ACEN 2002 Scholarship Winner Announced

Congratulations to Deanna Hutchings RN, BScN who won the ACEN award for 2002. She is a candidate for an MN degree in the Policy and Practice Program, Faculty of Human and Social Development at the University of Victoria, BC.

The aim of the ACEN award is to develop potential nursing leaders for Canada. The following letter of application submitted for the contest illustrates not only the contribution Deanna has already made, but assures she will have an impact on the future of nursing.

I submit this letter and the required accompanying documentation for consideration for the ACEN Scholarship for Nursing Leadership. I offer a description of my career goals and aspirations as requested, for a bid for this prestigious Leadership Scholarship. Additionally, I briefly outline my perspective on the significance of nursing leadership.

Currently, in my scholastic life, I am pursuing fulltime graduate studies in Nursing in British Columbia at the University of Victoria. My research thesis is a qualitative study that explores the experience of "struggling in change" for persons at end of life. I welcome the opportunity to contribute to the growing body of nursing knowledge related to care of persons at end of life through research, following a decade of practice in palliative care.

In my professional life, I am the coordinator of a BC nursing initiative designed to provide employment, professional development, and 'job readiness" for nursing students in our health region, the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA). This initiative is coordinated within the Professional Practice Office of VIHA, South Island. As the coordinator of the Undergraduate Nurse Employment initiative, it has been gratifying to witness the transformative development of Undergraduate Nurses poised to enter the nursing profession and contribute to health care service. These scholastic and professional activities represent two of my abiding interests in the discipline and profession of nursing: 1) the advancement of nursing knowledge, and 2) the enhancement of professional development for the next generation of nurses.

After many years of nursing practice in mental health,

hospice, and gerontological nursing, I returned to university for graduate study for the specific purpose of preparing for nursing leadership roles. I foresee my potential contribution to nursing leadership in Canada in two important streams of service: nursing practice and nursing education. I wish to teach, and I wish to stay involved in professional practice. I believe I can contribute to the education and development of the next generation of nurses through a combination of my extensive experience and practice wisdom with current nursing knowledge and a vibrant commitment to nursing education. In so doing, I can make a contribution to the education and formation of new nurses, nurses who will fill the depleted ranks of Canada's practicing Registered Nurses in the next decade.

Additionally, I derive enormous satisfaction from disseminating nursing knowledge and fresh ideas in the nursing literature. I suggest my seven single author publications in the nursing literature illustrate this commitment. This is, I believe, a rather unusual oeuvre for a nurse professional before attaining a graduate degree. Advanced education will enable me to expand my capacity to communicate nursing knowledge and further contribute to the growth of nursing science through written and oral means.

My perspective and understanding of nursing leadership is perhaps best illustrated with two examples: one a specific episode, the other, a consistent presence. At a national nursing conference recently, I witnessed a superb example of leadership as Dr. Marian McGee delivered a cogent and comprehensive address on Nursing Science in Gerontology. I listened, fascinated, and experienced a powerful sense of recognition that "this, this, is what leadership looks like". Why? Dr. McGee summarized the past, identified the present, and named the unfinished work yet to be accomplished. She gave guidance and purpose to the work ahead. Nor did her leadership activity stop with her formal address. Dr. McGee made a point of attending concurrent sessions. I was fortunate to have her attend mine. At the close of the presentation I watched her speak to many nurses in the room, encouraging them and affirming their work. Lastly, she approached me and said, "That was superb". Such encouragement, sprinkled liberally and generously to nurses as individuals, and to the nursing collective, demonstrates great leadership and provides the impetus for nurses to excel and to serve.

At closer range, on a consistent basis, I witness the nursing leadership of our visionary CNO in the VIHA, Anne Cooke. Anne too holds the knowledge of where nursing has been, where it is now, and envisions where the future of nursing needs to be. She demonstrates the capacity to spark, mobilize and sustain the energy and commitment of other nurses in concert with her vision of the future. When leaders such as Anne Cooke and Marian McGee exercise their courage to accurately portray the present and the wisdom to point the way to the future, they provide nurses with the guidance and support needed to shape nursing's future and provide quality, safe, ethical and competent nursing care. Quality nursing leadership has the effect of mobilizing nurses' commitment to the profession and to forge new ways of finding solutions for today's health care challenges. Quality nursing leadership is critical to sustaining the hope and the vitality of nurses in practice, a vitality that enriches service to the public, and provides mentorship and guidance for the next generation of nurses. As I continue my graduate studies, and join the ranks of nurse leaders in education and practice, I draw strength and direction from role models such as Anne Cooke and Marion McGee, and I too will strive to provide leadership to present and future nurses.

Respectfully submitted,

Deanna Hutchings RN, BScN, MN (c)