconess and Ascension St. Vincent as well as USI Housing and Residence Life.

Essential Worker

Point of View

In addition to teaching full time at USI, Heather Schmuck '02 M'13, Clinical Associate Professor of Radiologic and Imaging Sciences, works as a registered radiologic technologist as part of Deaconess Midtown Hospital's supplemental staff. She and her colleagues rotate through all areas of the hospital, including the emergency room.

Because radiologic technologists perform imaging to help doctors with a diagnosis, they are sometimes exposed to communicable diseases prior to a confirmed diagnosis, whether from lab test results and/or images being interpreted by the radiologist (Note: This is why staff are provided with personal protective equipment – or PPE – to help protect against infection). “We are oftentimes one of the first people to actually ‘see’ what is wrong with the patient, long before any formal report comes back to render a diagnosis,” she said.

Schmuck said that when she signed up for shifts at the start of the semester, she had no idea she would be working in this role during a pandemic. “I was fearful of the unknown going into work for my shifts last month,” she said. “I am thankful for each of

my co-workers as well as the staff from other areas of the hospital who are doing their best to help those in need during this time. Everyone across departments seemed to come together as a team, even more than we normally do.”

On the flip side, Schmuck said she didn't like not being able to kiss her kids goodnight for 14 days after her shifts, but in the end, said, “I'm proud to do my part and will do it again if I'm needed.”



Heather Schmuck '02 M'13 (back row, center), poses with co-workers Kate Riordan '06, Lindsey Chung '09, Ryan Williams '14 (seated) and Caleb Ford '20.



Bryon Safewright, '11, '17 • USI Graduate • Respiratory Therapist

USI Grad on the Front Lines in Central New York State

He has watched coronavirus victims gasp for breath: “It’s like they’ve been hit by a train.”

In 2016, when Bryon Safewright '11 '17 and his wife moved from Indianapolis to Syracuse, New York, to be closer to her family, they had no idea this area of the country would bear the brunt of a global pandemic. As a respiratory therapist in the COVID intensive care unit at St. Joseph’s Hospital, he daily cares for patients fighting for their lives on ventilators.

In a recent article in the Syracuse newspaper, Safewright described seeing patients with the coronavirus who are unable to breathe on their own. “It’s like they’ve been hit by a train,” he said.

In the article, Safewright offered a glimpse of what it is like to care for patients on ventilators. He is there when the breathing tube is put down the patient’s throat before they are hooked to the ventilator. This process has the highest risk

of passing the infection on. He said at first, he was worried about contracting the illness, but now, he seldom thinks about the risks as he suits up in a mask, gown and gloves before visiting each patient.

What he does think about is his patients. Because they are sedated, they cannot speak to him. Instead, he has one-way conversations, telling his patients what he is doing as he cares for them on the ventilator. He says he imagines who they are and what their voices sound like.

And he thinks about ways he and his fellow respiratory therapists can fight this virus and reduce the time patients spend on ventilators.

Originally from Liberty, Indiana, Safewright received an associate degree in respiratory therapy from USI in 2011. He first started working for IU Health University in Indianapolis. “Hospitals are starting to prefer that registered respiratory therapist have a bachelor’s degree. When I found out that USI started an online associate to bachelor’s degree program, I knew it was going to be right for me,” he said. “One of my main concerns was the feel of distance education. The staff was always available to answer questions and communicate effectively so it seemed personal. I have since recommended USI’s program to other respiratory therapists.”

Safewright was in the first class of students to earn a bachelor’s degree in

respiratory therapy (BSRT) in 2017. “USI faculty gave us challenging assignments that were both relevant to our careers and helped to broaden our intellect to move into more advanced roles as a respiratory therapist,” he said.

Excerpts from Marnie Eisenstadt’s article and Dennis Nett’s photo reprinted from syracuse.com

HOW CAN I HELP?

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IS AN UNCERTAIN AND SCARY TIME, BUT THAT DOESN’T SQUELCH THE URGE TO VOLUNTEER IN THE COMMUNITY. IN FACT, MANY HEALTH EXPERTS SAY THAT HELPING OTHERS CAN RELIEVE STRESS AND INCREASE OUR SENSE OF MEANING AND PURPOSE.

Brown Baggin' It

Like most of us, Kathy Peak, Clinical Assistant Professor of Radiologic and Imaging Sciences, found she had an abundance of time while sheltering in place. So, when one of her friends needed help with a service project, she jumped at the chance to get involved.

