Going back to school
Nurses say it’s tough but worth the effort
Page 10

Program trains health care coaches Page 5
Students learn about nursing at camp Page 6

See advertising feature Page 3

For the health care professional
Kathleen Woods, coordinator of the Children’s 1st program for Cobb & Douglas County Public Health, received the 2013 State of Georgia Public Health Nursing Practice Excellence Award for her work to improve the health and safety of children. LEITA COWART / SPECIAL

My Style: ‘Timeless and durable pieces with an eclectic flair’

NICK ARROYO / SPECIAL

What’s Inside

12

13

14

17

18

4

8

10

11

15

16

19

21

22

Editor’s Notes

Why I Love My Job

Know Your Leader

Continuing Education

Rapid Pulse

ON THE COVER

Cindy Johnson, clinical simulation educator at Northeast Georgia Medical Center in Gainesville, is a student in a hybrid Ph.D. program at Georgia Baptist College of Nursing of Mercer University.

NICK ARROYO / SPECIAL

@ajc.com

To see Pulse online, go to ajc.com/jobs/pulse.

HealthFlock

The AJC’s blog about the business of health care, written by experts in Atlanta and across Georgia, is sponsored by Billian. To read HealthFlock, go to blogs.ajc.com/health-flock.

Celebrating Nurses

ajcjobs. Nursing Excellence Awards

For information about the 2013 awards, go to www.ajc.com/celebratingnurses.

Like us on Facebook: Celebrating Nurses ajcjobs

Want more health care news?

Sign up for Pulseplus

our free monthly email newsletter.

ajc.com/newsletters/signup
A leader in spinal surgery

“For a growing segment of the population, the term “pain in the neck” is not just an expression of annoyance; it is the annoyance. And it’s not just in the neck; aches, soreness and serious pain can be centered anywhere from the top of the spine to the lower back.

The reasons more people are afflicted with aching backs are varied, ranging from excess weight and a lack of exercise to spinal degeneration and injury. Until recently, treatment of such complaints constituted various approaches, but surgery was often considered the most drastic. Now, thanks to advancements in modern medical technology, getting relief from back pain is easier. Surgeries to correct problems are more successful, and patient recovery time is shortening.

Best of all, advanced spinal surgeries are now being performed close to home at Rockdale Medical Center in Conyers.

“While I’d really like people in our community to realize is that spinal surgery has made great innovations,” said Deborah Moore, director of surgical services at Rockdale Medical. “What used to require incisions of 5 to 6 inches can now be done with 1 inch. Patients can recover at a much faster rate with considerably less pain. And it’s available right here in Rockdale.”

Back pain is often difficult to pinpoint, Moore said. It could be caused by a ruptured disc, which then leads to more spine deterioration. Over the years, the spine can become more unstable. Similar problems can be brought on by bone loss. But new techniques being used at Rockdale Medical Center have proven successful in getting patients back to a pain-free life.

“Here, we do a lot of instrumentation—putting cages, rods and screws into the spinal vertebrae to make it more stable,” Moore explained. “Over the last two to three years, new techniques with those surgeries have increased. Before, a procedure like that required a three-to four-day hospital stay, but now a patient may only stay in the hospital for one or two days and be mobile sooner.”

Recovery times for some spinal procedures can be even shorter.

“If someone is just having a ruptured disc removed, it can be done as an outpatient (procedure),” Moore said. “They’re up and out of bed the same day. Patients move more quickly and are more mobile.”

Rockdale Medical recently claimed a spinal surgery milestone when surgeons performed the first procedure in the state that utilized a newly approved replacement cervical vertebra.

“We were the first to use the Bryan® cervical disc replacement after the FDA approved it,” Moore said.

Rockdale Medical’s team of spine surgeons, who coordinate with radiologists, nurses and physical therapists, are now able to take care of patients without sending them to specialized hospitals.

“What’s really great is now patients who probably thought they needed to go to a specialty hospital for something like disc replacement will find those cutting-edge surgical techniques right here,” Moore said. “We offer all-encompassing care that takes the patient from admission to discharge and afterward.”

And it’s only getting better. Within the next year, Rockdale Medical plans to offer procedures such as spinal fusions as an outpatient procedure.

“Our goal is to send patients home the same day, and that’s pretty neat,” Moore said.

Career Opportunities www.rockdalemedicalcenter.org
Pediatric nurse takes learning seriously

Nursing is a learning profession. Working in a complex and changing environment, nurses are constantly learning on the job and, increasingly, in college classrooms.

The Institute of Medicine’s landmark 2010 “The Future of Nursing” report recommended that more nurses earn baccalaureate degrees. That has spurred new RN-to-BSN programs and increased enrollment in existing programs. Master’s and doctoral degree programs are also growing, as nurses aim to move into independent practice, informatics, management, research or teaching roles.

In 2012, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s RN Work Project found motivators that cause nurses to go back to school, including career and professional advancement, gaining knowledge, improving social welfare skills and being a positive role model for their children.

All of those reasons apply to Marie Gay, manager of clinical operations for the medicine service line at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta. She holds a clinical nurse specialist degree, is enrolled in a second master’s degree program and just applied to Georgia State University’s new DNP program. If accepted, she’ll continue in Georgia State’s master’s degree program in nursing leadership and healthcare innovations.

“If I do enjoy learning,” said Gay, MSN, RN-BC, who decided to become a nurse after her undergraduate degree in psychology and sociology led to a waitress job at Pizza Hut. “My mom was a nurse, and she’d never had any trouble finding a job, so I got my nursing degree in 1982,” Gay said.

A summer job as a patient care technician in a children’s hospital when Gay was in nursing school sold her on pediatrics. Gay, who was working weekends in intensive care and was married with two young children, went back for her master’s degree from 1993 to 1996.

Gay took on an educator role in the emergency room and has since moved into other staff education assignments. In 2012, she enrolled in a second master’s degree program.

“I’d been in a leadership position for five years and knew I needed more tools in my tool box,” she said. “It’s changed how I approach teams and projects. I’ve been able to apply what I’m learning almost immediately, so when my professors told me about the new DNP program, I thought, ‘Why not try for it?’ ”

A doctorate degree in nursing practice aligns with Gay’s desire to do even more within the hospital system.

“I didn’t want a traditional Ph.D., because I’m not interested in an academic setting or doing heavy-duty research,” she said. “My ultimate goal is to provide optimal care and have a positive impact on the lives of children.”

Gay is excited that so many nurses are returning to school. “We need highly skilled nurses at the bedside and if anyone wants to advance in the profession, they almost have to have a master’s degree now.”

While it’s challenging to balance work, school and family, Gay encourages nurses to go for it.

“The benefits far outweigh the costs,” she said.

Contact us
Do you have any story ideas for Pulse? Call 404-526-5664 or send email to jbrieske@ajc.com or lfraines@comcast.net.

Editor’s Notes
Laura Raines
lfraines@comcast.net

Healthcare of Atlanta. She holds a clinical nurse specialist degree, is enrolled in a second master’s degree program and just applied to Georgia State University’s new DNP program. If accepted, she’s planning to take the nursing leadership track. If not, she’ll continue in Georgia State’s master’s degree program in nursing leadership and health care innovations.

Our nurses make a difference on a higher level by Extending the Healing Ministry of Christ. You will experience the freedom to deliver the best care for patients’ bodies, minds, and spirits in a way you feel passionate about. There is no better place to make a true impact in the lives of others.

