

University of  
Southern Indiana

SUMMER 2013

# Synapse

College of Nursing and Health Professions

Dr. Ann White  
gives glimpse into  
College's future





## FEATURES

### 2 SCHOLARSHIPS GIVE STUDENTS AN EDGE

Donor dollars shape not only the lives of scholarship recipients but also members of the community as a whole. Here, students share insights on how scholarships helped change their lives as they journeyed into careers to help others.

### 6 DEAN DISCUSSES COLLEGE'S FUTURE

Ten months into her new role as dean of the College of Nursing and Health Professions, Dr. Ann White has her head up and is looking to the future. Dr. White shares her vision for the College, highlighting the exciting opportunities she plans for USI nursing and health professions.

# Synapse

College of Nursing and Health Professions

Synapse magazine is published by the University of Southern Indiana College of Nursing and Health Professions.

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### On the cover

Dean Ann White leads College of Nursing and Health Professions into new era.

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University of Southern Indiana is an affirmative action/equal employment opportunity institution.



Occupational Therapy Assistant students participated in the Indiana Blood Center's blood drive and bone marrow registry drive earlier this year. Indiana Blood Center is charged with collecting 550 units of blood daily to be able to supply over 60 Indiana hospitals.

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From participation in national studies to opening new community health clinics to instituting hands-on teaching units within area hospitals, USI's students and faculty are pitching in to improve community healthcare.

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Alumni among small percentage of elite nurses awarded prestigious Magnet Nurse of the Year.

# Scholarships Give Students an Edge in Life's Work

## Making the impossible possible

Going on a hike with your wife and son may not seem like an extraordinary Father's Day gift, but for Martin, a former avid outdoorsman diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), often known as "Lou Gehrig's Disease," it was monumental. Martin is completely paralyzed, hooked to a ventilator, and communicates solely through his eyes. He and his family made it to the top of Mt. Washington in New Hampshire with the help of a team, including Katherine (Kat) Belsito, who graduated with honors from USI in May 2013 with a bachelor of science degree.

Belsito volunteered last summer at a camp run by Adaptive Sports Partners of the North Country (ASPNC), an organization that allows individuals with all levels of disabilities to participate in outdoor activities. Her experience was made possible through an Epi-Hab Scholarship that benefits students who help make a difference for people with disabilities.

"I am so thankful for this scholarship," said Belsito. "It enabled me to take the internship at ASPNC without the worries of a full-time summer job to help pay my tuition."

ASPNC provides sports and recreation for people with physical and developmental disabilities through adaptive equipment. Belsito, who will be a graduate student in USI's occupational therapy program this fall,

water-skied, hiked, biked, and kayaked with paralyzed, blind, and autistic individuals.

"The most important lesson I took from my summer experience was learning to look beyond people's disabilities," she said. "Martin taught me if there is desire, any barrier can be overcome with the right resources."

Now that Belsito is back on campus, she's involved with USI's Best Buddies, an organization that pairs college students and individuals with physical and/or mental disabilities. As a result of her involvement with the organization—something she's been a part of since high school—she plans to study the need for adaptive bicycles in the Evansville area as her master's research project in the occupational therapy program.

"My buddy told me he'd like to go for a bike ride, an impossible task for him on a regular bicycle," Belsito said. "An adaptive bicycle would allow him that opportunity—not to mention many others in the community with disabilities."

She plans to conduct a needs assessment, and hopes to secure a grant to purchase hand cycles for people who are paralyzed, tandem bikes for those with cognitive and/or visual impairments, and three-wheelers with additional built-in adaptive support that allows individuals to sit and pedal themselves independently.



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*For issues of privacy, only Martin's first name was used in the article.*

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The most important lesson I took from my summer was learning to look beyond people's disabilities.

– Katherine (Kat) Belsito



- 1) Kat Belsito leads a team up Mt. Washington with Adaptive Sports Partners of the North Country (ASPNC) in New Hampshire.
- 2) A camp participant gets a thrill out of a hike up the mountain in a TrailRider.
- 3) Belsito learns how to lead hikers with visual impairments.
- 4) Belsito helps a camp participant use an adaptive tandem water ski.
- 5) Belsito tries out an adaptive bicycle called the Pino.
- 6) Three ASPNC camp participants paddle around Moore Reservoir.