Peak's friend often prepares and serves meals at United Caring Services, a homeless shelter in downtown Evansville. "She has a special place in her heart for the homeless population in Evansville and was concerned that perhaps they were not getting as many meals during the crisis because volunteer groups did not want to go into the shelter to prepare meals," said Peak. "She reached out to several of us via a Facebook group about taking donations and preparing sack lunches for the shelter."

Peak received items her friend had bought and collected with donations and supplies from the food bank – enough for her to assemble 150 sack lunches at her home (practicing social distancing) that she delivered to United Caring Shelter. Each sack lunch contained a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, an orange, a snack bar, a bag of chips and a bottle of water.

"In times like this, it's easy to focus on the negative. Instead, I'm trying very hard to focus on the positive," said Peak. "I'm very fortunate that I still have my job, that I can work from home, and that my family is safe and healthy. I'm grateful for an opportunity, however small, to provide some comfort to those in need."



Kathy Peak assembling sack lunches at her home.

Sewing to Help the Cause



Students, faculty and staff in the College of Nursing and Health Professions are dusting off their sewing machines during the pandemic.

Amy Doninger, Senior Administrative Assistant for Food and Nutrition, hadn't sewed in 15 years, but when she heard that local organizations were asking for donations of face masks, she sprang into action.

"I found a basic Singer model on Amazon, and it was delivered quickly," she said. "It stood out to me that Chemo Buddies needed them because my mom had just finished her chemo in January. They were with her throughout her treatment, providing companionship, assistance and lots of treats and goodies."

Using her mother's fabric and a pattern downloaded from the Deaconess website, she has made several face masks already, donating them to Chemo Buddies, family members and church members.

Dr. Jennifer Evans, Associate Professor of Nursing, also has sewn masks for family members, including her mother and her co-workers at the Evansville west side Wal-Mart.

Evans says her mother is in the high-risk category for COVID-19 since she is over 65 and a type 2 diabetic. "As an essential worker in a single income household, my mother doesn't have the option of not working, so having a mask makes her feel a little more protected," said Evans.

Hot Breakfast to Go

For the past nine years, Tamara Hall has served a hot breakfast once a month at the Potter's Wheel Ministries in downtown Evansville, and she wasn't going to let a global pandemic stop her from her volunteering. Hall, Senior Administrative Assistant for the USI Graduate Nursing Program, said she, her husband Jerry and others from their congregation, Northeast Park Baptist Church, cooked eggs, sausage, hash browns, biscuits and gravy, packaging it in 225 boxes for the Potter's Wheel to hand out on April 11.

"These are people that do not have a meal, let alone a hot meal. It is a joy to be able to share with those less fortunate than we are," she said. "It is always heart-warming to see the appreciation in the people's eyes and hear it in their voices. This month we were not allowed to see or be near the people, but at least they received a much-needed hot meal."

AROUND THE COLLEGE

Pivot to Online Learning

With the shift to online learning, faculty members have had to quickly move in-person classes and clinicals to an online format.

Multiple courses in the USI Nursing Program have assigned the book, *The Long Walk Out of the Woods*, by Dr. Adam Hill, a physician at Riley Hospital for Children.

The book is a personal narrative surrounding his struggle with stress and disillusionment with the culture of medicine, leading to alcoholism, depression and suicidal thoughts. Students were asked to respond to a series of reflective questions that dove into the topics of stigma, addiction, suicide and more.

Dr. Gina Schaar, Associate Professor of Nursing, shared one student's response:

"After finishing the last page of the book, I wanted more pages to read of his reflective journey. This book, that he poured every ounce of himself into and became completely vulnerable, left me feeling like I wanted to lead my life that way. There was something about the descriptive and relatable words he used that had me captivated. I had

never truly felt I could explore the journey of individuals who battled addiction until now. But now I feel that I have a greater confidence in appreciating the strength and timeless effort it takes every day to work through and overcome the stereotypes and labels our society places on those fighting with mental illness and alcoholism. At first, while reading the book I felt bad for these individuals, but now I see their strength, I see the open mindedness, courage and fight they have in them because of their experiences."

Schaar said this student's response is an example of how powerful this book and assignment was to her students, and also evidence that the USI nursing students are continuing to grow and learn while sheltering in place.