Emory-Adventist Hospital at Smyrna
A Member of Adventist Health System
3949 South Cobb Drive
Smyrna, GA 30080
www.emoryadventistcareers.com

We are looking for RN’s in:
• TELEMETRY
• LABOR & DELIVERY

ASK ABOUT OUR
$10,000 SIGN-ON BONUS!

770-991-8041 • www.southernregional.org/careers
Learning to coach

By Laura Raines
Pulse editor

Nurses have long been skilled clinicians and compassionate caregivers. Now some of them are taking on the additional role of health coach to help patients who have chronic illnesses.

About 30 nurses and medical assistants at Piedmont Heart Institute and Piedmont Physicians Group just finished a five-month program to earn a certificate in health coaching and multidisciplinary care coordination.

Mereder University and Piedmont healthcare collaborated to create this innovative certificate program through their partnership — the Center for Health and Learning, said Kevin Freeman, assistant professor of clinical mental counseling at Mercer.

“By using a team of counseling and nursing expert instructors, we were able to give people the skills to provide continuity of care across a variety of specialties, so that they can motivate and enable patients to better manage their own diseases and live healthier lives,” he said.

Mercer is offering the program to Piedmont employees through its College of Continuing and Professional Studies. Industry interest is growing and the school may expand it to a broader audience in the future, Freeman said.

In a blend of face-to-face and online instruction, participants in the 10-module program learn about the role of health coaching, as well as evidence-based practice and standards of care for chronic diseases.

“Nurses like Teri Baker provided the medical content. My role was to teach active listening and coaching strategies that would help clinicians facilitate communication and behavior change in their patients,” said Freeman, Ph.D., LPC, NCC.

By learning about various learning styles and multicultural differences, participants are better equipped to work with patients to create personalized plans, set goals and provide support.

The program was eye-opening for coaching, continued on Page 23
Happy campers

Clayton State gives students insight into the nursing profession.

By Laura Raines
Pulse editor

When she was in high school, Elizabeth Oyeyemi attended a weeklong camp at Clayton State University to get a closer look at the nursing profession.

“My health care occupations teacher had heard about it and knew I was interested in nursing. She thought this would be a good hands-on experience to see if nursing was really what I wanted,” she said.

This summer Oyeyemi was back at the same nursing camp as a volunteer instructor. A rising senior in the nursing program at Clayton State, she’s interested in working in an emergency room or as a flight nurse after she graduates.

“Being back at the camp brought back a lot of memories. I remembered when I was learning some of those skills for the first time,” she said. “I was a floater on skills day, helping wherever students needed help as they learned to dress wounds, start IVs and give medications. One student was having a hard time getting a blood pressure (reading), so I let her practice on me. It was really cool to see young people with so much enthusiasm about nursing.”

Students asked Oyeyemi about Clayton State’s program and how hard it was to get in. She advised them to study hard, use all the resources available and ask for help because getting into and staying in nursing school is tough, but worth it.

Later, she met a camper at a Clayton State freshman orientation session and agreed to mentor her.

“I love working with young people. My passion is to help find and achieve their dreams,” Oyeyemi said. “If someone is interested in nursing, it really helps to talk to someone who is in nursing school or working in the field to learn what it is really like.

“I wish there were more opportunities like this camp for young people.”

The Clayton State School of Nursing launched its Careers Into Nursing Camp for high school students six years ago with a Health Resources and Services Administration work force diversity grant. Up to 60 students participate in two weeklong day camps.

“We started offering the free camps to minority or (prospective) first-generation college students interested in a nursing career. The profession needs to recruit more minority nurses,” said Katrina Barnes, assistant nursing professor and laboratory coordinator at Clayton State.

The first grant ran for three years and the nursing department secured a second one to continue the program for another three years. By the second round of funding, the faculty had done some research.

Madison McNell (left) and Justin Frazier practice performing chest compressions on a patient simulator during nursing camp at Clayton State University.

Kathrina Barnes, assistant nursing professor, laboratory coordinator, Clayton State University

“I love working with these young people, to see their enthusiasm and how they grow through the week. At first, they say they want to be neurosurgeons, but by the end of the week more are talking about nursing, and that’s good.”

Campers continued on Page 19
Children’s champion

Public health nurse honored for efforts to help kids.

Laura Raines
Pulse editor

Maternal instincts run deep in Kathleen Woods, a proud mother of three and grandmother to three grandchildren. But the number of children whose lives she has positively impacted as a public health nurse is countless.

Woods, RN, received the 2013 State of Georgia Public Health Nursing Practice Excellence Award for her efforts to improve the health and safety of young children.

“Kathy Woods is an unwavering champion of our littlest Georgians,” said Dr. Brenda Fitzgerald, commissioner of the Georgia Department of Public Health. “Through her leadership and dedication to injury prevention and safe sleep for babies, Kathy has helped save the lives of hundreds of children.”

Woods, who was cited for her work with Children 1st, SAFE Kids, First Start, the Georgia Infant Safe Sleep Coalition and other initiatives, was a seasoned nurse who had practiced in mental health and other specialties before coming to public health in 1988.

“I’m not sure why it appealed to me, but I always wanted to try it,” she said. “I think it’s because you can do so many things in that role, and all of them are important and needed.

“The people I work with are amazing. There’s just something about public health nurses. They are all hard workers and they have the biggest hearts.”

Woods is coordinator of the Children’s 1st program for Cobb & Douglas County Public Health.

“This is a wonderful program within the community,” said Woods. “Through her leadership and dedication to injury prevention and safe sleep for babies, Kathy has helped save the lives of hundreds of children.”

Kathleen Woods received the 2013 State of Georgia Public Health Nursing Practice Excellence Award for her work to improve the health and safety of young children. LEITA COWART / SPECIAL

NOW HIRING RNs, PTs and OTs

Camellia Healthcare provides home health and hospice services in the Greater Atlanta area. We are seeking outstanding individuals to grow with us.

• 401k Match
• Great Benefits
• Flexible Schedules
• Competitive Per Visit Rates
• Excellent Mileage Reimbursement

www.camelliahealth.com

Office Locations in:
DOUGLASVILLE
LAWRENCEVILLE
MARIETTA

HOSPICE
678-218-5745
HOME HEALTH
678-354-1456

Opportunity for Visionary Educator
Georgia State University – An inclusive and diverse community dedicated to the transformative power of learning.

Join our highly qualified team of faculty in School of Nursing at the Byrdine F. Lewis School of Nursing and Health Professions. Be part of this exciting team as we lead the future of nursing education! We are seeking a dynamic, certified psychiatric nurse practitioner to lead the largest CCNE accredited program in psychiatric/mental health nursing in the state of Georgia. This full-time tenure-track faculty position will include responsibilities for program administration, didactic and clinical teaching, and student mentoring. An active program of research and involvement is service is an expectation of all tenure-track faculty. The opportunity to teach in both the PhD and DNP program is available, as well as engaging in dissertation and capstone projects.

Qualifications: non-restricted Georgia license, specialty certification and MSN (PMH/NP) required; earned doctorate in nursing or related field required. Two years of clinical nursing practice required with preference to those with recent clinical and teaching experience in psychiatric/mental health nursing. Prior teaching experience preferred. The position is available as of July 1, 2013; interviews will continue until filled.

