The night following my N113 final, I found myself on a red-eye flight heading to Mexico City. Stepping off the aircraft, I was looking forward to four weeks with the luxury of doing nothing at all. In fact, the only three things I truly decided to focus on during my trip were family, food, and food. However, plans quickly changed. After the first week in Mexico, I had already purchased a pair of blue scrubs and spiffy white leather shoes, beyond excited to begin volunteering at one of the local regional hospitals near my hometown, Hospital Regional de Río Blanco. This was going to be one of the most personal experiences for me knowing this was the hospital my godmother worked with for more than 25 years as an RN, nursing instructor, and ultimately as the nursing school director at La Universidad Veracruza (University of Veracruz).

Every morning at 5 am I was up and ready to catch the city bus that took me to the outskirts of town along the mountainsides, stopping directly at the entrance stairs of the hospital. Every day I arrived to families tucked away under blankets and sheets huddled a couple feet away from a worship statue of the Virgin Mary. I later learned these were family members of inpatients that had nowhere to go as they waited for their loved ones to get well enough to be discharged home. Most, if not all, of the patients that were admitted here had no health insurance or means of acquiring any sort of healthcare. People came from near and far to be seen, forming long lines. The hospital wasn’t the largest nor most advanced, and patients were constantly triaged, leaving many waiting for hours or even days to be treated. I don’t recall ever seeing an empty bed.

Money was an obvious factor in the care made available to patients. The institution lacked the most basic materials. I remember observing a nurse perform an intrusive procedure that made me feel uncomfortable, so in a very polite way I casually mentioned that usually in the U.S. we would use gloves. She knowingly smiled and replied, “I would too if there were enough.”

It was truly interesting comparing the differences between what I’ve seen in hospitals in the U.S. versus what I saw there. Besides the absence of financial resources and technological advancements, one of the greatest differences had to be the relationships between the hospital workers. I believe a lot has to do with culture. It was not uncommon for nurses and doctors to greet one another with a hug and a kiss on the cheek every morning. I never sensed any feelings of inferiority or superiority regarding professional status. This translated into great teamwork, trust, and open communication. Surgeons and charge nurses would share their lunches with me, and medical students made me a music playlist to play during my ICU shifts.
NURSING: Continued from page 1

Every three days or so I would rotate units between NICU, pediatric ICU, adult ICU, labor and delivery, and OR. Working with the staff on each floor was incredible; the closest friends I made were the floor janitor and a lovely NICU nurse. Once people realized that I fully understand and speak Spanish, nurses and physicians were constantly explaining procedure rationales, offering help, calling me over to observe unique patients, and encouraging me to be as hands on as possible. I turned down offers to attempt extracting blood samples and intubating with doctor’s assistance. I found it unethical to perform these sort of procedures without any former training, but it felt awesome thinking I was trusted enough to do it. My Spanish medical terminology expanded tremendously. The only English I ever spoke was to another volunteer, a physician visiting from Tennessee.

I fed newborns, bathed patients, passed out and drew up medications (under supervision), took and monitored vital signs, prepared operating rooms, made beds, ran errands, stocked material, pricked fingers, and communicated with patients. Overall, my favorite experiences include witnessing my first natural labor, observing open arm surgery, recognizing the signs and symptoms of a seizing mother suffering postpartum preeclampsia, and looking into the eyes of a newborn after having opened his eyes for the very first time. A new sort of connection and respect to humanity had formed within me, but there were challenging moments too. Nothing really prepares you for comforting a crying young mother who had just aborted her first child or seeing that the bed of a critically ill nine-year-old girl you cared for from the day before is no longer occupied by her.

Those three weeks were life-changing. Blessed is the only word that comes to mind when I think about how lucky I was to have had this opportunity. I am entering second semester with a brand new sense of gratitude and appreciation for the care nurses are able to provide here in the U.S. This experience was also very eye-opening in the sense that regardless of available material or overall space, nursing is the same no matter how far you travel. Nurses everywhere share the very same loving purpose in what they do. Nursing is universal.

As my time there came to an end, I couldn’t help but reflect that in many ways, my learning there made up for dozens of nursing conversations my grandmother would have shared with me. It was like getting to know a large part of who she really was, something I could have never seen as a small girl. It was an honor.

Sac State Hornets learn to be Heart Savers

By Jessica Decoque
CNSA Class Rep IV
4th Semester

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is a valuable skill for any individual to obtain. According to the American Heart Association, CPR provided immediately by a bystander can double or triple an individual’s chance of survival. No matter your profession, there’s a chance that you may be in a situation where an individual needs help, such as CPR. As nurses, we have a responsibility to give back and educate our community. We must act as role models and demonstrate ways to promote healthy living and safety techniques that the community can use. Throughout my two years as an active CNSA member, I have been given many opportunities to educate and teach valuable skills within the community. One event that I recently participated in was Sacramento State’s Hornet Heart Saver event.

