Kiara Morelli

By Josh Friesen

Kiara Morelli, a second-year student pursuing her bachelor's degree in nursing from the OHSU School of Nursing, defines her upbringing as "nontraditional." She never attended high school — at 14, she circumnavigated the country working merchandise booths at country music festivals. At 17, her mother, who had developed substance use disorder following a surgery, lost her life. Her grandparents, who'd helped raise her, passed away some years later.

Morelli’s lived experience influenced her mindset and galvanized her resolve. She has a heart for people, pursues challenges and never shies away from being uncomfortable. Those traits have led her to OHSU, to be elected president of the Oregon Student Nurses Association and to the OHSU All-Hill Student Council as a School of Nursing representative.

Despite the hurdles along her path, Morelli has always forged ahead.

“Life is fragile, uncertain and ever-changing,” Morelli said. “If you can become comfortable with change and take this culmination of experiences and choose how you respond to them, you'll be OK.”

Morelli’s values are reflected by the OHSU School of Nursing. As she continues her educational journey, she is confident she's at the perfect place to succeed, thrive and grow.

“There are people here from different backgrounds, different thoughts, different ideas, different visions of how to make health care better,” she said. “I don’t think every university is built that way, and that’s important to me. It feels like being home here. I think OHSU gets me in a way that a lot of places wouldn’t have.”

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Kiara Morelli

Class of 2025, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Portland, Oregon

Kiara Morelli, a second-year student pursuing her bachelor’s degree in nursing from the OHSU School of Nursing, was named the 2023 OHSU School of Nursing Distinguished Alumna Award winner. The award, presented to an outstanding alumna who has made significant contributions to nursing and to OHSU, is given annually.

Morelli’s work is in the area of substance use disorder. "All the nurses I’ve worked with have shared that there was a time in their career where they decided that they wanted to make a change for their patients. This was my opportunity to do that," she said.

Morelli says she is proud of her work in substance use disorder and is committed to continuing her education and research in this area. "I want to make a difference in the lives of patients who are suffering from substance use disorder," she said. "I want to help them find the resources and support they need to improve their quality of life."
The OHSU School of Nursing is planning a recognition of Dr. Curry-McCammon in spring 2024. Hoeffer. “Her lifetime of inspirational work makes her an ideal recipient of the Humanitarian Service Award.”

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“Mary Ann has worked tirelessly to improve the health and welfare of women and girls affected by poverty, pregnancy, abuse, and disability through her practice, teaching, and research,” wrote Liz Archbold and Heather Voss.

If you are living by collecting cans and bottles, you can (walk) up to 20 miles a day just trying to collect them. That is a lot of wear and tear on the feet.”

“Overall, the Street Team assists thousands of people in southern Oregon,” says Heather Voss, Ph.D., RN, the Associate Dean for the School of Nursing’s Ashland campus. This number includes 605 encounters in the Spring 2023 academic term alone. Of the 605, 112 started off with a foot soak.

UCSF Recognizes Dr. Mary-Ann Curry McCammon

By Mark Kombali

The University of California San Francisco (UCSF) Alumni Association has posthumously recognized Dr. Mary Ann Curry McCammon with its Alumni Humanitarian Service Award. Dr. Curry McCammon served on the UCSF faculty from 2001 to 2015, serving as an emerita faculty member. Those nominating Dr. Curry McCammon for this award included UCSF emerita faculty members Dr. Pat Archbold and Dr. Liz Hoeffer.

Together they honored Dr. Curry McCammon’s substantive care career research contributions “to our current understanding of the complex interrelationships among pregnancy, abuse and intimate partner violence, abuse in isolated populations, and the assessment of dangerousness.”

Following her academic retirement, Dr. Curry McCammon volunteered at the Coffee Creek Correctional Institute in Wilsonville, Ore. and at the GynoCare Family Center in Eldoret, Kenya. Through their settings and populations are worlds apart, Dr. Curry McCammon recognized the shared need to reconnect the lives of women who are economically challenged and vulnerable in their societies.

Dr. Curry McCammon used quilting to address the profound psychosocial consequences suffered by women of pregnancy, abuse, and disability through her practice, teaching, and research,” wrote Liz Archbold and Heather Voss.