IPE Collaboration: Respiratory and Food and Nutrition

Jody Delp, Clinical Assistant Professor of Respiratory Therapy, said her junior students are completing an online case study with Food and Nutrition students to understand the importance of nutrition in patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

Delp and Dr. Julie McCullough, Associate Professor of Nutrition and Chair of Food and Nutrition, partnered to give online lectures, create a case study and assign groups so students in their respective programs could collaborate on the study.

"The students have found innovative ways to communicate, with many learning how to use all the features of Zoom and document sharing," said McCullough.

Sarah Hicks, a student in McCullough's Medical Nutrition Therapy II class, said the use of Zoom meetings and ability to share documents in Microsoft Office online were important for her and her project partner to successfully complete the case study. "With the sharing of the document, we were able to work on it at the same time and read through the work that the other person was doing," she said. "Also, if we noticed a question the other person had answered but maybe had missed the mark on a little or

hadn't answered in enough detail, we could add to it and expound upon it a little further.

Hicks said the Zoom meetings were very helpful "just for us to talk through everything together and voice any questions or

concerns." She said they also used the screen share feature when meeting over Zoom so that they could look through the document together.



USI faculty post video messages to students

X-Ray at Home is Rad



Imagine trying to teach radiographic positioning without a laboratory! Heather Schmuck '02 M'13, Clinical Associate Professor of Radiologic and Imaging Sciences, says her students have risen to the challenge.

"Since our program requires students to demonstrate competency on their radiographic procedures before they can perform in the clinic, I came up with the idea of a virtual lab comp for both my RADT308 and RADT318 courses," said Schmuck. "I did a tutorial video explaining my expectations

and highlighting some different ideas of how to create their own 'X-ray room' to showcase their positioning skill sets virtually."

Schmuck enlisted her son's cooperation to serve as a model for the typical positions she would ordinarily teach within the lab setting and uploaded those to Panopto. She created a separate audio with directions for assignment requirements and then each student created a video to demonstrate all aspects of the chosen exam for their peers.

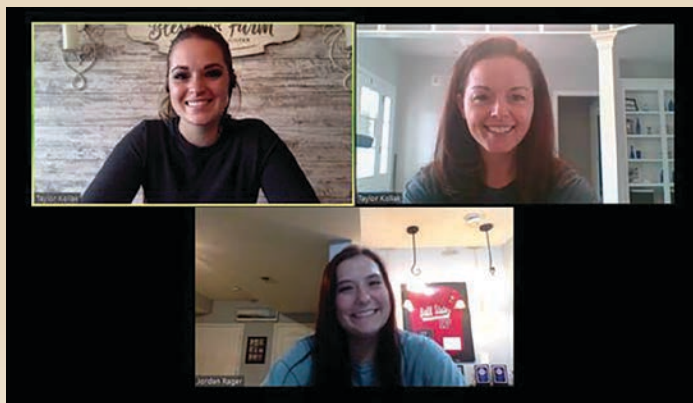
Joy Cook '03 M'09, Associate Professor and Chair of the USI Radiologic and Imaging Sciences Program, said that she and Schmuck created alternative assignments as well for students unable to complete their clinical hours due to the pandemic. Schmuck's students were asked to find and critique images of radiology examinations and review radiographic positioning and procedures in a digital presentation. For Cook's online CT/MR clinical course, she created a similar alternative assignment, but the focus was COVID-19 and its presentation on Computed Tomography (CT) images.

"These are just a few examples of how we are being creative to achieve course objectives while making it meaningful for our students," said Cook.



Heather Schmuck showed her students how to make a collimator out of a flashlight. In X-ray, a collimator is a device which narrows a beam of particles or waves. Schmuck's son helped demonstrate radiology positioning at her home using the homemade X-ray collimator.

Nutrition Telehealth is Homerun



Instructor Beth Young, upper right, on a Zoom nutrition counseling call with Taylor Kollak, senior dietetics major (on the bottom of the screen) and her client, Jordan Rager, nursing major, who is a member of the USI softball team.

Beth Young, instructor in Food and Nutrition, combined USI Athletics with telehealth technology to hit a homerun for her senior dietetics' students.

She partnered with the USI Softball team so students in NUTR 481 (Nutritional Education, Counseling and Theory) could counsel real clients on a variety of nutrition-related topics. It was a win-win for the athletes too as they were able to receive one-on-one counseling to work on individual nutrition goals.