## Scholarships Give Students an Edge in Life's Work

### Hardships didn't detour Daywalt's dream



The scholarship...it was exactly what I needed for my board certifications.

— Lesley Daywalt

Lesley Daywalt tests a patient's heart using echocardiography at St. Mary's Cardiology Unit.

Lesley Daywalt knows a lot about the hardships of healthcare for a woman who is so young. Her dad has been in a wheelchair—the result of a car accident—since before she was born. At the time of his accident, the hospital he was admitted to didn't test blood for hepatitis before a transfusion, and he contracted hepatitis C. The hepatitis C led to liver failure, and eventually caused him to need a liver transplant.

Given her father's health hardships, it's plausible to think Daywalt, a 2013 Diagnostic Medical Sonographer graduate, chose her profession because of him. However, her interest in healthcare doesn't stem directly from his history, but rather her own. She had kidney disease as an infant through her teen years, and had to undergo ultrasounds twice a year until she was 16.

"I became interested in ultrasounds in general because of my condition, and decided to specialize in echocardiography once I got into the program," said Daywalt, who now works in St. Mary's Cardiology Unit.

Daywalt, due to her life experiences, was awarded the 2012 Anthony Wayne Dyhrkopp Memorial Scholarship. The \$250 award is given to a diagnostic medical sonography student who perseveres and overcomes hardship, and is in memory of the father of one of Daywalt's clinical instructors, Kara (Dyhrkopp) Brass '07.

"The scholarship amount might not seem like a lot, but it was exactly what I needed to take my board certification," said Daywalt.

Brass, who works as a cardiac sonographer at St. Mary's Medical Center in Evansville, had just been accepted into the inaugural class of the diagnostic medical sonography program at USI in 2005 when her father died of a heart attack.

"When I heard that Kara's dad died of a heart attack, I thought how strangely full-circle life can be, given that I have since decided to specialize in echocardiography," she said.

### Eye-opening experience result of scholarship

For Kinzy Amos, 2010 nursing graduate, the Trudy and Bill Mitchell Scholarship led to an eye-opening experience, one she encourages her students today to strive for as an adjunct nursing faculty in the College of Nursing and Health Professions. The scholarship helped her travel to Harlaxton College in England, where she took a two-week nursing course taught by Dr. Nadine Coudret and Dr. Ann White.

"I highly recommend studying abroad if you have scholarship funds. It was such a great opportunity to have at a young age," Amos said, "and one I'll always remember."

Her Harlaxton senior-level course "Nursing and Healthcare Issues" and the challenges she encountered in England helped shaped her appreciation of medical treatment in the States.

"I was able to go in the wards and see first-hand how healthcare worked in Europe," said Amos, who is currently earning a master's degree in nursing education from USI. "We toured two different hospitals where there were wards containing four to six patients per room. This was at a time when there was much debate about healthcare in the United States. What I saw led me to really appreciate the private healthcare system we have."



I highly recommend studying abroad if you have scholarship funds.

— Kinzy Amos

USI College of Nursing and Health Professions adjunct nursing faculty Kinzy Amos, left, instructs a student on tracheotomy care in the Clinical Simulation Center.

## Hard work and big dreams pay off

Since Stephanie Durbin was the first person in her family to attend college, the ins and outs of college life were foreign and complicated at times. When she was accepted to USI, she believed that meant she could go straight into the nursing program and be on her way to a dream career. However, the competition was tough, and the challenges more than she anticipated.



These scholarships gave me confidence that I was doing the right thing, because I was being noticed.  
— Stephanie Durbin

Stephanie Durbin explains sterilized IV kits to USI nursing students at St. Mary's Surgical Trauma Intensive Care Unit.

Still, Durbin worked hard to gain a spot in the nursing program, taking SATs and ACTs as a college sophomore. In time, her persistence paid off, and she earned recognition from faculty that led to financial assistance.