Salary commensurate with credentials. Interested applicants should send a letter of interest and curriculum vitae to Dr. Joan Cranford at jcranford2@gsu.edu. Visit us on the web at nursing.gsu.edu.
Caring for kids

Pediatria promotes wellness for medically fragile children.

By Laura Raines
Pulse editor

How do you care for medically fragile children who have special needs? You weave a network of clinical care and compassion that will help them develop and thrive.

That’s the mission of Pediatria Healthcare for Kids, a seven-year-old company that has grown from a handful of licensed clinicians to a team of more than 1,000 employees, serving more than 500 families in five states with day health centers and private duty nursing.

This type of care fills a growing need, said Lorie Graves, RN, administrative director for Pediatria’s Stockbridge day health center.

“Through technology and better knowledge, we can save premature babies now as young as 22 weeks and others born with critical medical conditions, but these babies require intensive care in the hospital and more medical help and therapy afterward,” she said.

After 20 years as a nurse and a neonatal intensive care unit clinical manager, Graves was drawn to the day health setting at Pediatria.

“In the NICU, you never see the outcome of any of your patients,” she said. “Here, you see the bigger picture. You see them come in really sick, but then you see them grow and develop. You really get to know them and you become a part of the family.”

Pediatria cares for medically fragile children from birth to age 5. The children may have cardiac or gastro-intestinal defects, respiratory issues, chronic illnesses, cerebral palsy or developmental delays and complications from premature births.

Other day care centers aren’t licensed or staffed to give the diverse range of individual care these children need. Pediatria provides skilled nursing care; speech, physical, occupational and respiratory therapy; as well as typical preschool activities such as story time, educational exercises, naps and outdoor play time.

“We take them outside with a sprinkler or wading pool, and they love it,” Graves said.

The children are referred by government health agencies and must qualify for the services, which are paid for by Medicaid.

“It’s kind of expensive, about $60,000 a year, but that includes transportation, skilled nursing care and therapy. It’s a lot less than repeated hospital admissions,” Graves said. “Our goal is to keep our kids out of the hospital and to make it easier for parents by having all the therapies in one place.”

The young clients are picked up in specialized vans staffed by nurses who assess them to make sure they are medically stable enough to come to the centers. They are assessed throughout the day, as they go through various activities and

“Kids continued on Page 17

Lorie Graves (holding Courtney White) works for Pediatria Healthcare for Kids, which provides day health care services and private duty, in-home nursing for medically fragile children. Photos by LEITA COWART / SPECIAL

“In the NICU, you never see the outcome of any of your patients. Here, you see the bigger picture. You see them come in really sick, but then you see them grow and develop. You really get to know them and you become a part of the family.”

Lorie Graves, administrative director, Pediatria Healthcare for Kids, Stockbridge day health center
First birthday

Cancer Treatment Centers of America opened its Newnan facility a year ago. Today, it’s up and running smoothly.

By Laura Raines
Pulse editor

A lot can happen in a year. Four seasons come and go. A newborn grows into a walking toddler. A brand-new hospital opens its doors and becomes a vital part of a community.

When Cancer Treatment Centers of America at Southeastern Regional Medical Center opened in Newnan on Aug. 15, 2012, it had a distinct advantage. While the facility and many of the staff were brand new, the care model for treating advanced cancer patients had been developed and honed at CTCA’s four other centers across the country.

Operating from a common playbook has helped CTCA Southeastern avoid some of the common bumps of hospital startups. In fact, administrators are already planning an expansion that will double the number of patient beds (to 50) and operating rooms (to four).

Amanda Woodward, an infusion nurse and one of the facility’s initial 178 employees, was surprised by the extensive orientation process that began more than a month before the doors opened to patients. Getting to know everyone in the hospital — not just those in her unit — has helped her work more effectively.

“The culture here is different from any I’ve ever experienced,” said Woodward, BSN, RN. “Everything is completely about the patient and the staff is empowered to work together to overcome any obstacles that would stand in the way of providing the best care.”

That empowerment comes from personal relationships with fellow employees and with patients. Woodward recently spent time with a young mother and her family during the patient’s final days.

“I got to hold her 5-year-old child because I knew her and had played with her. It was so sad, but the mother was able to die with dignity, knowing that others would care for her child. It’s an experience I’ll never forget,” she said.

Two months into her job, the nurse took on the role...
Going back to school

Nurses are returning to the classroom in record numbers.

By Laura Raines
Pulse editor

There are more than 600 U.S. programs that allow registered nurses with a diploma or an associate degree to earn a bachelor’s degree in nursing and more than 170 programs where they can earn a master’s degree, according to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing.

Those classes are filled with working nurses who want to meet career and personal goals. It’s no picnic going back to class when you have a job, a family and other responsibilities. It takes stamina, ingenuity and commitment.

“But the goal is attainable and it is definitely worth it,” said Katrina Bailey, RN, BSN, MBA-HC, manager of continuing medical education at Northeast Georgia Medical Center in Gainesville.

In May 2012, Bailey graduated with an MBA with a concentration in health care administration from Brenau University. The degree helped Bailey land her present job, where she enjoys the respect of the physicians who take her courses.

A nurse since 1995 with experience in cardiac, operations management and education, Bailey had always wanted to earn a master’s degree.

“I knew it would be beneficial to my career. I just didn’t think I had any spare time,” she said. “But when I heard that NGMC was creating this MBA-HC program with Brenau for a cohort of 20 hospital administrators, I wanted to be the first to apply.”

She attended classes online and on site every Monday night for more than two years.

“It was difficult learning how to be a student again, how to research and cite references. I was sweating that first paper,” she said. “But the experience of learning things that were immediately applicable to our jobs here at the hospital was an amazing experience.”

Bailey juggled school with her role as wife and mother of two daughters, who were 7 and 5 when she went back to school.

Back to school continued on Page 11

Cindy Johnson, clinical simulation educator at Northeast Georgia Medical Center, prepares for a class demonstration. She’s a student in a hybrid Ph.D. program at Georgia Baptist College of Nursing of Mercer University.
Are you ready to hit the books again?

By Laura Raines
Pulse editor

American Sentinel University saw record enrollments in its RN-to-BSN and DNP online programs in March and April, said Cheryl Wagner, associate dean of graduate nursing. The school isn’t alone.

Across the country, nurses are returning to the classroom in droves. The reasons are many.

One is the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Institute of Medicine’s 2010 Initiative on the Future of Nursing, recommend that 80 percent of nurses in the United States hold bachelor’s degrees by 2020. Another reason is a growing preference by hospitals to hire BSN nurses, especially if the institution is aiming for Magnet status, Wagner said. Master’s-level and Ph.D.-prepared nurses are needed to fill new roles in the health care system and to teach future nurses.

Is having more education a good thing for nurses?

“Absolutely. There’s been such an explosion of knowledge in the field and you don’t have time to learn about the profession or nursing theory in two years. You have to focus on anatomy, skills and medications,” Wagner said.

“A BSN degree can increase your career options, and research is starting to show that patient outcomes are better with baccalaureate-trained nurses.”

Going back to school isn’t for everyone, however.

“Our student success advisers noticed that some students struggled more than others, so they did some research to see why. From that research they put together a screening tool to help nurses assess their own readiness,” said Wagner, Ph.D., MSN, MBA.

Here are five factors to consider before heading back to the classroom.

1. **Can you meet the required time commitment?**
   - “Lack of time is one of the main barriers to furthering your education when you have a job and family,” Wagner said. “Online education makes attending class more convenient, but we still estimate that you’ll need 10 hours on the discussion board and 20 hours to do the reading and assignments per week, per course to get the most out of your classes.”