"Originally these counseling sessions would have been completed on campus in a mixture of in-person counseling and telehealth sessions," said Young. "Given the campus closure and social distancing guidelines that were put in place, I elected to move 100% of the counseling sessions to telehealth, conducting all sessions virtually using the software **Healthie**. This software allows me to still be able to view and listen to the counseling sessions in real time, which allows me to grade and critique my students."

Young said the telehealth software has both a desktop and mobile app that the counselor and client can use, allowing for virtual meetings, chat messaging, and tracking and logging food and exercise. The student counselors can complete electronic charting within the *Healthie* software as well.

Young is utilizing telehealth to assist 2019 graduates from the program. “A few of our recent dietetic graduates that are currently

completing dietetic internships (at a variety of locations throughout the country) were removed from clinical rotations and are in need of alternative opportunities to complete the required clinical hours,” she said. “I reached out to the network of registered dietitians that utilize *Healthie* in their private practices and was able to secure some interim preceptors for these interns. The interns will be able to obtain clinical hours through telehealth counseling services.”

Food Science at Home

Elizabeth Ramos, instructor in Food and Nutrition, has had an interesting pivot with her NUTR 384 Food Science class. Dietetics majors at USI are required to take this course to learn the chemical and physical properties of the components of food. When the decision was made to move all learning online, Ramos quickly recorded lectures and three experiments for her students to view, with instructions for them to create their self-directed lab projects at home.

“When I heard that USI was going remote for the remainder of the semester my first thought was, ‘How will Food Science work?’” said Casey Hand, a junior dietetics major from Evansville. “Throughout the entire semester, we have been planning and preparing for individual self-directed lab experiments that we developed ourselves and would be executing in the lab. However, now that we are self-isolating at home, we still had to complete the project for the course requirements, but it is going to look a little different.”

For her experiment, Hand prepared two batches of chocolate chip cookies: one batch with granulated sugar and one batch with honey. She identified and compared differences in objective measurements and organoleptic properties between cookies made with granulated sugar (sucrose) and honey (fructose).

For the objective evaluation, she measured and compared the diameter and height of each cookie sample to determine a difference in spreading related to the type of sweetener used. She originally planned to ask 10 people to serve as judges of the two samples, rating the cookies by taste, color, texture and aroma.

“This was where my biggest challenge was presented, as I did not easily have access to 10 people, which is a well-balanced sample of judges to complete a sensory evaluation,” said Hand. “My revised plan was to reduce the number of judges, and by practicing safe social distancing, deliver cookies to the doorstep of some of my family and friends – with instructions and scorecard included – and then have them report their results to me by sending me a picture of their completed scorecards.”



Casey Hand and her Food Science lab at home.



Elizabeth Ramos filmed an experiment making cottage cheese as part of her lecture for her online Food Science class. Her students are completing their own lab projects at their homes.

Faculty and Staff Achievements



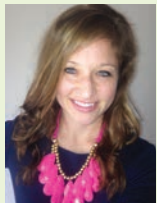
Joy A. Cook, Associate Professor and Chair of the Radiologic and Imaging Sciences Program, has been appointed magnetic resonance (MR) representative for the American Society of Radiologic Technologists (ASRT) Practice Standards Council. She will serve as the national representative for the MR discipline for three years. In her role, Cook will chair the MR Practice Standards Subcommittee, where she will lead a group

of individuals within this discipline to review and revise MR practice standards.

Cook is a graduate of the University of Southern Indiana, having earned an associate degree in radiologic technology in 1995, bachelor's degrees in health services and radiologic and imaging sciences in 2003, and a master's degree in education in 2009. She is currently pursuing a doctorate in educational leadership from USI.



Dr. Katie Ehlman, Professor of Gerontology and Director of the USI Center for Healthy Aging and Wellness, was appointed by Governor Eric J. Holcomb to the Indiana Commission on Aging, part of the state's Family and Social Services Administration.



Jennifer Fehrenbacher '03 '05 '06, Instructor in Dental Assisting and Dental Clinic Coordinator, received a master's degree in Education, Curriculum and Instruction, from Indiana State University.



Tanner Watkins, Administrative Assistant for Graduate Health Administration and Health Informatics and Information Management, received a Master of Science in Sport Management from USI.



Amy Doninger, Senior Administrative Assistant for Food and Nutrition, received a Bachelor of Professional Studies, with a major in Individualized Studies, from USI.

"Growing up, I spent many of my summers volunteering at a nursing home in my hometown. I knew from those experiences I wanted to work in a healthcare profession," said Cook. "I was attracted to the field of radiology because of its combination of art and science. I was very interested in how radiology plays a part in the discovery of disease."