In her junior and senior years, Durbin received two scholarships: the Ethel Mae Jenny Payne Scholarship for deserving nursing students, and the Fred and Elise Moutoux Trautvetter Scholarship for full-time nursing students. Then, as a senior, the nursing faculty awarded her the Alumni Faculty Recognition Scholarship.

"These scholarships gave me confidence that I was doing the right thing, because I was being noticed," said Durbin, a 2010 nursing graduate. "I was hard up for money, and the scholarships gave me an opportunity to relax and not worry so much about how I would pay for my education."

Today, Durbin is back at USI working toward a master of science in nursing degree and plans to graduate in 2014. She is completing the acute care nurse practitioner specialty while working at St. Mary's Surgical Trauma Intensive Care Unit. She also serves as adjunct nursing faculty at USI's College of Nursing and Health Professions.

## Long-standing scholarships in the College of Nursing and Health Professions

### Edward F. Harrison Scholarship

Established in 1991 by Edward F. Harrison for USI undergraduate students who demonstrate a commitment to nursing while pursuing their professional healthcare career.

**Total of 132 \$1,000 scholarships have been awarded since its inception.**

### Ethel Mae Jenney Payne Scholarship

Established in 1994 by the Estate of Ethel Mae Jenney Payne for deserving USI nursing students.

**Total of 196 \$1,000 scholarships awarded since its inception.**

### Gordon and Gail Kelley Health Professions Scholarship

Established in 1993 by Gordon and Gail Kelley for deserving full-time USI health professions students active in volunteer services.

**Total of 31 \$400 scholarships awarded since its inception.**

### Claude Wertz Sr. Memorial Scholarship

### Barbara Jeanne Wertz Memorial Scholarship

### Judith Wertz Memorial Scholarship

All three were established by Mrs. Claude Wertz in memory of her husband and daughters for USI students pursuing degrees in nursing.

**Total of 53 \$400 scholarships awarded since their inceptions.**

## Dean discusses College's future

Ten months into her new role as dean of the College of Nursing and Health Professions, Dr. Ann White has her head up and is looking to the future. The dean, the College, and the University are all positioned at the edge of a new frontier, one that Dr. White envisions as an exciting opportunity for both USI nursing and health professions students and the community at large. Dr. White recently answered several questions about her visions and goals.



**Q:** What is your vision for the College of Nursing and Health Professions for the coming year, and looking to the future?

**A:** We need to take a look at where we are in our trajectory, since we are on the cusp of a huge shift in healthcare reform in this country. Healthcare is changing and, as such, we need to prepare our graduates to work in this as yet undetermined environment. That means preparing them to be even better critical thinkers and problem solvers, since it's impossible to prepare them for every situation they might encounter. By developing their thinking skills they will be better prepared to work in these environments—whatever they look like.

To that, we have to think about what will be needed in our future healthcare world, and create new programs that respond and are responsive to those needs. Our healthcare system has for so long been focused on treating the illness, and we can't do that anymore. What we have to do now is prevent illnesses from happening. This will be a huge cultural shift within society and the healthcare profession. I see it, however, as an ethical responsibility of the College to prepare our graduates for the future.

**Q:** Both you and the College of Nursing and Health Professions are actively involved with community initiatives, and the College is partnering with local hospitals on exciting endeavors. With this in mind, how do you envision the College continuing to partner with the community?

**A:** We just implemented Dedicated Education Units. This was a collaborative effort with both local hospitals. No one knew if it was going to work, but we did our homework and it is a huge success at both St. Mary's Medical Center and Deaconess Hospital.

One new project we're working on is a grant with the Veteran's Administration to provide inter-professional healthcare to veterans in rural communities. This grant would allow us to work with people who have served our country—to be able to give back to them—as well as give our students an opportunity to work with other healthcare professionals in a team effort. It would not be just the nursing student going out to visit a veteran but a team of healthcare professionals such as a nutritionist, respiratory therapist, occupational therapy student; whatever that individual needs.

We need to be innovative and creative. Sometimes we might fail, and that's okay. However, it's my responsibility to create an environment where people feel supported and know it's okay to take a risk. If something doesn't work, then we look at it again and shift it a bit and try again. That's what I want the College of Nursing and Health Professions to continue to do.





