



Pennsylvania Association of School Nurses and Practitioners

The Examiner Spring 2009

The President's Message

Charity Istone

While the title of this article says "President's Message" it really should read "Past President's Message". At the past conference in April, Cheryl Mattern was installed as the next President of PASNAP and because of that I know PASNAP has a great future ahead.

At that same conference, I found myself feeling a little melancholy. The start of a new presidency meant the end of mine. Now don't get me wrong, there comes a time when we all need to move on. It's just that when you spend so much time working on, with, or for something, the end is always bittersweet. So, maybe this article should be called endings and beginnings. The Presidents before me have all been here. I used to look at them and think that they must be happy to have that job complete and I was right. You do get very introspective at these times and as we all discover....it's ok.

Like the book "All I Ever Learned I Learned in Kindergarten", there were certainly a few things that I learned

I have made friends with nurses from across the state that I know I will have for a long time. It is exciting to know that you are a part of something that makes a difference.

The visionary nurses who started this organization came up with something great.

I will be a lifelong member. Thanks for letting me take part. In the past week I have been reminded that we can never take anything for granted. Sometimes we are smacked in the face with it, actually. So the new motto isJump in....Dive in.....Get in! Life is too short to just sit back. Get involved in something. Getting involved in PASNAP would be great. There's always something to do, a new challenge to face. Here's wishing that you face those new challenges with the joy and energy life deserves. I'm certainly going to try.

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Our Visionary

Ann Hoist

The President's Message of this issue was humble and brief. That however is no reflection of the tenure of Charity Istone during my participation with this organization. In the past three years I have watched dynamic change and growth. I saw the strategizing and presentation of quality conferences, innovative internet utilization, organized legislative communication, and the development of a fiscally sound base for PASNAP.

The planning and execution of the conference included locating speakers; establishing accommodations and meals for attendees; negotiating with vendors; coordinating activities such as the 50/50 raffle, legislative auction, and the awards ceremony; advertising; and collecting and processing conference applications and fees. The orchestration of this was no small feat, and managed within the realm of predetermined parameters, conference attendance has continued to increase.

I heard "go green" and "save trees" when internet utilization was being discussed. A list serve was set up to enable communication between members via the internet. I can see solutions

offered between colleagues for problems posted on the list serve. The newsletter is retrieved on the internet. Both of these means of communication are paperless. A new logo and web page have been designed utilizing the expertise of board member Karen Thomas' son, a designer of graphic arts.

PASNAP hired Lobbyist Morgan Plant, who has successfully enabled other health care groups achieve goals. Ms. Plant has oriented us to the legislative process and introduced us to many legislators in managing our yearly "Day on the Hill." She continues to increase our number of supporters.

PASNAP is now a fiscally sound organization with funds both invested and available for PASNAP to use. This past fall PASNAP could afford to have all board members attend a retreat in State College. Aside from our business meeting, we were able to get to know one another and visit in a relaxed pleasant atmosphere. It was an opportunity for networking and creating new plans.

Charity has told us we will still see her. For now she will have more time and energy for her family, including her little granddaughter, and her school district, North Allegheny, where she is department chair. We thank her for her visionary leadership as we follow through with what she has begun.



The Notion Of Networking

Ann Hoist

Autonomy is one good description for school nursing. Serving students as the sole health care provider in a building often leaves me yearning for better ways to accomplish my goals, and so being with others of my specialty is a welcome occurrence. For me networking that provided ideas, insight, and information, happened at a Penn State summer course, conferences, PASNAP board meetings, and legislative meetings.

This past summer I traveled to Wilkes Barre, Pa for a week long course offered by Penn State about emergencies encountered in school nursing. At the conclusion of the course I had earned 90 CEU credits and gained much knowledge to carry back to my practice. Beyond those opportunities I got to be with eight other school nurses from districts very different than my own.

I am a nurse practitioner from a city environment. My setting does have it's challenges, but emergency transportation and hospitals are nearby. Many of the other ladies in my class were from rural settings and a two hour drive from the nearest health care facility. It was interesting and fun to listen to them describe their health offices equipped with the newest technology and abundant supplies for any imaginable event. They had standing orders for inhalers, epinephrine, and other medications for which I did not. I however, had 911 at my fingertips.