Cook has spent most of her career practicing in MRI. "The interesting thing about the healthcare field is it has a funny way of steering people in the path they are supposed to be in," she said. "When different positions within the hospital radiology department opened up, I always 'knew' which ones were right for me. After landing myself in MRI, I knew that was where I was going to stay."

Cook said while MRI is a useful tool in diagnosis of disease, it does it very differently than the way she was trained in radiology school because it does not use X-rays. Years ago, she discovered she had much to learn about MRI, and said she continues to gain knowledge in her practice today.



Kim Sullivan, Advising Associate for Nursing, received a Master of Public Administration, Public Sector, from USI.

New Hires



Dr. Paul B. Arthur, Assistant Professor, is the new chair of the Occupational Therapy Program.



Dr. Suzanne Kennedy Leahy joined the Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP) as the Data and Evaluation Manager.

STUDENT NEWS



Megan Webster '21, radiologic and imaging sciences, was selected as one of only two students in the state of Indiana to participate in the American Society of Radiologic Technologists (ASRT) Student Leadership Development Program (SLDP).

Approximately 90-100 students from across the United States will participate in this program, which offered students the opportunity

to attend the 2020 ASRT Educational Symposium and Annual Governance and House of Delegates Meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico, June 24-28 (which will now be held as a virtual meeting, due to COVID-19).

“I feel very fortunate to be chosen as one of the Indiana students,” she said. “I didn’t think I’d get the opportunity when I applied, so I’m very appreciative and excited! I attended the ISRT (Indiana Society of Radiologic Technologists) conference in October last year and really enjoyed it!”

Students selected for this program receive an insider’s look into the world’s largest association for medical imaging and radiation therapy professionals with opportunities for networking, education and professional growth.

Webster, of Newburgh, Indiana, is a member of Lambda Nu Theta Chi, USI’s chapter of the national society for radiology students, and she works 20 hours a week at Deaconess Hospital. When she was working on her first degree from USI (double majoring in anthropology and Spanish studies, graduating in 2016) she was an AMIGO orientation leader on campus.

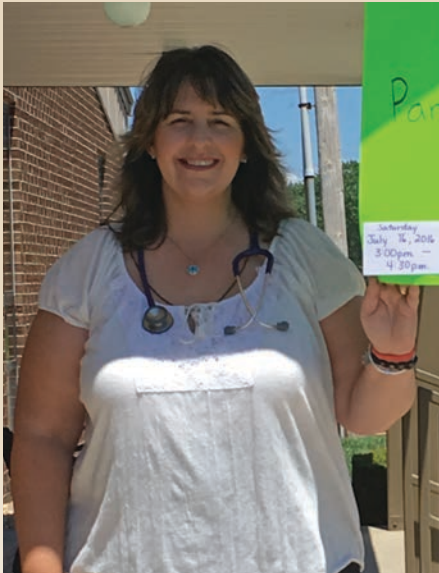
After graduation, she plans to work as an MRI tech, but said she also is open to working in a few different modalities during her career.



Dental Hygiene Zoom Call

Members of the Dental Hygiene Class of 2020 send a positive message during a Zoom call to faculty members and also their patients in the USI Dental Hygiene Clinic.

Combating Isolation During Pandemic



In response to the pandemic, **Amy Todd**, a student in the USI RN-BSN Program, created a nursing task force at her church with a goal to help fellow parishioners combat the negative effects from social distancing and isolation.

She mobilized 23 nurses at St. John Catholic Church, Loogootee, Indiana, to make phone calls in an attempt to meet the psycho-social well-being of at-risk groups in their parish. Individuals suffering from lack of interaction, loss of independence, financial strain or mental illness are particularly vulnerable. She says that as nurses make these calls they are always “assessing with the intent to refer, if necessary.”

“Evidence shows that fear produces many unhealthy behaviors and responses when pushed to limits,” she said. “And there is plenty of evidence to support that elevated stress damages the mind and the body. This task force is set up to be as proactive as possible. We know that life for many people in our community is about to get worse before it gets better.”

Serving as the faith community nurse for the parish since 2016, Todd has done a lot of one-on-one care with parishioners and their family members, as well as collaboration within her community to provide better resources for Martin County. Most of her work

is in the area of mental health, special needs, eldercare and cancer care.