2. **How’s your attitude?**
   - “ ‘My boss is making me do this,’ is not a good reason to be in school,” Wagner said. “People who are committed to learning and broadening their horizons generally are more successful than people who really don’t want to be there.”

3. **Do you have support?**
   - “Students do better when their families and workplaces are behind their efforts because going back to school requires some juggling,” Wagner said.

   Some workplaces will create flexible schedules and some will even pay for part or all of your tuition. Discuss your plans with family members and supervisors before enrolling, she suggested.

4. **Can you afford it?**
   - “ ‘My boss is making me do this,’ is not a good reason to be in school,” Wagner said. “People who are committed to learning and broadening their horizons generally are more successful than people who really don’t want to be there.”

5. **What’s your goal?**
   - “You may want a bachelor’s degree for personal satisfaction or because it might help you move up the career ladder or give you greater job security,” Wagner said. “If you’re going for a master’s degree or Ph.D., it’s good to know what you want to do with it because those degrees are specialized.”

   Having a goal will strengthen your commitment.


Back to school
Continued from Page 10

school. She credits a supportive husband and mother for helping her make it work.

“I’d work all day, come home and do the things that mommies do and then start assignments about 9 p.m. and work until 1 or 2 a.m.,” she said.

Bailey maintained a 4.0 grade point average despite being pregnant her last year. She delivered her son the day before graduation.

Looking back at that challenging time makes Bailey especially satisfied with her work/life balance today.

“I know I’m contributing on the job and I have time to enjoy my family,” she said. “Nurses need more education in this ever-changing health care environment, and there are so many opportunities out there if you are willing to grow.”

‘You have to know your limits’

Cindy Johnson, clinical simulation educator at Northeast Georgia Medical Center, has worked in various hospitals and specialties since earning her diploma from Georgia Baptist Hospital School of Nursing in 1982. She’s worked in the emergency room, postanesthetic care, intensive care and helped usher in new initiatives as a performance improvement coordinator. Her present job as a staff simulation educator was a direct result of earning a master’s degree in 2010.

“I was a staff educator as part of a surgical observation unit and my mentor, Priscilla Stockwell, told me that many educators had master’s degrees,” said Johnson, RN, BSN, MS, CAPA.

She enrolled in a master’s degree program in nursing education at North Georgia College & State University in Dahlonega.

“I went to campus one day a week and worked part time in cardiology and as a clinical instructor for the college while in school,” she said. “Working as a clinical instructor was a great way to pull together everything I was learning about teaching.”

Johnson had planned to take her new knowledge back to her old job, but she needed to do complete 180 clinical hours in a different field and asked to perform them in the simulation lab at NGMC.

Join the best healthcare workplace in Atlanta.

If you’re looking for a nursing job in Atlanta, Northeast Georgia Health System is the clear choice. For the third consecutive year, we’ve been named as one of the Top 100 Workplaces in Atlanta by the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Among acute care hospitals, NGHS ranks highest. No one even comes close.

We are the recipient of numerous accolades including:

- Healthgrades’ America’s 50 Best Hospitals in 2013
- #1 in Georgia for 7 years and top 5% in the nation for cardiac care by Healthgrades*
- #1 in GA for Cardiac Surgery
- #1 in GA for Cardiology Services
- #1 in GA for Coronary Interventional Procedures
- NGMC is one of only six hospitals in the nation to rank #1 in all four cardiac categories.
- First Hospital in the WORLD to receive two ACE Accreditations for Heart and Vascular Services
- Most Wired Hospitals and Health Systems of 2012, by Hospitals & Health Networks magazine

Learn more and apply online at www.GANurseJobs.com.
My style

- **Name:** Natasha Welch, MSN, FNP-BC
- **Age:** 40
- **Occupation:** National director of cardiac services for Seasons Hospice & Palliative Care.

**Signature style:** “I like timeless and durable pieces with an eclectic flair. I love skirts and heels; sneakers are for the gym.”

- **Best finds:** “Hand-crafted, embroidered cowboy boots. I found them at a flea market, and everyone loves them and they stay in fashion.

- **Fashion weakness:** “I only wear Silpada Designs sterling silver.”

- **Favorite stores:** “Nordstrom, outlets and any good clearance rack.”

- **Fashion inspiration:** “My Panamanian heritage and growing up in Brooklyn, N.Y. I was surrounded by fashion and we got dressed up for every occasion, including going to the grocery store.”

- **Pet peeve:** “Wearing what doesn’t complement you. If reds or skirts look good on you, then wear lots of them!”

- **Best fashion compliment:** “A patient once told me that she looks forward to seeing what I am wearing because it cheers her up.”

Contact us
Compiled by John Brieske, Pulse managing editor. Do you or someone you work with have a great sense of style? Please send email to jbrieske@ajc.com.
Why I Love My Job: LeSean Davis, RT

**Job:** Clinical liaison, Regency Hospital of South Atlanta.

**What I do:** “I am a resource for patients, families, physicians, case managers and administrators. I equip patients and families with necessary information required to make the best choice in determining the next level of care. I am a concierge, sounding board, counselor and road warrior. Most importantly, I do what I love — helping others!”

**How I got into this:** “I really enjoyed being a RT. However, I wanted to do something different in the health care field. After doing my research, I was led to the clinical liaison position. I figured that I could use my experience as an RT and my outgoing personality to make a greater impact in the lives of others.”

**Best part of the job:** “Building relationships in the community.”

**Most challenging part:** “Dealing with health insurance providers.”

**What people don't know about my job:** “How challenging and demanding it is to be a clinical liaison. I drive an average of 3,000 miles each month.”

**What keeps me going:** “It’s not just about placing patients in a hospital; it’s about keeping people employed on the floor. If I don’t get patients in the hospital, I directly affect the viability of the organization and someone's livelihood.”

**Preparation needed:** “Great attitude, planning, personality, patience and faith.”

**Salary:** The average annual pay for clinical liaisons in the United States is about $68,000, according to indeed.com.

Contact us
Compiled by John Brieske, Pulse managing editor. Got a health care job that you love? Please send email to jbieske@ajc.com.

Former respiratory therapist LeSean Davis enjoys his current role as clinical liaison at Regency Hospital of South Atlanta. “I figured that I could use my experience as an RT and my outgoing personality to make a greater impact in the lives of others,” he said. ALEX GARDENER / SMART ALECK FILMS
Know Your Leader: Paula Butts, RN, BSN

Paula Butts is assistant chief nursing officer at Atlanta Medical Center. “I love to see nurses grow and know that I had a part in them developing professionally. They have a love for the profession of nursing and I am proud that I had a part in their growth and advancement,” she said.

• Current job: Assistant chief nursing officer, Atlanta Medical Center.

• Family: Married for 24 years; two children, Meg, 23, and Zach, 19.

• What makes a good leader? “Characteristics of a good leader include the ability to inspire others. One must be an effective communicator and this includes being a good listener. I think a good leader is a cheerleader, and one who has integrity. “In nursing, I think one of the most important characteristics of a good leader is to own the nursing profession. I want nurses to be proud of our profession.”

• What are you most proud of in your career? “I love to see nurses grow and know that I had a part in them developing professionally. They have a love for the profession of nursing and I am proud that I had a part in their growth and advancement.”