Sacramento State's College of Continuing Education holds an annual event where AHA trained individuals perform "hands only" CPR demonstrations to educate interested Sacramento State students and CPR instructors who were also assisted paramedic students with CPR education and training.

This event demonstrated how knowing just a few techniques could make a significant difference in saving an individual's life. It was a fun and engaging way to get the CSUS campus interested and involved in such a critical lifesaving skill. Sacramento State nursing students had a booth where we offered blood pressure readings, information regarding cardiac health, and the importance of dental hygiene. Many students asked questions regarding the connection between proper dental hygiene and cardiac health. They were unaware that the simple act of toothbrushing can prevent cardiovascular health problems. We also assisted paramedic students and CPR instructors with CPR education and training.

THE MONTHLY SHOT
Donate blood, save a life (or three)

By Remi Curley
CNSA Community Health Director
3rd Semester

During second semester, everyone has to go through a blood administration lab. During this lab, I am sure most students, like myself, are more focused on learning the procedure rather than the effect it has on the patient. Once we are in the hospital, and see our patients face to face, do we stop to think about how valuable a bag of blood is? We simply go to the blood bank and pick up a blood bag out of a seemingly unlimited quantity. What if there wasn’t a blood bag available for your patient? Without volunteers willing to donate blood, no amount of nursing skills could save our patient.

When I met with CNSA’s Blood Source representative, Ashley Smudski, to plan our Folsom Hall blood drive, she shared some information with me that I had never heard about before. Here are some facts that help bring to light the importance of donating blood:

- Approximately 40,000 pints of blood are used each day in the United States.
- Approximately 1 out of every 7 people entering the hospital needs blood.
- 1 donation has the potential to save as many as 3 lives.
- Blood lasts only 42 days.
- Platelets last only 5 days.

These facts show a serious need for volunteer blood donations. As nursing students, we will see first-hand the importance of blood donation. You have the opportunity to participate in the upcoming SON blood drive! The drive will take place on Monday, February 29th at Folsom Hall. You can sign up by going to: http://tinyurl.com/SONblooddrive. Even if you cannot make it to this blood drive, please consider donating in the future.

The T-shirt prizes from last year’s drive

to plan our Folsom Hall blood drive, she shared some information with me that I had never heard about before. Here are some facts that help bring to light the importance of donating blood:

The difference you will make

By Michael Strabala
CNSA Class Rep II
2nd Semester

The second semester of nursing school is one of new and expanding clinical experiences for the Sacramento State nursing student. Clinical days on the med-surg floor increase from one to two days per week, and during this rotation the student is expected to provide care for an additional patient as compared to first semester, from one patient to two (and probably more than that by semester’s end!) While the role in med-surg expands, during second semester a new clinical experience is added: mental health.

The thought of a clinical rotation in mental health makes many students anxious, myself included. When I learned of my schedule, and with it early clinical rotations in mental health, I just kept thinking, “I don’t have any mental health skills! What can I possibly do that will be of benefit? How can I make a difference?” The semester begins. I blink, and suddenly I am lying in bed trying to get a good night of sleep as, ready or not, I await the start of my rapidly approaching mental health clinical day early the next morning.

I arrive with my peers at the facility, we receive instruction and clinical assignments from our instructor, and we all go our separate ways to the various lockdown units we are assigned for the day. After receiving morning report, I step onto the floor feeling a mixture of excitement and unease. Where do I begin? What should I do first? I turn around to seek guidance from my nurse, only to discover she isn’t there. She is in the nurses’ station and looks preoccupied and stressed out with several other matters. I look for someone else to help me. I see one or two mental health technicians busy themselves with paperwork, and they look as though answering my questions is not high on their list of concerns.

In fact, I don’t see any staff out on the floor interacting with patients – and interaction is precisely what these patients need! The circumstances that led to their admission at the facility is a desperate cry for help, for someone to talk to, for someone to listen! Where the heck is everyone? Do they not understand the need that surrounds them here?

And then it hits me. What these patients need is for someone to care. They need someone to care enough to be out there with them face-to-face, someone brave enough to start the conversation so that they can be afforded a path toward healing and wellness. I suddenly understand that I am more than capable to provide at least part of what these patients need: I can give them my time and my very best effort. This is enough to begin being that difference that your mental health patient so desperately needs. Your presence makes a difference.
A day full of “Hart” at Ethel Hart Senior Center

By Brittany Tinsey
CNSA Undergrad Rep II
3rd Semester

I anxiously walked up to the building of the Ethel Hart Senior Center, not knowing what to expect. I walked through the door and to the front counter, dinging the bell for someone to come to the front. “One second!!” someone yelled from an office in the back. Out rushed Alicia, the program coordinator, and with a big smile she greeted me and enthusiastically began giving me information about the center and the different programs they offered while telling me how happy she was that I was there. Alicia motioned to some tables and told me that I could hang out there until the class started.