Todd encourages her nurse colleagues to join her in a research project connected with the Indiana University School of Public Health in response to COVID-19. “This project is focused on the health and well-being of rural communities and their response to the coronavirus,” she said.

“I feel strongly that we are embarking on some unhealthy terrain, and given the skill sets that nurses have – combined with the unique beauty that lies in nursing that is not only a career, but a vocation – we are called to respond,” she said.

In an email to her USI instructors, Julie St. Clair, Clinical Assistant Professor of Nursing, and Melissa Warthen, instructor in Nursing, Todd said she would not have been able to form the nursing task force if not for the USI RN-BSN Program. “I cannot tell you what a difference this program has made to my confidence and development as a nurse.”

Dental Hygiene Student



Shayna Stuffle '20, Dental Hygiene, knew from a young age that she wanted to make a difference in the lives of others. As a recipient of a national grant through the American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA), she's achieving her goal.

Stuffle's project, providing dental hygiene treatment and products to victims of domestic and sexual violence, earned \$5,000 from the Mars Wrigley Foundation's Healthier Smiles Grant Program. “I have had the privilege of mentoring Shayna as she completes her final project through the USI Honors Program,” said Mandy Reddington, Clinical Assistant Professor of Dental Hygiene and Dental Assisting. “Her project idea began with wanting to learn more about a career in public health dentistry and quickly evolved into a project that could increase access to dental care for survivors of abuse.”

In fall 2019, Stuffle received a USI Endeavor Award to provide dental hygiene treatment for clients of Evansville's Albion Fellows Bacon Center, a non-profit organization that provides services to

victims of abuse, at USI's Dental Hygiene Clinic during the spring 2020 semester. The additional funding from the ADHA will allow USI to continue offering Albion clients dental hygiene care during the fall 2020 semester.

“As part of her Honors project, Shayna was able to donate 800 toothbrushes, tubes of toothpaste, floss and several hundred bottles of mouth rinse to Albion Fellows Bacon Center,” said Reddington. “There is enough product so that every person who seeks services from this agency for the next calendar year will receive one of each.”

Stuffle learned about Albion Fellows Bacon Center through a donation drive conducted by a campus religious life organization her freshman year.

“When the student in charge of the drive explained how they impact the community,

I immediately wanted to donate and find other ways to assist this organization in their mission,” she said. “This project helps survivors of abuse receive care they may not otherwise have access to. They will also be provided education on their oral health, including ways to prevent disease.”

Stuffle says her project is also an important professional development opportunity for her and her fellow dental hygiene classmates who are providing care

for the Albion clients. “Working with these survivors exposes us to signs of abuse so that we can recognize those signs in the future, as well as enables us to create oral health education tailored to their needs,” she said.

A native of Loogootee, Indiana, Stuffle said the only career she ever considered pursuing is dental hygiene.

“Growing up and having an amazing dental hygienist, interning while in high school and witnessing the difference dental

hygienists can make with their patients made me feel secure in my career choice,” she said. “As I have been more exposed to the dental hygiene field, there have been many individuals who have inspired me to keep working diligently and making a difference, as they have made a difference in my professional life.”

Crossing the FNP Finish Line



Ask any student in the Graduate Nursing Program and they will tell you: the coursework is very rigorous and time-consuming. Some might describe the journey to graduation as “a marathon, not a sprint,” something **Amy Patterson** decided to enact by running a marathon – her first – during her third year in the USI Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) Program while working full-time as a nurse.

“I had several people that would look at me in disbelief that I would even attempt to do such a thing while going through my last year of FNP school,” she said. “I have to admit it was challenging at times, especially on those slow long-run Saturdays and then having to study afterward, but it made me stronger, not only physically but mentally as well. Everyone should have a method of

relieving stress to stay strong and healthy. I just happened to find mine through running and spending time with my husband.”

Patterson and her husband, James, a former U.S. Marine, both completed the Marine Corps Marathon on October 27, 2019, in Arlington, Virginia and Washington, D.C. She says she felt “humbled and honored” to have had the opportunity to run alongside both military and civilian runners on a route that included several of the U.S. capital’s famous monuments and sites.

This experience is even more memorable now during this time of COVID-19, as large public gatherings and events are cancelled.

Patterson, the mother of three adult children, works as a registered nurse in the field of quality coordinator/educator at Ascension St. Vincent Evansville’s Surgicare, an outpatient ambulatory surgery center. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, her job duties have taken a shift towards assisting the administrator, clinical director and managers with the implementation of the many, frequent, and ongoing new safety protocols and measures to keep her associates and patients safe during this trying time.

