

The Privilege of Giving

OHSU School of Nursing Faculty and Staff Give of Themselves

Many faculty and staff at the School of Nursing give their time to volunteer activities. Below are a few of the many volunteer stories of our colleagues:

Jesika Gavilanes
operations manager and simulation specialist
OHSU Simulation and Clinical Learning Center,
Portland campus

Teaching is a part of each workday for Jesika Gavilanes, B.A., operations manager and simulation specialist at OHSU's Simulation and Clinical Learning Center. Once a week for the last two years, she has worn her teaching hat in the evenings, too, as an English-as-a-second-language instructor.

Gavilanes, a new mom, is currently taking a break from leading beginner-level ESL classes for non-native English speakers at St. Pius X Parish in Beaverton. She started teaching eight years ago to supplement her job as a liaison to American college students studying in Parma, Italy.



"There is a tremendous satisfaction in helping to teach adult learners the basics of survival English," says Gavilanes, who is fluent in both Spanish and Italian. "Having learned languages myself definitely gives me the patience and understanding to work with others who are learning a language."

As a lead teacher, Gavilanes develops the curriculum and plans lessons in advance of a 90-minute class each week. For many of her students, learning even the simplest phrases can make a world of difference in everyday situations, such as asking for directions or communicating with their children's teachers. "I find a wonderful sense of gratification by helping in the ESL classroom," she says.

BY DAN SADOWSKY

Becky Ellison
administrative assistant, office of practice
development and integration, Portland Campus

A college self-defense class taught Becky Ellison, B.A., E.M.T.-B, the skills she later used to fend off a potential assault. For the last two years, she's passed on what she learned by volunteering in Women Strength, a free personal-safety program run by the Portland Police Bureau.

Ellison, administrative assistant for the School of Nursing's office of practice development and integration, logged nearly 200 hours of training to become one of



about 45 Women Strength volunteers. Since its founding in 1979 the program has taught self-defense skills to approximately 17,000 women and teenage girls, and personal safety workshops to many thousands of women and men. Each

month, she and three other instructors lead a nine-hour self-defense training broken into three weekly sessions.

Teaching self-defense is a way for Ellison to maintain her attack-prevention skills, which "have definitely made a difference for me personally," she stresses. It also allows her to train people who might not be able to afford fee-based programs. "Women who've taken our class often write or tell us that the skills they learned empowered them to survive and heal after an attack, or avoid an attack altogether," she says. "That makes it really worthwhile for me."

Karen Nollenberger
instructor, Ashland campus

When an Ashland community-health organization got out of the bereavement business in the late 1980s, Karen Nollenberger, M.S.N., R.N., and three other area health professionals got in.

"A group of us thought we needed a place not like hospice, where people had anticipated loss," she explains, "but a place where we could put back into our communities what we used to do for one another around supportive bereavement and adapting to unexpected losses," says Nollenberger, a mental-health nursing instructor on the School of Nursing Ashland campus.



The group founded Winter Spring, Center for Living with Loss and Grief, which today provides grief support and education for children, youth and adults throughout Jackson County. Nollenberger spends about 20 hours a month facilitating one of seven different bereavement groups,

conducting volunteer training and speaking to civic groups about the organization.

What she has received in return is “a deep appreciation of how complex people’s losses can be, and how people cope in often very surprising and adaptive ways.” She’s also gained a sense of satisfaction from guiding people through their darkest hours. “When it seems like nothing will go well again,” she says, “we really hold the hope for them.”

Marsha Heims
associate professor, Portland campus

Associate professor Marsha Heims, Ed.D., R.N., recently made a point to visit colleagues who were moving offices to ask if they planned on discarding any manila folders.

She also rummaged through office recycling bins to round up spare folders, the latest donation she has made to the Community Transitional School, a small independent school in Southeast Portland for at-risk children (ages 4-14) from homeless families who are unable to overcome the barriers preventing them from regularly attending school.

Heims contacted the school six years ago after a story about its students tugged at her heart. In addition to collecting folders for teachers she has spear-headed a coat drive for the school’s students. To spread the word about the school’s needs she distributes lists to OHSU colleagues and posts notes on office bulletin boards.