• Who has inspired or mentored you? “I have had three professional mentors during my career: Julie Lewis, Lea Gardner and Jacqueline Herd — all of whom work at Atlanta Medical Center. “These three women have pushed me professionally and personally. They have provided guidance, advice and leadership. They have inspired me to stretch myself beyond what I thought I was capable of and (to) view setbacks and mistakes as learning opportunities.”

• What’s your favorite thing to do away from work? “I love to hike, run, swim and enjoy time with my family and friends. When I finish school (she is scheduled to graduate with an MSN degree in October), I want to learn to quilt.”

• Who’s your favorite fictional nurse? Why? “I do not have a favorite fictional nurse. However, I enjoy interacting with the real ones who care for patients every day.”

• What’s your favorite guilty pleasure? “Laying on a raft in the middle of a lake, dozing.”

• Tell us something that nobody at work knows about you: “Very little know that I am one of five adopted children. My family is very diverse.”

Contact us
Compiled by John Brieske. Do you work with someone who’s an exceptional leader in the health care field? If so, please send an email to jbrieske@ajc.com.
Woods

Continued from Page 7

public health and everyone needs to know about it,” she said.

Part of a statewide collaborative system, the organization’s mission is to make sure that every child gets a safe and healthy start and is ready for school by age 5. Doctors, hospitals, social workers and others can refer children who they believe are at risk for medical or socioeconomic reasons. The program is free to families who are referred.

As part of Children 1st, public health nurses perform developmental screening on newborns and make home visits to families.

“Our nurses go into the homes to do a maternal/child assessment, but they are also looking for safety concerns,” Woods said. “You can’t be a nurse and not notice things. We’re checking to see that there’s adequate food, that immunizations are up to date, and that there aren’t any safety issues.

“A big part of the program is to connect families with other services and resources that can help. We often partner with Babies Can’t Wait, Children’s Medical Services and others.”

Making house calls

Woods started her public health career making those home visits.

“I never thought I would want to do that, but there’s something about going into people’s homes and making contact on their level,” she said. “In the hospital, you give instructions never knowing whether patients can or will follow them. In homes, you can see what the needs really are and find ways to address them. It’s very rewarding.”

One thing she always asked new mothers was where their infants were sleeping.

“If they gave the wrong answer, then they were going to get all my education about safe practices,” she said. “Many parents want to put the child in bed with them, thinking that they are bonding, but it’s unsafe and can cause the child to be smothered or to fall out.”

Woods and her team have gone above and beyond to educate parents about where infants should sleep. In 2006, they secured a $20,000 grant from a local foundation to purchase pack-and-play cribs for families. In 2007, they took advantage of the Georgia Crib Match Program to acquire three additional cribs for every five they purchased.

Woods has continued to secure grants to purchase cribs, child-proofing supplies, gun locks, smoke detectors, baby gates and other supplies for her clients.

She’s also worked with the Georgia Infant Safe Sleep Coalition to study and prevent the number of sleep-related infant deaths, such as sudden infant death syndrome or sudden unexplained infant deaths.

“My friends don’t want to talk to me about their grandkids, because they know I’m going to ask if the child is sleeping on its back, without crib bumpers, stuffed animals or blankets in the bed, but I can’t help it,” Woods said. “The thought of one healthy infant dying makes me crazy, especially when it could have been prevented.”

As the coordinator, Woods doesn’t get into the field as often as she once did, but she has been going into the homes of high-risk families to teach safe parenting practices as part of a Douglas County pilot project.

“I was surprised to get a hug from a teen mother when I walked out the door the other day,” she said. “She was grateful that someone was willing to sit and talk with her and to respect that she could learn to do what was right for her child.”

Be it education or intervention, Woods believes that public health nursing improves the lives of children in Georgia.

“Recently a nurse went into a home and found an infant not breathing correctly. She got him to a doctor and now he’s OK,” she said. “Another nurse drove to several addresses in her search for a mother whose child had tested positive for cystic fibrosis in order to help her.

“I wish more money were channeled into public health. We struggle all the time to make smart decisions with our budget. We know that the teaching we do makes a difference.”

“Kathy Woods is an unwavering champion of our littlest Georgians. Through her leadership and dedication to injury prevention and safe sleep for babies, Kathy has helped save the lives of hundreds of children.”

Dr. Brenda Fitzgerald, commissioner, Georgia Department of Public Health
Nursing students having trouble understanding English idioms?

There’s an app for that

By Laura Raines  
Pulse editor

"Passing out, " "throwing up" and "having the sniffles" are phrases that nurses hear every day. While not clinical terms, everyone knows what they mean, right? Not necessarily, especially for nursing students who learned English as a second language.

Two nursing instructors at Georgia Perimeter College have created an app that explains idioms to such students, with the goal of helping them care for patients more effectively in the future.

"As Americans, we use idioms every day and think that everyone understands them, but those common expressions aren’t always taught to international students, " said Wakita R. Bradford, nursing community outreach and educational technology coordinator at Georgia Perimeter. "Our nursing students come from all over the globe and their English is often excellent. Still, they don’t always understand what we say.”

One example is when she was discussing secondary IVs — also called piggyback IVs — in the school’s skills lab.

"An Hispanic student raised his hand and asked, ‘What’s a piggyback?’ “ said Bradford, RN, CPN, MSN. “I realized then that idioms aren’t universal and that there was an area of our nursing education we needed to address.”

After reading student surveys from class and from a language support group for ESL students, Sue Buchholz spotted a problem.

"Phrases that we commonly used on tests or in class — things like ‘bear with me,’ ‘she’s tied up,’ ‘don’t drink the Kool-Aid’ or ‘get the chip off your shoulder’ — could be stumbling blocks to international students, “ said Buchholz, an associate professor of nursing at Georgia Perimeter.

"Apps were growing by leaps and bounds, and we thought an app would be most useful because students could access it instantly from their mobile devices, “ said Buchholz, RN, BSN. 

The two instructors proposed the idea at a Health Information Technology Scholars conference two years ago and earned a grant to take classes that would help them integrate technology into nursing education.

"Other nurses had proposed ideas that involved simulation or using the Web’s ‘Second Life’ game, but an app was a unique idea, “ Buchholz said. "Other nurses told us to let them know when we finished it, because they had the same problem in their departments. Wakita is a computer geek who built her own computer and wanted to learn how to create an app, so we figured if we had to do it, she was our best bet.”

The GPC Nursing Idiomatic app launched on March 26, but neither woman expected it to take two years to accomplish that.

"I first took a GPC technology course on developing apps to see if it was even doable, “ Bradford said. "I had done some programming years ago, and Sculdi didn’t look too difficult to learn, but in order to create a mobile-based app, we needed a MacBook Pro computer.”

Every instructor at Georgia Perimeter receives a PC, but the head of the nursing department at the time offered grant money to help purchase a MacBook Pro. "She realized how to use the computer and then became fluent in Swift, " said Buchholz.

Buchholz taught himself HTML, YouTube videos and effectively taught himself to be the Steve Van Brakle in our technology department.

"The app, which was launched in March, helps nursing students understand English idioms and common homonyms and homophones. "We know that this will help our ESL students do better in school and become better nurses, “ Buchholz said. 

Georgia Perimeter College instructors Wakita R. Bradford (left) and Sue Buchholz designed an app for nursing students who speak English as a second language.  Photos by LEITA COWART / SPECIAL
Kids

Continued from Page 8

therapy.