Completing her academic coursework has also been challenging. “As with many of my fellow USI FNP students, our clinical rotations have been difficult to obtain for this semester with many facilities halting student preceptorships,” she said. “However, the USI Graduate Nursing Program has graciously provided optional clinical opportunities that we may use towards fulfilling a select amount of our total clinical hours required for the program.”

Patterson does have a few other running races on her “bucket list,” but those are on hold now, due to COVID-19 and because she is focusing the majority of her time to completing the FNP Program and preparing to take the nurse practitioner boards in the fall.

“Running has become a tremendous source of enjoyment in my life,” she said. “It has become a new outlet for stress relief, exercise and socialization. I am excited to soon be crossing the finish line of the FNP Graduate Program. And with a new runner’s mentality, I am already thinking about my next race, whether that be another marathon or future career opportunity.”

“I am excited to soon be crossing the finish line of the FNP Graduate Program. And with a new runner’s mentality, I am already thinking about my next race, whether that be another marathon or future career opportunity.”

-Amy Patterson, RN

Nursing Alumni



Adrienne Bond '16, a registered nurse at the Vanderburgh Health Department, is the 2019 recipient of the University of Southern Indiana Distinguished Nursing Alumni Award. She works in the Pre to 3 Program, which provides support for mothers, infants and families to reduce risks associated with infant mortality and is certified as a lactation consultant and car seat technician.

Before the Pre to 3 Program launched, Bond was instrumental in helping develop policy, standards and the model currently implemented for home visiting. Her nominator said, "I am nominating Adrienne for the dedication and professionalism she has exemplified in her position as a Pre to 3 nurse. Adrienne is passionate about her role in our program and about the families that she serves. She has been a mentor for our new staff, helped organize continuing education opportunities and promotes our program through outreach opportunities."

When accepting the award during USI Nursing's annual White Coat Ceremony, held last September, Bond said, "The USI Nursing Program helped equip me to practice nursing in a variety of settings. The emphasis on taking care of the whole patient and focusing on the small things that patients truly remember is such an important value that is instilled into USI nursing students. The program prepares students to hone the compassionate values of our nursing founders so that they shine through in the work of modern nursing today."

Each year, the USI Nursing Alumni Society recognizes a graduate who has made outstanding achievements in a career or public service. For more information about the USI Nursing Alumni Society, visit USI.edu/health/nursing/nursing-alumni-society.



Rachel Spalding M'13 has been hired as Chief Nursing Officer at Good Samaritan in Knox County after serving as Executive Director of Perioperative Services at Ascension St. Vincent Evansville. Spalding earned her bachelor's degree from Morehead State University, a master's degree from the University of Southern Indiana and a doctorate's degree in nursing at Capella University.

Partnerships

GWEP pivots in response to COVID-19

The Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP), a five-year grant at USI received from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), has pivoted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in order to continue to maximize patient and family engagement and integrate geriatrics into primary care.

In 2019, USI's College of Nursing and Health Professions received the \$3.7 million grant to improve care of older adults in southwestern Indiana. In the first year, USI has been working with Deaconess Health System and two Area Agencies on Aging (AAA – SWIRCA & More and Generations) to complete several of the grant's objectives, including embedding an AAA care coordinator at a primary care clinic, community-based programming on dementia and mobility, dissemination of an Advance Care Planning (ACP) program and the development of Interprofessional Geriatric Assessment Clinic with the Deaconess Family Medicine Residency Program.

GWEP's primary investigator, Dr. Katie Ehlman, Professor of Gerontology, said several grant areas have been impacted due to the pandemic, but her team and community partners are collaborating to deliver outcomes in response to the changing environment.

Online Course Modules

After universities moved classes online, the GWEP team quickly developed a six-hour ACP module and a three-hour module on telehealth to assist faculty members with relevant healthcare content for courses, internships and clinicals.

Online PAC Course with Teepa Snow

A two-day in-person dementia certification course with Teepa Snow and her Positive Approach® to Care (PAC) team, scheduled to take place in Evansville on March 31 and April 1, was successfully moved to a "live online" format via Zoom. One participant commented to Snow, "Even though we are all practicing social distancing, your enthusiasm is contagious."