**Q:** How else do you see the College of Nursing and Health Professions impacting the local community?

**A:** We have two nurse-managed health centers now—one in Glenwood Leadership Academy and the other at Cedar Hall Community School—that we are going to continue to support. Both are school-based clinics but they are not limited to school-age children. We see all ages from babies to the elderly, and I think we're making a huge difference in these communities because it allows people to look at their healthcare differently. They don't have to go to the emergency room, rather they can be seen by us for their primary care needs.

Because we are in the community providing primary healthcare, we are able to form bonds with these individuals. They can turn to us for help. The clinics have been very successful, so much so that we will be opening a third one to serve the Latino population early next year.

**Q:** What ground-breaking changes would you like to see in the College's future?

**A:** I'd like to see to see our faculty get more involved in applied research and join forces with some of our community partners. For instance, we might collaborate with Mead Johnson to do some food and nutrition applied research in our school population to discover identifiers of obesity at a community level. To do this, I'd like to go after some applied research grants from the National Institutes of Health. With NIH grants we could collect data from community individuals, then, based upon the results of the data, change individual practices and improve health community-wide.

**Q:** What are some of the challenges you've faced in the last year? What do you foresee as your greatest challenge moving forward?

**A:** Now that I'm at a higher administrative level I have to think differently. I'm engaged in different conversations that present new perspectives on the strategic plans for the University and the College.

I spend time with all of the departments, but particularly with health professions so that I have a better understanding and more insight to their needs. I want to be a better representative of the entire College when I'm in University administrative meetings.

The other challenge we're facing now as a College is the phenomenal number of applicants interested in all of our health programs, and the limited space we have available. It's a huge challenge for me to try to identify opportunities for all our students. The administration and I are engaged in conversations to address these issues. Part of our plan depends on state funding, but rather than wait for the state to decide, we look at all kinds of options so can be ready with a plan.

**Q:** The University of Southern Indiana will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2015. What role do you see the College playing as the University continues to grow and move into its next 50 years?

**A:** As the University continues to grow, I think we are primed to develop more practice doctorates. We've started the nursing doctorate, but I think we should look at an occupational doctorate and some other practice doctorates as well. Doing so would contribute to the region and address the University's strategic plan to provide leadership in the community. Practice doctorates will become tomorrow's healthcare leaders.

### Cedar Hall site of newest community health center



USI nurse practitioner Allison Krieger takes Elizabeth McCormick's blood pressure.

USI opened its second community health center in January as a means of better serving the healthcare needs of Evansville citizens. Located in Cedar Hall Community School, the Cedar Hall Community Health Center offers undergraduate and graduate health professions students the opportunity to gain practical experience while providing primary healthcare services to Evansville citizens in need, especially neighborhood residents.

"Access to a familiar place to see medical professionals...when children are ill is essential," said Cathlin Gray, Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation associate superintendent for Family, School, and Community Partnerships.

The USI Community Health Centers resulted from a five-year \$1.2 million grant to USI from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The grant was a collaborative effort between USI, the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation, St. Mary's Health System, and Southwestern Behavioral Healthcare, Inc.

USI opened its first health center a year ago at Glenwood Leadership Academy and a third center is scheduled to open in 2014 to serve the Latino community.



### Faculty, students focus on hospital readmission

When the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) identified the Evansville Hospital Area as one of 14 communities nationwide with higher-than-average hospital readmission rates within 30 days of discharge, Dr. Mary Jane Swartz, assistant professor of nursing, began working with the Heart Hospital at Deaconess Gateway to lower the numbers. She collaborated with Dr. Iris Philips, social work department chair, to engage students from both the College of Nursing and Health Professions and the College of Liberal Arts to team up and coach elderly patients with heart failure on how to care for themselves after being discharged from the hospital so they don't get readmitted.

"Older patients have many challenges for self-management after being discharged; that's why a multi-pronged approach is needed," Swartz said. "A nurse might ask if the patient understands how to take the medicine but a

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"Older patients have many challenges for self-management after being discharged."