“Our staff ratio is one staff member for every three children and we all work as a team to create individual case management for every child,” she said.

It takes a special person to work with children who have complex health issues. It’s a career, not a job.

“All of our staff need at least two years of pediatric experience,” Graves said. “They need compassion and they also need to think independently because they never know what they’ll encounter.”

The staff celebrates every developmental milestone because a first step is even more precious to parents who wondered if their children would ever walk.

Caregivers must be capable of making quick decisions, including whether a condition warrants calling 911.

“Besides caring for the children, we are helping parents who could not work if we were not here,” Graves said. “Here, they find a team of professionals who know their children and can answer questions and provide support.”

Graves often gives her personal phone number to parents so they can call her over the weekend for advice.

“If meeting other parents who understand the challenges is a great benefit to our families,” she said. “No one chooses to parent a medically fragile child. It’s an overwhelming job, and I admire the way our parents do it.”

Besides regular conferences and educational sessions, the staff at Pediatria believes in the importance of family events. For Halloween last year, they decorated the center with hay bales and pumpkins, set up carnival games for the children and hosted a chili supper for the parents.

“Being around other children provides the socialization children need to be successful in a school setting later,” Graves said. “They make friends and learn from each other. You can tell even when the nonverbal ones are participating. Their smiles are wonderful.”

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Aug. 19-21
The Emory diabetes educator certificate course at Grady will be at the Emory Faculty Office Building (49 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive in Atlanta). This seminar is open to nurses, dietitians, pharmacists, social workers and others interested in the management and education of people with diabetes. Professionals preparing to take the certified diabetes educator exam should find the course helpful. Attendees must have a degree or diploma in a health profession. The course is also open to students preparing to take a licensure examination. The cost, which includes materials, is $375. For information, contact Britt Rotberg at 404-616-7417 or britt.rotberg@emory.edu, or go to www.medicine.emory.edu/diabetescourse.

Oct. 23-35
The Georgia Nurses Association’s 2013 Professional Development Conference and Membership Assembly will be at the Augusta Marriott. The event will feature continuing education sessions, poster presentations and networking opportunities. Doug Krug, a nationally recognized management consultant and author of “The Missing Piece in Leadership,” will be the keynote speaker. The early-bird cost is $249 for members, $249 for students and $419 for nonmembers, all through Aug. 31. For information, go to www.georgianurses.org/conference.htm.

Contact us
To publicize a continuing education event, send email to jbrieske@ajc.com. The deadline for publication is the 10th of the month prior to the event.
Clayton State MHA program, prof honored

The Clayton State University master’s of health administration program and program director Thomas McIlwain were recently honored for excellence.

Clayton State’s MHA program was recognized by MastersDegreeOnline.org as one of the best schools and programs in the nation in its annual college program ranking, one of only 41 such programs to be honored. MastersDegreeOnline.org, a leading resource for graduate education, features a directory with more than 90,000 program listings for prospective students.

McIlwain was identified by MHA Guide as one of the nation’s “100 Great Health Administration Professors.” The criteria for the list is based on the personal achievements and leadership positions of the professors, as well as the reputation of their respective institutions.

MHA Guide is an independent publishing company focused on health care administration careers and degrees, and is also a directory of health care administration programs on the web.

• New director: Cynthia May, a clinical nurse specialist with 22 years of administrative experience, has joined St. Joseph’s Hospital in Atlanta as specialty director for acute care.

May, RN, came from Harrison Medical Center in Bremerton, Wash., where she was vice president, executive director/chief nursing officer. In that role, she had administrative oversight for nursing and led teams to improve core measures, quality initiatives, and pharmacy and practice protocols.

Throughout her career, May has focused on quality care and ensuring that nurses and staff have the training, experience and tools necessary to provide exceptional care.

“Cindy May built her career and skills as a stellar nurse and leader,” said Joyce Soule, RN, vice president of patient care services and chief nursing officer. “We are thrilled that she is bringing her experience and dedication to our St. Joseph’s family.”

• Research grant: The University of Georgia Research Foundation received a $3.4 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to expand its research on how to eliminate schistosomiasis, a debilitating tropical disease that affects millions of people. This recent award adds to an $18.7 million grant awarded to UGA by the Gates Foundation in 2008, bringing the funding total to more than $22 million.

Researchers will use the additional money to find out how to move from repeatedly treating infected people to eliminating the parasitic disease, which is caused by several species of worms.

“This is going to take combining a number of interventions,” said Dan Colley, director of the Center for Tropical and Emerging Global Diseases, a microbiologist in UGA’s Franklin College of Arts and Sciences and principal investigator for the project. “We’re going to have to knock it down at several points along the line, and keep doing that long enough for the disease to disappear in a given area.”

UGA researchers and partners from other institutions working as part of the Schistosomiasis Consortium for Operational Research and Evaluation are already looking for countries or districts in Africa to partner with on the project.

• DAISY winner: Leslie Branson, an intensive care unit nurse at Piedmont Fayette Hospital, has been named winner of the DAISY (Diseases Attacking the Immune System) Award for Extraordinary Nurses.

The DAISY program is part of a national program honoring nurses for their clinical skills and compassionate care for patients and their families. Honorees are selected quarterly by a selection committee and nursing administration team.

Branson, a 2009 graduate of Clayton State University, was nominated by a patient’s family.

The not-for-profit DAISY Foundation was established by family members in memory of J. Patrick Barnes, who died at the age of 33 in 1999 from complications of idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura.

Contact us
Do you have any news briefs for Rapid Pulse? If so, send an email to jbrieske@ajc.com or call 404-526-5664.
Campers

and realized that students began thinking about careers earlier, so they opened the camp to middle school students and to anyone with an interest in a health care profession.

“I love working with these young people, to see their enthusiasm and how they grow through the week,” Barnes said. “At first, they say they want to be neurosurgeons, but by the end of the week more are talking about nursing, and that’s good. Our aim is to give a good introduction to the profession.”

The first day of camp, faculty members and nursing students talk about the things nurses do. The campers also learn about college life and take an assessment test to see how they learn best. The campers spend the second day in the nursing skills lab, trying their hand at administering shots, taking vital signs and starting IV lines.

“That’s when the students begin to loosen up and talk to one another and have fun,” Barnes said.

Campers spend a day at Grady Memorial Hospital, where the older students shadow nurses and the younger ones take a tour. They spend a day learning how to perform CPR and earning certification.

“You can talk about nursing all you want, but you really gain a lot of insight when you start learning some of the skills,” said Madison McNeill, who graduated last May from Paragon Academy in Conyers. “I took an anatomy and physiology class in my junior year and discovered I had an interest. I began looking at professions where I could pursue that interest.”

A friend at church suggested the nursing camp.

“It was a great way to get your foot in the door and see what nursing is all about. I especially liked getting to shadow a nurse at Grady to see what she did every day,” McNeill said. “The camp reinforced my plans and made me more comfortable about pursuing nursing.”

This month, McNeill will start classes at Kennesaw State University, a college she selected because of its nursing program. “I’m dedicated to working hard and I hope that I’ll be accepted into the nursing program when the time comes.”

The camp showed McNeill the wide range of nursing jobs.

“The versatility is one of the reasons I decided on nursing,” she said. “I want to help people, but I want my job to be fun, too. With nursing, it sounds like you never have to be bored. There’s always something else you can do.”

App

He was an enormous help in answering my questions and helping me get past hurdles,” Bradford said. “It’s one thing to know what you want to do, and another to get there. In the long run, I guess I was more stubborn than the program.”