“I find great satisfaction in helping children,” says Heims. She’s currently making plans to talk to students at the school about nursing careers, and during her visits to



drop off donations has talked twice to a 10-year-old aspiring nurse. “Children need to know that there are many adults in their lives who care for them,” says Heims, “and children need to see that acted out, every day.”

Debbie Simpson
instructor, Portland campus

During 18 years in the Army National Guard, Debbie Simpson, M.S.N., F.N.P., R.N., has cared for troops and villagers during peacekeeping missions, for soldiers during training exercises and for recruits who need physical exams and immunizations to be “medically prepared” for battle.

Nursing to soldiers is both an honor and a challenge, says Simpson, a family nurse practitioner. The troops can be stoic about pain, she says, and in remote locales “you have to make do with what you have.”

Simpson is a self-described “adrenaline junkie” and former ICU nurse who joined the National Guard because she loves her country and “figured I had a skill that could be utilized.” She recently was promoted to lieutenant colonel, a rank not many nurses attain.

Simpson has traveled to Japan, Germany and Panama on peacekeeping missions, and could be sent to a more dangerous place: Iraq or Afghanistan. Because of recent Middle East deployments, this year she’s already surpassed the typical Guard commitment of one weekend a month and one week a year. Says Simpson of the chance of wartime action, “It comes with the territory. If I could give my talent and take care of soldiers medically, I wouldn’t have any problems going.”

Carol Craig
director of academic programs, Klamath Falls campus

Carol Craig, Ph.D., R.N., F.N.P., director of academic programs at OHSU School of Nursing Klamath Falls campus, spreads health education through the town’s most revered civic institutions: their churches.

For three years, Craig has served as the volunteer parish nurse for a loose consortium of Klamath Falls churches – one Catholic, one Lutheran and one Episcopal. Parish nurses work with congregations and faith-based organizations to provide health education, health counseling, advocacy, referrals and support to the community. “Congregations can be an ideal place to teach and disseminate information about health,” Craig says, “because they are a community-



gathering place where people often seek help and guidance. It can be a very powerful model.”

In Klamath Falls, where church attendance is high, Craig assembles health-education programs (past and future topics include spirituality and healing, herbal medications and depression) for the entire community, counsels church members on

health issues, organizes on-site flu shots at the churches and writes a monthly health column for the church newsletters.

“I get the fun of being able to do health teaching, which I enjoy, and to give back to the community,” she says.

Sheila Kodadek
professor, Portland campus

Sheila Kodadek, Ph.D., R.N., may be a professor of child, adolescent and family nursing, but she’s no slouch when it comes to mental health. Her younger sister, Mary Anne, has severe epilepsy and associated disabilities and lives in an apartment within Kodadek’s home.

After Mary Anne moved in nine years ago, Kodadek wanted to help people with similar disabilities but, because they have outlived or are estranged from family, often eke out lonely existences on the streets or in single-room-occupancy hotels. She joined the initial board of the Macdonald Center, then a fledgling Old Town group that worked out of a leaky church basement and ministered to the homeless and poor.

Today the Macdonald Center owns a 54-unit assisted living facility, visits socially isolated downtown residents, and performs education and research on issues of poverty, mental illness and health care. (It also has hosted successful clinical rotations for community health nursing and psychiatric-mental illness nurse practitioner students.) Kodadek’s duties as board vice president include evaluating new initiatives and visiting with clients.

“I am deeply moved by the approach the center uses,” says Kodadek. “It’s really about relationships. We can’t solve all the problems, but we can help with the loneliness and the isolation.” NP

Insight on the One Faculty Initiative

The One Faculty Initiative is the joint response of OHSU nursing leadership in all settings to address the demands of a critical nursing shortage and changing health care environment. In 2002 OHSU nursing leaders explored strategies to meet the evolving demands and identified the need to leverage nursing faculty resources and expertise. The result of the collaborative exploration is the One Faculty Initiative – where OHSU nursing faculty focus on the three missions of practice, education and research.