– Dr. Mary Jane Schwartz

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social worker will ask if the patient has money to buy the medicine."

Research over the past decade has shown that a significant number of patients are readmitted to care facilities after discharge. A goal of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act has been to increase the quality of patient care, especially for Medicare beneficiaries. For this reason, CMS awarded research grants to state Medicare quality improvement organizations. Health Care Excel, Indiana's quality improvement organization, chose the Evansville hospital service area for the project.

### Nursing alumna honored with esteemed award



Elikofer

Amanda Elikofer, 2009 nursing graduate, was recently named the recipient of the prestigious 2013 Foundation Nurse Fellow by the Society of Trauma Nurses and the Eastern Association for the Surgery of Trauma (EAST).

The award gives Elikofer the opportunity to gain access to key leaders in trauma care.

"This experience will allow me to ask questions, offer suggestions, and grow clinically

and professionally. I am looking forward to future involvement with the Society of Trauma Nurses and EAST," she said.

Elikofer is the trauma program manager at Deaconess Regional Trauma Center in Evansville, Indiana, as well a student in USI's nursing master's program.

As the 2013 Nurse Fellow, she will receive support for travel, hotel, and registration fees made possible by donations to the EAST Foundation Board Nurse Fellow program. She also will be assigned a mentor to assist in designing a plan for programs to attend and arranging interviews with trauma care leaders.

## Dedicated Education Units embeds students with local hospitals

The University of Southern Indiana has partnered with two area hospitals to establish Dedicated Education Units (DEUs). The first DEU was instituted at St. Mary's Medical Center on 6 West, the renal and diabetic unit last January. In March, the second DEU was started at Deaconess Hospital on Unit 5100, the respiratory and oncology unit.

"We have long been partners with both local hospitals in offering innovative learning opportunities for students," said Dr. Ann White, dean of the College of Nursing and Health Professions. "The DEUs provide undergraduate nursing students with an immersion experience in a hospital environment."

Deaconess and St. Mary's DEUs operate under the same model, in that they both provide extended, hands-on opportunities for nursing students to gain clinical education and experience under the guidance of knowledgeable nurses.

The distinction between USI's DEU model and other teaching units within the state is that USI's is geared for college juniors enrolled in their second medical surgical course rather than seniors taking their practicums. The program is the first of its kind in the state.

At both Deaconess 5100 and St. Mary's 6 West, two students are paired with one nurse who is their Clinical Teaching Partner for a full 12-hour shift. The students work with the same nurse for five shifts during a four-week clinical rotation.



Jennifer Titzer, USI instructor in nursing; Shana Evans, a registered nurse with Deaconess Hospital; and USI nursing student Lusine Vardanyan converse outside the Dedicated Education Unit at Deaconess Hospital.

## MHA student presents paper at international conference



Marcum

Chrissy Marcum, a Master of Health Administration student at USI, presented her capstone project titled "Transfers to Pediatric Tertiary Care: An Analysis of Weekly Trends Predict Greatest Need and Improve Efficiency," at the

Pediatric Academic Societies' annual meeting in Washington, D.C., in May 2013.

"Any time a patient is moved between hospitals, there are risks involving transportation, equipment, and a change in the medical care staff," said Marcum. "In this study, we

wanted to identify trends to help us predict when transfers occur most frequently so we can plan accordingly in terms of staffing and other measures to keep the patients safe and maintain quality of care."

Marcum, the Pediatric Hospital Medicine Program Coordinator at Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis, plans to graduate with her master's degree in July 2013.

Marcum and her co-authors, Dr. Kenton Hilbish and Dr. Emily Webber, both of Indiana University School of Medicine, collected data on patients transferred to Riley Hospital for Children to determine a means of improving efficient use of resources, staffing needs, and patient transfer safety.

## USI-Potter's Wheel health fair



Zacary Collins helps USI Family Nurse Practitioner Stephanie Lidauer listen to his heart during his wellness checkup. Collins and his mom, Misty Tucker, participated in USI's College of Nursing and Health Professions children's health fair held at The Potter's Wheel in March.