I sat down next to this sweet woman who began chatting with me. She was about 70 years old and began to tell me about how this was her first time at the Zumba class. Her friends had convinced her to come to this “really fun class,” but she wasn't completely convinced. She followed that up quickly with, “but the other programs here are wonderful so I figured, why not?” We walked together to the room where the class took place.

When the first song started, I nervously stood in the back of the room trying to keep up with the steps. The woman who I talked to before the class looked over to me and smiled. With a nod she beckoned me to come forward next to her in the front of the class. I stumbled through the steps as the instructor started slow and talked about some of the health benefits of the movements, swiftly going through each one while pointing to the parts of the body we were working out. Three songs in and I was sweating, acutely aware of how much more out of shape I was than most of the seniors around me. Another song came on and the instructor suggested we pick up weights. My new friend looked at me and said “are you going to get some weights? You should do it!” as she grabbed some weights of her own. Her friend to the left joins in “yeah, go for it!”

After the fifth song, we were all getting the steps down pretty well and keeping up with the instructor. Everyone was upbeat, and the energy in the room was contagious. With one last fast-paced song we ended our workout. I looked over at the seniors in the room and was amazed. Instead of being tired, these people were revitalized. I asked some of them if they attended other groups at the center. They mentioned how they attend a couple different groups a week. “That's the trick,” one of them said, “staying active and busy, I want to live a long time. There are people of all ages that come to these groups from 50 something to 87!” she said excitedly.

I walked away from this positive community experience grinning and feeling great. I never knew about the community and programs that are out there for seniors outside the hospital. This resource is invaluable for the people that attend these classes and I feel very fortunate to have experienced a little of that community. I am constantly surprised by the positive experiences I have had through nursing school. I can’t wait to see what is next.

Better late than never....Join the legislative committee!

By Krystal Scott
CNSA Legislative Director
4th Semester

I was recently notified of my appointment as the CNSA Legislative Director for the Spring 2016 semester. It is my honor and pleasure to serve the membership in this new capacity. I was working with the previous director on the committee, and I have had an interest in writing a resolution to be submitted to CNSA for consideration in the future. I hope that I can easily transition into this role, and serve the board and members well. I am also currently serving as the Convention Director on the CNSA State Board, and I have an amazing committee that is hard at work planning our next annual convention in October. Two of those members are students at Sac State, Andrea Howlett and Rose Castro - a big thank you to them for their work, dedication, and service to CNSA members in many different leadership roles!

As excited as I am, I am suddenly "under the gun" to get things rolling as Legislative Director, being that my term is starting later than usual. As the saying goes, better late than never! I could really use some help from some of you Sac State CNSA members to join the legislative committee.

The committee meets (or has conference calls) to discuss and raise awareness of legislative issues that impact nursing, health care, patient care, etc. It is important that as future nurse leaders we utilize our voices to advocate for positive policy change and encourage other students and nurses to get involved in legislation. In addition, there is opportunity to collaborate on future resolutions, and to support the recent resolution written by Melissa Byrne on raising awareness of Sex Trafficking in the Sacramento Area and beyond.

Please join me! You can reach out to me at: csus.cnsa.legislative@gmail.com or 916-205-5797 cell.
Ask a Nurse!

In this month’s edition, Zohra Azizi (Spring 2013), tells us about her path into Nursing! She currently works at UCDMC in the Surgical Specialties Unit (D 12)

When did you first discover an interest in nursing?

After graduating high school, I volunteered at UCDMC in the NICU and Internal Medicine units. I truly wanted to make an impact on patient care and lives, so I decided to go forth with it and I don’t regret it at all.

What specifically about your current position interests you?

I absolutely love my profession, especially on my unit. It’s amazing how much I have learned and am continuing to learn; there’s never a boring night on the unit. It’s always a rewarding feeling to know that as nurses, we are able to save a life, help our patients during their recovery process, or be able to comfort dying patients and their families. As nurses at a distinguished teaching hospital, we have autonomy in patient care, great communication with interdisciplinary teams, and an encouraging management team. This is helpful in making a safe and effective working environment. Personally, I have taken the role as bedside nurse, preceptor, and charge nurse, which are very different aspects of nursing. Being a bedside nurse allows nurses to create a personal, trusting bond with their patients/families. Being a charge nurse, it allows an opportunity for us to be a team leader to guide and support our colleagues throughout the shift. Being a preceptor, I am able to teach new nurses about patient care, policies/procedures, tasks/skills, etc. Overall, I love being a registered nurse. With it comes huge responsibility, but it’s definitely worth it.