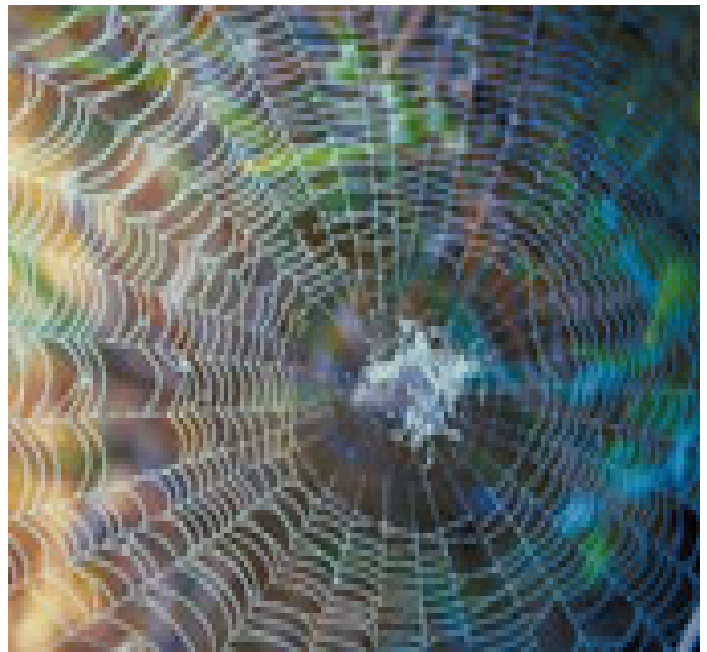
Another kind of networking experience has been through attending PASNAP conferences. Mealtime has been a good time to learn about different schools and methods for meeting goals. I recalled sitting with the school nurse from George Jr. Republic, a Western Pennsylvania school for "at risk" youth. I was fascinated as she described her beautiful facility because some of my middle school boys from Pittsburgh's Hill District had been referred there. Another time during a break, a school nurse shared her summer routine of many years that included volunteering at camp. After our conversation I decided to volunteer at Diabetes Camp. That involvement has been valuable personally and professionally.

For the past three years I have been a PASNAP Board member as the Pittsburgh Representative. This position requires four meetings a year with the officers and other region representatives from across the state. Networking with these school nurses, and especially the school nurse consultant for the State Health Department, has given me a global view. I was informed about the upcoming immunization catch-up requirements and schedule at the state level. Although the schedule for my county, Allegheny, differed from that at the state level, it was empowering to have that information early on. I also heard about how other school nurses were managing the catch-up in their district. There was an abundance of good ideas.

Sometimes the journey to board meetings was shared with other board members. Though the trip was 3 hours, the time flew with lively conversations filled with school nurse stories. I learned that the school district of one of my PASNAP colleagues awarded her clerical help a few hours a week. This wise policy released her for more nursing intervention with the children. Another topic that provided insight was paperwork and computer utilization. I thought procedures done in other school districts might, maybe with modification, work in mine. With these insights, I have spoken up in my school district about efficient ways to accomplish goals utilizing the computer technology available to us.

Each year board members travel to Harrisburg for the PASNAP "Day on the Hill." This is the opportunity to speak with our state's lawmakers about issues concerning school nurses, including the ratio and funding. We tell them what we do and why we are important for the welfare and education of Pennsylvania's children, and give them illustrative examples of our work on behalf of our students. Together we organize a "Legislative Auction," conducted at the yearly PASNAP Conference, to raise the money to help pay the salary for our lobbyist and her activities. This "passionate camaraderie in action" moves us to work together to increase our voice politically.

Although we are autonomous there is no reason to feel alone. There are educational opportunities and projects with which to become involved and meet other people. Relationships are readily established with ongoing commitments like committees or the PASNAP Board, and in these associations you will grow professionally and have even more to offer your children. Take these opportunities for yourself and the children you serve. Go for it and Network!