## Maddox receives Berger Award



Maddox

Phyllis Maddox, assistant professor emerita of dental hygiene, was named the recipient of the 2013 Sydney L. and Sadelle Berger Faculty Community Service Award. The award, established in 1996

by Charles and Leslie Berger in honor of his parents, is given annually to a USI faculty member who has shown outstanding service to the community.

Deborah Wolf, dental hygiene program director, collaborated with Maddox on many projects when they began teaching together in the late 1970s.

"In those early days, it was evident that Phyllis had a passion for oral public health and giving back to the community," said Wolf. "As the dental hygiene program grew, she assumed responsibility for the community service portion of the curriculum. Phyllis has been involved in the education of almost every graduate of this program. She's instilled in them the importance of giving back to the community and making a difference."

Maddox helped with the development of a partnership with the oncology unit at Deaconess Hospital, which is an opportunity for USI dental hygiene students to provide oral care for cancer patients.

She also coordinated and supervised oral cancer screenings and health education programs for the Vanderburgh County

Correctional Facility and many local elementary schools and organizations, including Community First Health Care, Evansville State Hospital, ECHO Health Center, CK Newsome Community Center, Fulton Avenue Head Start Program, Central Day Care, Evansville ARC Child Life Center, Impact Ministries, and the Evansville Coalition for the Homeless.

Maddox holds a bachelor's degree in dental hygiene education from Indiana State University Evansville and a master's degree in education from Indiana State University. Prior to coming to USI in 1978, she worked as a dental hygiene practitioner for four years in the Evansville area. She retired from USI at the end of the spring semester 2013 after teaching for 35 years.

## Honors society chapter started

The Lambda Nu Honor Society (Indiana Theta Chi Chapter) held an inaugural induction ceremony at USI in April. Lambda Nu is a national honor society for radiologic and imaging sciences professionals that fosters academic scholarship, promotes research and investigation, and recognizes exemplary scholarship.

"This will be the first chapter here at USI and only the third chapter in the state of Indiana," said Heather Schmuck, instructor in Radiologic and Imaging Sciences and Lambda Nu faculty adviser. "We're excited to have an honor society specific to our field that recognizes the academic achievements of our students and faculty."

Schmuck presented the idea to establish the USI chapter to student Ashley Merkel as an honors project for her radiologic technology major. Merkel has been part of the honors program at USI since spring 2012. She worked closely with Schmuck to set up the chapter, recruit members, and plan the installation ceremony. Seven faculty members and 17 students were inducted.

## Homeless symposium draws USI students from array of disciplines

Each night, an average of 450 individuals sleep in shelters or transition housing in Evansville—more than a third are under the age of 18. This spring, a symposium was held to raise awareness of homelessness in the Evansville community.

Participants came from USI's education, social work, nursing and health professions, and medical programs. Participants also represented several community organizations, and Evansville Mayor Lloyd Winnecke delivered the welcome address.

The symposium covered complex social and health issues faced by homeless families. Formal education often doesn't address these situations, and many graduates don't expect to encounter homeless individuals, said Julie St. Clair, clinical assistant professor of nursing.

"You can't do anything about it if you don't know it's an issue," she said. "Educating about homelessness is often a missed opportunity."

The event was closely linked to Destination: Home, a community-wide 10-year plan to end homelessness in Evansville. That plan (launched in 2004) has a goal of preventing homelessness and developing solutions to issues specific to homeless individuals. Luzada Hayes, executive director of Aurora, Evansville's homeless advocacy organization and resource coordinator for Destination: Home, gave an overview of the plan to attendees.

Housing, social issues, healthcare, and educational issues were covered during the morning event. A facilitated discussion with formerly homeless individuals on how they moved beyond their circumstances helped make the issues real.

## Ehlman leads gerontology group



Ehlman

Dr. Katie Ehlman, assistant professor of gerontology, has been named president-elect of Sigma Phi Omega (SPO), the national academic and professional honor society in gerontology. The SPO honor, established in 1980, recognizes

excellence in gerontology and aging professionals working on behalf of older persons.