Check-in Phone Calls to Older Adults

The SWIRCA & More care coordinator, who had just started receiving patient referrals at the Deaconess Clinic downtown Evansville location in Fall 2019, worked from home for several weeks, making phone calls to check in on older adults' health and wellness and also combat their feelings of isolation using the social determinants of health to guide the conversations.

"These are just a few of the areas where we have had to make adjustments," said Ehlman. "Our team continues to assess the environment to identify other areas to restructure and pivot. Now more than ever, we need to continue to provide services to older adults and their caregivers in our communities."

[Learn more at USI.edu/gwep](http://USI.edu/gwep)

CONFERENCES AND CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

March 17, 2020, ushered in a new reality for the USI Center for Health Professions Lifelong Learning (CHPLL).

In addition to working from home, the CHPLL also received notice about the cancellation of eight conferences scheduled between April 1 through August 7, 2020. The CHPLL began immediately notifying presenters, planning committee members, vendors, registered attendees and issuing refunds.

“After a year’s planning for each of these conferences, disappointment was overshadowed by the reality of keeping all safe,” said Dr. M. Jane Swartz, Director of the CHPLL.

For over 20 years, the CHPLL has provided health professionals with conferences and online education through the certificate programs, which provide health professionals education within an online format. “With the COVID-19 pandemic, the CHPLL has frequently interacted with participants around the globe with requests,” said Swartz. “Some are requesting to be enrolled into a certificate program now and others say they need to pause

while they respond to overwhelming responsibilities. They all are appreciative of our quick and empathetic problem solving.”

Since the call to work from home, Swartz said her department have been meeting via Zoom. “Connecting to each other as a department provided us guidance, connection, collaboration and emotional support,” she said. “We are enjoying interacting with our team in their home environments and getting a glimpse into the other aspects of their life such as two- and four-legged family.”

As the shelter-in-place days continue, the CHPLL are researching additional resources to meet the health professional education needs. Programs using formats such as webinars, Zoom and independent study are being investigated and developed, according to Swartz. “It is the goal of the CHPLL to continue providing continuing education opportunities to assist health professionals in meeting their personal and professional goals and requirements.”

COVID-19 INDEPENDENT STUDY

The USI Center for Health Professions Lifelong Learning is offering a 30-minute presentation to assist you, your family, peers and patients cope with the pandemic environment in which we find ourselves.

Elizabeth Kalb, PhD, HSPP, MBA, and Anita Hagan MSN, RN, CNS, developed the complimentary program to anyone in need of information and resources. The program provides 0.5 CE after viewing the presentation and completing the evaluation.

Access the
COVID-19
Independent
Study Course:



Center for Health Professions Lifelong Learning

2020 Conferences

- August 6, 13, 20 and 27, Mid-America Institute on Aging and Wellness Webinar (Mini MAIA)
- October 1, Suture Workshop
- October 2, 17th Annual Pharmacology Update for Healthcare Professionals
- October 14, Focus on Healthcare (abstracts accepted)
- Virtual Event (Date TBD): Advance Care Planning Conference
- Virtual Event (Date TBD): Dental Ethics Conference
- Respecting Choices® First Steps® Workshop:
Available upon request for groups of five or more participants

2020 Online Certificate Programs

- Anticoagulation Therapy Management, eight weeks, begins July 27, October 5
- Case Management, eight weeks, begins August 10
- Clinical Simulation, six weeks, begins September 14
- Diabetes, 10 weeks, begins August 3
- Faith Community Nursing, six weeks, begins September 14
- Health Promotion and Worksite Wellness, eight weeks, begins September 14
- Heart Failure, seven weeks, begins September 21
- Hypertension Management, seven weeks, begins July 27
- Medical Coding, 16 weeks, begins July 6*
- Oncology Management, 10 weeks, begins August 10
- Pain Management, eight weeks, begins August 3
- Wound Management, eight weeks, begins September 21

Online Independent Study Programs:

- Anticoagulation: Oral
- Anticoagulation: Patient Self-Testing
- Behavioral Health
- Complementary and Alternative Medicine Program (CAM)
- COVID-19

- Limited Cardiac Catheterization Radiography Certification
- Lipid Management
- Opioid Program
- Pediatric Pain Management with Opioids and Opioid Alternatives
- Changes to the POST and Healthcare Consent Laws

**Denotes "Hybrid" conference and certificate programs (combination of online and face-to-face content). See website for specific online and live start dates.*

Registration and Program Information

Visit USI.edu/health or call:
812-461-5217