What has been your path (before nursing school and after)?

Before nursing school, I was taking prerequisites, completing my General Education, and volunteering. Upon graduation of nursing school, I was hired on D12 with conditions of passing the NCLEX. I took the NCLEX within a month after graduation, thankfully passing and immediately started working.

Do you feel like Sac State prepared you for your position? What class/professor do you especially remember as helping you?

CSUS did prepare me for my position with the basics, but there’s A LOT that will be learned in the field that the student will choose. I learned a lot by experience and actually doing patient care, but it will vary depending on the type of learner (visual, auditory, kinesthetic…etc). Every class had an impact on me in becoming the registered nurse that I am today. CSUS was great in preparing us for the NCLEX with the ATI tests, case studies, etc. The fourth semester was my favorite because that’s when I was precepting; I’ll always remember Dr. Keegan for placing me on D12 (even though it was last minute) because it was the best opportunity for my education and transitioning from student to nurse.

Can you tell us a little about the opportunities for nurses in your field?

RN’s have a wide variety of opportunities to carry out care, whether it’s at the bedside, management role, community, case management, etc. That’s the best thing about nursing. You’re able to do so much with the RN license.

Do you plan to go back to school to continue your nursing education?

I am actually already in the UCD Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing Master’s of Science Leadership program. I’m finishing up my second quarter currently. I don’t quite know yet where I am going to go from there, but I would love to venture to other specialties because I enjoy being in the hospital atmosphere.

Zohra Azizi, RN, BSN

I have a ton of advice for students, but I’ll give a few important ones in my opinion. #1: If you’re having difficulty or trouble understanding something, then immediately ask for assistance/help from your professor or clinical preceptor. #2: As nurses, we may want to be perfect, but the truth is, we all will make mistakes. The main thing is to learn from the experiences and become better afterwards. #3: For NCLEX: take lots and lots of practice tests!! ATI tests [editor’s note: current students use HESI tests] help a lot, so take as many as you can. #4: Practice time management and priorities. Reflect on what you learned in the sim labs, as to which pt to see first, etc. #5: The previous piece of advice can also be related to your personal life to be able to have a balance. It’s so important to make time to take care of yourself to do non-school related activities and spend time with loved ones. It will all be done before you know it (seriously!!)

Thank you Zohra! We wish you luck in all your endeavors!!
Submit pictures for the Monthly Shot!

For each issue, it is nice to see pictures of you and/or your nursing school buddies doing awesome nursing-related activities! Become a celebrity and submit pictures for the March issue! Send pictures today to:

csus.cnsa.monthlyshot@gmail.com
Important Upcoming Dates

February 26 (Friday):
Men In Nursing Meeting
4:30pm room 1050

February 29 (Monday):
BloodSource Blood Drive
Folsom Hall

March 4 (Friday):
CNSA Meeting
4:30pm room 1050

March 12 (Saturday):
CNSA Membership North meeting
8:00am-5:00pm, Samuel Merritt Oakland

March 21-27 (Monday-Sunday):
Spring Recess

March 30-April 3 (Wednesday-Sunday):
NSNA Annual Convention
Orlando, Florida

March 31 (Thursday):
Cesar Chavez’ Birthday
(Campus Closed)

May 19 (Thursday):
Pinning for 4th semester students

May 20-21 (Friday & Saturday):
Graduation Commencement

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"Like" Sac State Nursing on Facebook!
www.facebook.com/SacStateNursing

RN Day at the Capitol
ALL California nursing students are invited to join ANA\C for the "RN Day at the Capitol", held on April 11th, 2016! Annually ANA\C presents a dynamic educational conference in Sacramento to open the world of politics and legislation in a friendly and easy to understand venue. The goal of this conference is to "open up new avenues of thinking as to how nurses can participate in the legislative process and support the nursing agenda throughout the state of California." For more information on "RN Day at the Capitol", click here. Or contact Krystal Scott, Legislative Director at csus.cnsa.legislative@gmail.com

NSNA National Convention
Where imaginations and journeys meet
March 30-April 3
Register here

Write articles for the Monthly Shot!
Each article is one CNSA event and is great for your resume! Articles should be at least 250 words, and can be about anything nursing- or school-related. We want to hear from all semesters!

CNSA 2016 Membership Meeting North
Saturday, 3/12
For information, click here!