Dr. Ehlman joined USI's College of Nursing and Health Professions in 2003, and teaches gerontology courses. During her time at USI, she has developed several new academic programs related to aging studies at the Center for Healthy Aging and Wellness to advance research, education, and partnerships related to the well-being of older adults.



## Mayor proclaims Nurse Leadership Day

Nationally known healthcare speaker and author Sharon Cox, MSN, RN, addresses the 10th Annual Nursing Leadership Conference held at USI in April. Mayor Lloyd Winnecke officially proclaimed April 3, 2013 as Nursing Leadership Day in recognition of the College providing nationally recognized speakers for the continued education to develop strong nursing leaders.



## Hearts on the Hill

Nursing students in USI's College of Nursing and Health Professions experienced the legislative side of healthcare when they traveled to Indianapolis for "Make a Difference Indiana Day" at the Indiana Statehouse. During the American Heart Association's "Heart on the Hill" they met with local and state legislators, including Senator Vaneta Becker, front row, center. Accompanying the students were Gina Schaar and Tracy Kinner, both assistant professors of nursing. "It was a wonderful experience," said Schaar. "The trip made them realize that they do have a voice." She added that the experience broadened the students' view of a nurse's role to include political advocacy.

**Calling all alumni**

Send news along with your degree and year of graduation, major, address, phone number, current position, and employer to [myscheller@usi.edu](mailto:myscheller@usi.edu).

# Help strengthen the College of Nursing and Health Professions

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A contribution of \$25 or more to any USI Foundation fund makes graduates "active" members of the USI Alumni Association.

## ALUMNI NEWS

# Emmons honored with national nursing award

Fewer than seven percent of hospitals nationwide achieve the Magnet designation—the gold standard for nursing care. St. Mary's Medical Center earned that designation in 2011 and, the following year, Joanna Emmons, '05 USI alumnae and St. Mary's clinical nurse specialist in critical care, was named the 2012 Magnet Nurse of the Year in the area of Empirical Outcomes.



"This is great news for one of our alumni to receive this prestigious national award," said Dr. Ann White, dean of the College of Nursing and Health Professions. "Emmons is the only nurse to receive this award in the nation for 2012. Her accomplishments placed her at the top of a list of nurses from some of the most notable hospitals in the United States."

Emmons was awarded the Magnet Nurse of the Year award for her outstanding accomplishments in improving patient outcomes, including:

- Leading an "early warning scoring" project that reduced code blue events outside the critical care units by 40 percent
- Leading a project that reduced central line-associated bloodstream infection rates by 67 percent
- Establishing a "pre-flight checklist" for Intensive Care Unit nurses that reduced catheter-associated urinary tract infections to well below national benchmarks
- Switching to a safer saline lock system that needs to be flushed every 12 hours instead of every four. This was adopted by the entire Ascension Health System (67 hospitals nationwide), resulting in a savings of more than \$1 million a year.

An event honoring the achievement was sponsored by USI in February at St. Mary's Manor. "Results like these require a team effort, beginning with what we learn in the classroom," said Emmons. "My education at USI helped prepare me for my role at St. Mary's, and it is truly an honor to be recognized by my alma mater for this achievement."