The OHSU School of Nursing is planning a recognition of Dr. Curry McCammon in spring 2024.

By Dawn Weinberger

For people experiencing homelessness, the ability to move around comfortably on foot is critical.

“If you are living by collecting cans and bottles, you can (walk) up to 20 miles a day just trying to collect them,” says Rachel Richmond, M.S.N., RN, an assistant professor of clinical nursing in the OHSU School of Nursing Ashland campus. “That is a lot of wear and tear on the feet.”

This is where OHSU’s Nursing Street Team comes in. Based in Ashland and serving unsheltered people in and around the Ashland and Medford areas, the Street Team receives funding through a four-year, $3.9 million grant from U.S. Department of Health & Human Services’ Health Resources & Services Administration.

Nurses, nurse practitioners and nursing students all serve on the team, providing a variety of direct support (including care coordination, referrals, transportation vouchers and harm reduction education) to people experiencing homelessness. Initial contact, however, is often through the Street Team’s Foot Soak Clinics, where people can get respite for their feet while simultaneously connecting and building trust with members of the local medical community.

The overall mission, Richmond says, is to help eliminate barriers to care by meeting people right where they are and on their own terms — without an agenda (i.e. to convince them to go to a clinic or to seek help for an addiction).

Richmond coordinated the launch of the program back in 2015, beginning with weekly foot soak clinics in Ashland. Later, the program expanded to Medford. Now, the clinics are happening a few times a week at parks, urban encampments, community centers and other locations in both cities, as well as in Klamath Falls — a new addition to the program as of this fall. Community partners include local organizations like LaClinica, AllCare Health, Rogue Community Health, Mac’s Mission, Paradigm Clinic and Jackson Care Connect. These partners provide everything from follow-up services and mental health evaluations to supplies and additional sources of funding. (Jackson Care Connect, for example, contributed funds to help start the program in 2015.)

Along with Richmond, Voss and other faculty members, the program relies on the involvement of nursing students, many of whom serve on the Street Team as a part of their studies. Scholarships are even available to qualified students through an application process and a one-year commitment.

“This gives this students the opportunity to work with populations with barriers to gaining access to care,” Voss says.

Recent graduate Ryan Villani, ’22 spent four academic terms serving on the Street Team in some capacity. Now an emergency department nurse at Asante Rogue Regional Medical Center in Ashland, Villani says her involvement in the program was extremely valuable, giving her fresh insights into the barriers unsheltered people people face each day.

“This experience can be translated into any type of nursing that we do — not only community-based healthcare. Whether you are working in family care or oncology or surgery, you will come across people that are experiencing (challenges like) homelessness,” she says.

“If you are living by collecting cans and bottles, you can (walk) up to 20 miles a day just trying to collect them. That is a lot of wear and tear on the feet.”

Dr. Curry McCammon

Dedicated Education Units to Enrich OHSU SoN Clinical Learning

By Dawn Weinberger

Asante Health and OHSU School of Nursing are teaming up to create two dedicated education units at hospitals in Southern Oregon.

“The project is the result of $100K donation to the school from a family that was deeply and positively impacted by the care their family member received from an OHSU nursing student,” says Heather Voss, Ph.D., RN, the Associate Dean for the School of Nursing’s Ashland campus.

One unit will be at Rogue Regional Medical Center in Ashland; the other will be at Three Rivers Medical Center in Grants Pass. Both are existing acute care units.

The purpose of the dedicated education units is to give students enhanced clinical training while also providing professional development opportunities for Asante nurses. Groups of eight students will work at the sites for 10 straight weeks, under the supervision of one or two specific nurses.

“It gets our students (learning) at the bedside and it gives nurses the (chance) to see what it is like to be a teacher,” Voss says.

“Additionally, it will allow the workforce of nursing school faculty members, who are often working with students in clinical settings while also teaching classes, planning courses and grading tests and papers,” Voss adds.

As for the students, it will allow them to really immerse themselves in the experience by getting to know patients and staff and working closely with veteran nurses.

Because the program is still in the development phase, a launch date is not yet known. Voss, however, says she hopes students, faculty, nurses and patients can benefit from the dedicated education units sooner — rather than later.

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