We asked OHSU nursing faculty from around the state and in different mission areas about how they see the One Faculty Initiative affecting their work, the school and the nursing profession. Here are their answers:

Marna Flaherty-Robb, M.S., R.N., C.N.S.,
associate dean for practice development and integration

“One Faculty is a term and a goal that has come to mean ‘growing family’ to me. It has facilitated many more meetings and conscious efforts to grow relationships as well as meaningful work with the many talented nursing individuals in our organization. We have also had the opportunity to come to know and partner far more productively with our adjunct and joint faculty who are either serving us on a regular basis or who want to become a more visible and engaged presence in our community. Together we have also created over these many months a unified way of appointing, credentialing and privileging all advanced practice nurses. In this way we are more visibly accountable for our practice and the conditions that support superior care for the patients and families who entrust us with their health. It is a privilege to be guests in their lives. ”



Leslie Bevan, Ph.D.,
director of the office of research development

“The One Faculty Initiative is a tremendous opportunity to meaningfully integrate the teaching, research and practice missions of the School of Nursing. The office of research development will expand services to provide grants preparation and grants management support to faculty whose major mission is patient care, but also have the skills and

interest to conduct research. In addition, we hope to foster collaborative relationships to support the dissemination of research findings to practice and education, and to also collaborate with those at the bedside to focus our research efforts on timely and patient-focused research questions. The One Faculty Initiative is an opportunity for all of us!"

**Michael Brody, M.S., R.N., P.M.H.N.P.,
instructor, Portland campus**

"I never imagined that I would be a member of the OHSU faculty. The myriad challenges facing the nursing profession are intellectually compelling from a distance; they are daunting from within these hallowed halls. But here I am. As a novice clinician, I have a passionate and vested interest in elevating my practice skills, as well as educating the general public regarding the role of nurse practitioners as autonomous, high level health care providers. I cherish the opportunity to collaborate with research scientists exploring the cutting edge of our discipline, and educators training the students who will define nursing in the 21st century. My role as instructor enriches my role as clinician, and vice versa. The One Faculty Initiative institutionalizes this collaborative, multidisciplinary approach, and in my experience thus far, ensures that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts."



**Wendy Neander, M.N., R.N.,
assistant professor, Ashland campus**

"Nursing has the capacity to reach across all boundaries to work with diverse populations. As academics, clinicians and researchers we are charged with being citizens of the world at a time when crisis is rampant. The One Faculty Initiative is a way in which strengths can be utilized within the context of OHSU School of Nursing to meet local, national and international health care challenges. It is not a one size fits all, but instead, recognition of the strength of diversity, individual members and geographical locations bring to the school.

"It is through these strengths that the Ashland campus provides immersion, international and intercultural learning and research opportunities for nursing faculty and students. These opportunities are the response to the needs of a rural environment and the rapidly growing Hispanic population. Having colleagues and students around the state enhances the work that I do in my immediate geographical area as it

provides a broader horizon on which to draw ideas and support for local learning and research opportunities."

**Linda Smith, D.S.N., M.S., R.N.,
assistant professor, Southern region**

"The OHSU School of Nursing One Faculty construct is enormously complex yet easy to define. For me, it means that all of nursing supports all of nursing. Our collective OHSU nursing talents, creativity, integrity, and hard-working, dedicated commitment to the school and profession, participate in the professional development of emerging and practicing nurses. As One Faculty all OHSU nurses support our missions of healing, teaching and discovery. All of this is absolutely essential as we maximize our resources to provide safe, evidence-based care now and in the future.

"The One Faculty Initiative has impacted my research endeavors. Students participate in protocol training, data collection, and join me in data analysis and dissemination. Faculty nurses learn significant issues and concerns; they also share with researchers their important perspective. As students evolve into professional practitioners, they take with them valuable research critique and research utilization abilities that permeate practice arenas. As a result, learners discover and explore, practitioners lead, and teachers create environments that improve health care and patient outcomes."

**Gabrielle Petersen, M.S.N., R.N., C.P.N.P.,
instructor, Portland campus**

"As one grows in their professional role from seasoned practitioner to newest faculty member and novice educator, the One Faculty Initiative evokes excitement and wonder within me. This Initiative provides a bridge between two important facets of health care-delivery and education. The list becomes endless when one starts to think of all the possible opportunities that could emerge: research put into real practice, bedside expertise in the classrooms, simulated scenarios that enhance seasoned health care providers ability to combine the art and science of nursing. I feel the newer generation of students will benefit from this Initiative by experiencing the true connection between practice and education. They will be provided a pathway that demonstrates high functioning teams that strive to improve the quality of care, provide educational lessons that model theory into practice, as well as create as platform for intellectual inquiry and research." NP