Clip form and mail in envelope

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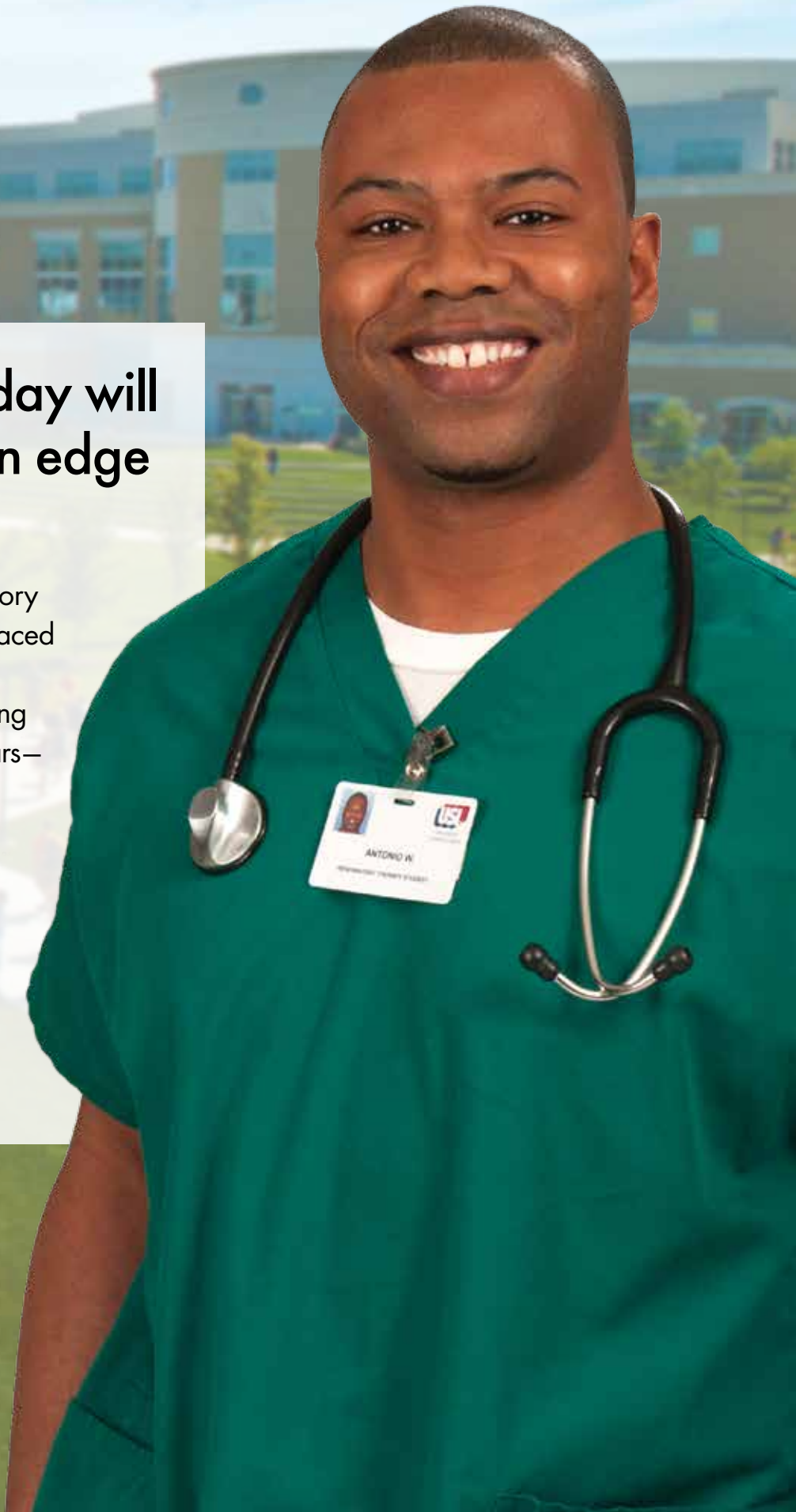
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Without a scholarship, respiratory therapy senior Tony Waddell faced financial challenges when he returned to college after working as a pharmacy tech for six years—a career change inspired by his mother's health condition. The funds he received helped pay living expenses and kept his focus on education.

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## Nursing and Health Professions Continuing Education

### 2013 Workshop and Conferences

6th Annual Mid-America Institute on Aging	August 8-9
Foundations of Parish/Faith Community Nursing	
Part 1, Online	September 16
Part 2, Retreat	November 5-8
10th Annual Pharmacology Update for Advanced Practice Nurses	September 27
PEP Rally: A Perinatal Conference	October 9
Healing Touch Workshop, Level 1, 2 & 3	October 19-20
17th Annual Nursing and Health Professions Educator Conference	October 23
Pediatric Conference	November 12-13
Annual Deaconess Trauma Conference	November 15-16

### Registration and program information:

Visit [health.usi.edu](http://health.usi.edu) or call 812/465-1148

Peggy Graul—Conferences, continuing education

Karen Jones—Certificate Programs