Buchholz gave up the idea of helping with programming after reading one chapter of “Apps for Dummies.” Instead, she scoured nursing exams and student surveys to find idioms to include in the app and helped Bradford write definitions for the expressions.

The app includes an alphabetized directory of more than 200 idioms, a section that explains common homonyms (words that share the same spelling but have different meanings) and homophones (words that sound the same but are spelled differently).

“We also included a link to the Google Translate site, which is a great help to clinicians in the field when treating foreign patients,” Bradford said.

She is proud that the free app was accepted by Apple Inc. without revisions.

“We plan to add more expressions over time, and maybe some pictures. Our next step is to create a version for the Android platform, but for now, it’s very rewarding to have completed this project,” Buchholz said.

Other nursing schools have already asked to use the app.

“We know that this will help our ESL students do better in school and become better nurses,” Buchholz said.

If just one student sees it and uses it, the app will be worth all the effort, Bradford said. “I always think of that one student who was brave enough to raise his hand. How many others never did?”

“We want our students to be active learners and to be engaged practitioners. If they’re pulling out devices and looking things up in class or lab, that’s fine with me. We didn’t create this app for fame and fortune. We did it for students.”

This article was reprinted from The Atlanta Journal-Constitution’s EDU Atlanta special section.
Infusion nurse Amanda Woodward administers chemotherapy to Gary Scranage at Cancer Treatment Centers of America at Southeastern Regional Medical Center in Newnan. LEITA COWART / SPECIAL

Eventful year

Continued from Page 9

of communicator for the infusion center. She keeps constant contact with the center’s clinics and care teams to learn more about infusion patients.

“I’ve learned so much about starting a hospital from scratch in this job, not just about how to stock an infusion center and where to put things, but about the processes and relationships that make it function,” Woodward said.

Continuity of care

Because all surgical, therapeutic and complementary services are under one roof, CTCA Southeastern is different from traditional hospitals. Something else that sets it apart is its Mother Standard of care, which means employees are charged with treating every patient as they would their own mother.

“Compassionate and nurturing care is our culture and we brought the majority of our executive team from other centers to ensure that it would continue,” said Gloria Barnes, chief nursing officer and assistant vice president of patient care services.

Nurses were hired six weeks before the Newnan hospital opened. They began learning procedures and processes on the computer, as well as how to identify and solve problems as the hospital came to life.

“We incorporate Six Sigma Green Belt training into all our units,” said Barnes, RN, MSN. “We listen to our staff and when they have a concern, they feel comfortable speaking up.”

In the last six months, her nursing team has reduced the patient call light response time to less than three minutes — 100 percent of the time.

“That means they are actually in the room, not just picking up the phone,” she said.

The infusion staff has streamlined the time it takes to start a patient’s medication.

“We’re now at less than 14 minutes to the hanging of the first bag, an accomplishment that contributes to our 90 percent patient satisfaction rate,” she said.

Barnes helped open CTCA’s Tulsa center 23 years ago and relished transferring her knowledge and passion to Newnan.

“For a brand-new hospital, the speed at which we’ve grown has been remarkable,” Barnes said.

It’s been a steep climb. Bridgett Thomas, house supervisor for patient care, has seen the staff grow from 178 to 450 in a year.

“It’s exciting to be part of this brand-new facility and atmosphere, but the growth has been challenging,” said Thomas, RN, BSN, ONS. “Our in-patient population can fluctuate from two to 20 in a week, so we come together to find the best practices and work through it. So far, we haven’t hit a roadblock.”

Previously a med/surge and travel nurse, Thomas was impressed by how she was welcomed at CTCA Southeastern.

“It’s like you’ve been adopted into a family. You’re valued and you’re there to help your patient find a better quality of life,” she said. “You can show your compassion, share positive energy and hugs. When my patients graduate from treatment, we grab the pom-poms and cheer. You don’t see that at many places.”

When she was a travel nurse, it was easy for Thomas to pick up and quit a job when she didn’t like something. Now she has no intentions of leaving. “I’m home,” she said.

“We made a celebration-of-life video for our unit,” she added. “We did the Harlem Shake, and I can’t wait to see it. We’ve had so many milestones to celebrate in our first year.”

“It’s exciting to be part of this brand-new facility and atmosphere, but the growth has been challenging. Our in-patient population can fluctuate from two to 20 in a week, so we come together to find the best practices and work through it. So far, we haven’t hit a roadblock.”

Bridgett Thomas, house supervisor for patient care, Cancer Treatment Centers of America at Southeastern Regional Medical Center

Opportunity for Visionary Educator

Georgia State University – An inclusive and diverse community dedicated to the transformative power of learning.

Join an exciting Research 1 institution in Atlanta and contribute to change and growth in the School of Nursing at the Byrdine F. Lewis School of Nursing and Health Professions by leading the new Doctor of Nursing Practice program that begins Fall 2013.

This experienced educator will lead curriculum development and evaluation, student recruitment, budgeting, as well as faculty and resource development. The ideal candidate will be eligible for appointment as associate professor and will report to the assistant dean of the School of Nursing at the Byrdine F. Lewis School of Nursing & Health Professions.

Candidates must hold an earned doctorate in nursing or a related field; a master’s degree in a specialty area of nursing; two years of teaching experience at the graduate level; service and scholarly record commensurate with the rank of associate professor or higher. Candidates will be either an experienced advanced practice nurse or have a record of scholarship in health systems research. Desired appointment date is August 1, 2013 or as soon as practical thereafter. Salary will be commensurate with credentials. Applications will be accepted until position is filled.

Georgia State University is the second largest university in the state, with students coming from every county in Georgia, every state in the nation and from over 120 countries. The successful candidate will be committed to moving the strategic plan of The Lewis School forward toward achieving our vision of being the premier school for the education of health professionals in the southeastern United States.

Interested applicants should send their CV and letter of interest to Dr. Joan Cranford at jcranford2@gsu.edu. Visit us on the web at nursing.gsu.edu.
SCHOOL

Continued from Page 11

“I loved the technology and it took me in a totally different direction,” she said.

After finishing her master’s degree, Johnson enrolled in a hybrid Ph.D. program at Georgia Baptist College of Nursing in summer 2012.

“The first day was scary. I was worried about the online environment and scared that everyone knew more than me,” she said.

But a good instructor helped the class to bond.

“Online is a great learning environment and if I can do it, anyone can. I didn’t even have PowerPoint in nursing school,” Johnson said.

Going to school and working requires a balancing act. Johnson works four days a week and meets with her classes on Thursday afternoons and all day on Fridays. She gets tired at night, so she only works on short homework assignments then and saves large projects for the weekend.

“You have to know your limits when you go back to school,” she said.

An understanding boss, a flexible schedule, having three college-age vs. young children, and a retired husband willing to run the household help her manage the load.

“I’m multitasking more than I ever have in my life, but going back to school allows you to see nursing from a different side and expand your horizons,” Johnson said.

She enrolled in the doctorate program in order to teach nursing at some point, but her manager is helping her see new opportunities in simulation research.

“I love encouraging nurses to go back to school. Better-educated nurses are the wave of the future.”

Adrienne Harris, charge nurse, interim director, fourth floor surgical unit, Emory Johns Creek Hospital

and enrolled in an online program through the University of South Alabama, losing a semester of credits in the transfer but saving her sanity.