Yoga in Schools

Ken Lukitish

Mr. Lukitish is the Athletic Director and Physical Education Teacher at Dilworth Traditional Academy of the Arts and Humanities, a prekindergarten to fifth grade school in the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

This past year I had the privilege of being part of a pilot “Yoga in Schools” program for our district. Because of my position, my involvement was important for the success of this new endeavor. Although I had little or no knowledge about yoga, I was intrigued and a bit excited to be involved because it was new to me and viewed positively by our teaching staff and my colleagues.

The “Yoga in Schools” program was conducted by Mrs. Joann Spence, a yoga specialist. Mrs. Spence, a practitioner and instructor with over fifteen years of experience, runs her own studio, “Yoga on the Square”, located in the Regent Square section of Pittsburgh. The program, which lasted 10 weeks, was introduced to the children from all grades, pre-kindergarten through fifth.

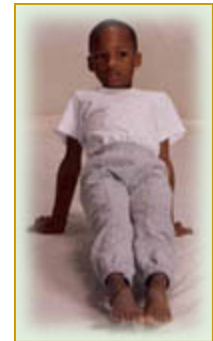
The physical practice of yoga is the study of body and mind. The students learned about how their bodies and minds work as well as the correlation between their physical and mental state of being. I liked the challenges it presented for the students both physically and mentally. They concentrated on alignment, balance, flexibility, and physical strength. The yoga staff concentrated on student outcomes that included physical, mental, emotional, and social fitness.

Neither the students nor I had much knowledge about yoga so it was recommended that we “start from scratch.” We focused on breathing exercises first. Some of the breathing exercises were “Balloon Breath”, “Bear Breath”, “Bunny Breath”, and “Candle Breath”. Because the brain is very dependent upon oxygen, the breathing exercises were important to help the students achieve a more peaceful and focused state of mind.

The second area of focus in yoga is the poses. The yoga staff kept this as simple as possible. Our gymnasium at Dilworth is a very small area, so with thirty students in this space participating in free movement exercises, safety was a huge concern of mine. Poses the children learned were “down dog”, “dragon”, “rock”, “plank”, “frog”, “mountain”, “tree”, and “warrior”. I enjoyed watching the students challenge themselves with these physically demanding poses.

The third and final focus of a typical day’s lesson was a game situation that tied breathing exercises and physical poses together. This offered the students an opportunity to apply yoga principals and explore new physical challenges with each other in a playful way.

Overall I enjoyed the “Yoga in Schools” program very much. I participated and learned along with the students. Now we all see that yoga can be applied to many aspects of a person’s life.



Online Education—A Sign of the Times

Emily Huntzinger

Emily Huntzinger is the marketing specialist for the College Network.

As Americans work through challenging economic times, education will be the key to changing bleak circumstances and significantly improving the quality of life. Today, educational opportunities for working adults are vastly different from those available just twenty years ago. Higher education and technology have come together to bring the classroom to the individual. Online education has given more people the chance to earn college degrees and professional certificates from universities while balancing their personal and professional commitments.

The College Network™ was established in 1992 in response to nurses looking for work-friendly ways to earn their degrees. Since then, The College Network has continued to develop and expand its online services and offerings to become a leader in the educational services industry. The College Network partners with leading universities across the country to provide individuals greater access to a variety of career-enhancing college degree and professional certificate programs. In fact, The College Network has helped more than 150,000 adults advance their education.

How the Degree Programs Work

The College Network has developed Comprehensive Learning Modules™ (CLMs™) that are designed to help individuals earn college credit for many general education and prerequisite courses by passing end-of-course college equivalency exams. CLMs are available online and enable individuals to work at their own pace. Credit earned this way is transferred to a university partner where the degree can be completed conveniently online and is awarded by the university.

Available Nursing Degree Programs

- LPN/LVN to RN
- LPN/LVN to RN/BSN
- RN to BSN
- BSN to MS in Nursing
- RN to MS in Nursing
- MS in Nursing

How the Professional Certificate Programs Work

Professional certificates prepare individuals for immediate, real-world experience that can be applied in their current positions or applied toward career advancement. Coursework is completed entirely online, and most certificate programs can be completed in a matter of weeks. Contact The College Network to find out when classes begin.

Available Professional Certificate Programs

- Business Leadership Skills
- Change Leadership
- Executive Leadership
- Healthcare Administration and Leadership
- And many more....

Be Rewarded for Sharing the Value of Education

The EARN referral program was developed by The College Network to reward people who refer others and inspire them to continue their education. Customers of The College Network can receive \$200 and non-customers can receive \$150 for every referral submitted who enrolls in one of the degree program offerings. Go to www.college-net.com/EARN for specific details.

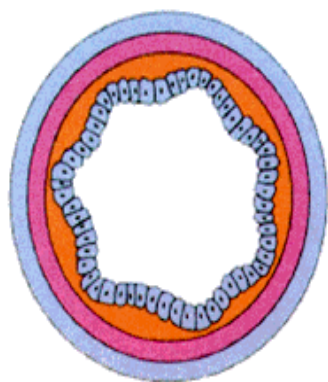
As a school nurse, it is possible to further your education while you work. Both degree and professional certificate opportunities are available to you through The College Network. To learn more, contact Karen Zimmerman by phone at (412) 600-5627 or by email at karen.zimmerman@college-net.com.



Asthma: Environment Makes All the Difference

Asthma is a common chronic disease in both children and adults. Asthma is characterized by an inflammation of the airways of the lungs. Inflammation causes the airways to swell. The airways also contract or narrow. In addition, the inflammation causes mucus to be produced (as indicated in green below), further limiting airflow.

Normal Airway



Asthmatic Airway



People diagnosed with asthma who are under good control are often without any symptoms. However, they may still have inflammation present in their airways and should continue to take their anti-inflammatory medications and limit their exposure to environmental factors that might worsen their asthma.

Asthma symptoms may include wheezing, coughing, a feeling of chest tightness and shortness of breath. Those with asthma may have one or several of these symptoms when experiencing an asthma attack.

There are multiple environmental triggers that may result in an asthmatic attack. Environmental asthma triggers may be divided into two groups: allergens and irritants. Allergens include molds, dust mites, cockroaches, pet dander, and weed, tree and grass pollen. Irritants include cigarette smoke, pollution, fragrances, and organic solvents being the most common. Additionally, sinus infections and reflux from the esophagus may also trigger an asthma attack.

Dust mite exposure generally does not trigger an asthma attack although it does promote airway inflammation. Mattress and pillow covers that are specifically manufactured to prevent dust mite allergen release can reduce dust mite allergen. Stuffed animals may also harbor dust mites. However, dust mite avoidance is only useful in patients allergic to dust mite allergen. Allergy testing (mold, pets, etc.) should be considered prior to recommending any allergen avoidance.

Secondhand or passive tobacco smoke is particularly harmful to asthmatics. Secondhand or passive smoke is smoke that is breathed in by every person in proximity to the smoker. Everyone should stop smoking but, if this cannot be achieved, smokers must smoke away from asthmatics – outside and never in an enclosed car. Homes and schools should be designated as “smoke-free zones”.

Cockroaches and their feces are well-known asthma triggers. Infested homes should be treated by an extermination service if possible. Food and water should be carefully put away. The house must be kept clean, including vacuuming every few days. The dander of pets can be problematic for the person with asthma. It is preferable not to have a furry pet in the home of an asthmatic. However, if this can't be done, the pet should be kept away from the person to the greatest degree possible. The pet should be kept outside and bathed frequently. Floors should have a hard surface and be mopped frequently.

Mold can trigger an asthmatic attack when it is inhaled. Any mold should be eliminated and humidity in the home should be kept low - between 35% and 50%. An air conditioner may be necessary particularly in humid climates.

People diagnosed with asthma should be aware of the air quality in their areas and plan accordingly. Controller medications usually allow a person to remain physically active as well as exercising early in the day if the quality of the air is poor. An asthmatic must be knowledgeable about what substances may cause an allergic reaction in them.

People with asthma should be aware of the conditions around them in order to maintain a high quality of life. Contact your doctor or healthcare provider to be sure that you are doing all that you can to avoid asthma attacks.

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NASN

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NASN 41st

Annual Conference

Boston Seaport World Trade Center

June 25-28, 2009

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Communities: Partners
for Student Success**

PASNAP Conference

Pennsylvania Association of School Nurses and Practitioners

Annual Education Conference

April 9, 10, & 11, 2010

Station Square, Pittsburgh

Have a Great Summer!