“I’ve had to learn how to raise my hand online and research virtually, but graduate school is different in a more fundamental way,” she said. “It’s more serious and I’ve realized that I’m not just being taught by experts. I’m an expert, too, because of my work experience. They’re pushing me to become a more independent professional.”

Harris studies every day, even during halftime at her son’s soccer games and on vacation. She and her son coordinate their schedules on Google Calendar.

Harris has also made sacrifices. She no longer plays piano or participates in live theater.

“The arts had to go, but I’m still a pro-am ballroom (dancing) competitor, because you have to have a stress outlet,” she said.

As an interim director of her unit, Harris must approve requests for her staff members who want to go back to school.

“I love helping them get down to the nitty-gritty of what they want to do with the education, and we talk about the time commitment, planning and the sacrifices,” she said.

“I love encouraging nurses to go back to school.

“Better-educated nurses are the wave of the future. We’re the ones who are going to help get health care where it needs to be.”

NOW HIRING!

Immediate Opportunities in a Physician’s Office Infusion Center:

Travel RN - Nationwide
FT Infusion Coordinator - Fayetteville, GA
FT & PRN Staff Nurse - Macon, GA

Responsibilities:
- Coordinates care with pharmacy, physician, and patient
- Performs comprehensive nursing assessment for each patient
- Manages IV access
- Educates patients on medication, administration, and the disease process
- Monitors patient safety and follow-up
- Manages the nursing functions of the Office Infusion Center

Requirements:
- At least two years’ experience as an RN
- Home infusion experience is a plus
- Strong communication skills
- Strong IV skills

To apply or learn more, visit us online at www.healix.net.

T: 1.886.654.2614
F: 1.855.488.3343
E: clinicalemployment@healix.net

#2013 Healix, Inc.

What you’re looking for...

Hamilton Health Care System understands what you are looking for in a health care career. On the forefront of medical treatment and diagnosis, Hamilton has an excellent salary/benefits package that includes health and dental coverage, life insurance, retirement plan, and much more.

We are seeking team-oriented professionals with a commitment to patient-centered care.

NEONATAL NURSE PRACTITIONER
PRN (as needed)

For inquiries, please call Human Resources at 706.272.6145.

Apply online at www.hamiltonhealth.com

EOE M/F/D/V Drug-Free Workplace

For 29 years, nurse finds new energy at camp

By Gracie Bonds Staples
For Pulse

It had been three days since the first week of Camp Sunshine ended, and Colleen Austin had returned to her post at the Aflac Cancer Center of Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta. And she was still pumped.

For five days, she’d watched 232 teens – some angry, some afraid, some sad about what cancer had stolen from them – take back their lives.

“They get to be kids again,” Austin said. “They get to be happy the way kids should be.”

And so every year for the past 29, Austin has returned to Camp Sunshine in search of such moments, the ones recorded in pictures on her iPhone, the ones embodied in the 29 bracelets dangling on her left wrist.

When she began in 1983, it was on her own time. Now Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta gives her the week off with pay.

Austin is one of about 50 Children’s Healthcare employees who volunteer each year at Camp Sunshine, said Linda Matzigkeit, chief administration officer at Children’s.

“Employees at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta are very nurturing and innate caregivers. We work very hard to give our people the support, both personally and professionally, to learn, grow and give back,” Matzigkeit said.

Austin described volunteering at Camp Sunshine as “career changing,” as it made her realize how important her work in pediatric oncology is to Children’s Healthcare patients and families.

As she played with the bracelets on her wrist the other day, she remembered a 7-year-old boy who gave her her first camp bracelet and hug. His one goal was to sleep on the top bunk because he’d never done that before.

“The first night he fell off and got a black eye, but it was like a badge of courage for him,” she said. “They made him a cape and he became Superman.”

Four months later he died from acute myeloid leukemia. But for that one week “he stepped out of his illness and back into his childhood,” Austin said. “That’s why I do this.”

It’s also why every June, she dons her camp bracelets — 29 strings of fishing lures and beads for each year of camp — and wears them for the entire month.

Each one reminds her of the children she has helped reclaim their childhood and the bonds fostered at Camp Sunshine.

“We’re constantly reminded that it’s their journey,” she said. “But it’s our journey too and we’re important players in that journey.”

A longer version of this article ran in The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.
Continued from Page 5

Daleis Hamrick counsels a chronically ill patient over the phone. LEITA COWART/SPECIAL

Clinicians, said Baker, director of clinical services for Piedmont Medical Care Corp. (the parent company of Piedmont Physicians Group).

“Nurses don’t usually learn counseling skills in nursing school,” said Baker, BSN, RN. “They said that the information and skills they learned shed new light on patient behaviors and what coaches could do to foster health.”

Health coaching is the wave of the future because it fits with national health care initiatives and Piedmont Health-care’s goals to provide better quality care and customer service at a lower cost, Baker said.

“By increasing a patient’s ability to self-manage his disease, Piedmont can reduce emergency room visits and re-admissions to the hospital,” Freeman said.

Health coaches are trained to interpret medical data to identify at-risk patients who may need more attention.

“They call patients to learn what barriers are preventing them from making appointments, having tests done or taking their medications,” Baker said.

Coaches can interpret test results and explain disease progression. They help patients make plans to achieve optimal health and find resources.

“Patients may not know about Wal-Mart’s 54 prescriptions or that their insurer offers free stress-management classes or nicotine patches,” Baker said.

“Health coaching is an extension of the primary care and the patients love it. They can’t believe that someone in the doctor’s office would call them to discuss their health.”

Transition period

Figuring out how to use her new skills is taking a little time, like learning to drive a stick shift, said Daleis Hamrick, health coach for Piedmont’s Medical Home, a concept for improving primary care for patients.

“It’s a different approach, so I have to think about how I want to talk to each patient,” said Hamrick, RN, BSN, CHC.

“Nurses are used to telling their patients what to do and fixing things. As coaches, we’re teaching, asking them what they want to do and helping them set their own goals and be accountable.

“It’s patient-driven and that makes sense because I may talk to patients three times a year, but they are with themselves 24/7 and have to live with the results of how they manage, or don’t manage their health.”

The course helped Hamrick think about her own ways of learning and communicating, and to recognize that others learn differently. For a diabetic who is a visual learner, a picture of a plate with appropriate portion sizes is more effective than a brochure about diet, for instance.

“From our readings and role playing, I learned a lot about motivational interviewing, which is the way we draw patients out to learn about their conditions and see how they are addressing their issues,” said Joann Gorrell, health coach with Piedmont’s Medical Home.

“I’ve been a nurse for a long time, and I had heard about motivational interviewing, but I wasn’t clear on the process, so this program really helped me,” said Gorrell, BSN, RN, CHC. “All the evidence shows that the way we’ve been treating chronic illness isn’t working. The population is heavier, and there’s more diabetes than ever. We have to try something different.

“Am I sure this will work? Well, the verdict is still out. It all goes back to people taking responsibility and how well we can encourage and motivate them to do that.”

Hamrick is confident that the team will put forth the effort required to make a difference.

“Gorrell will do everything she can to discover the barriers to noncompliance with her patients and to see that they get the services they need,” she said. “Sometimes that means having the ‘stick-to-itiveness’ to break through bureaucratic red tape. Health coaches are the epitome of patient advocates, and we all work together as a team.”

Both nurses believe that coaching skills have helped them improve patient outcomes.

“I’m more cognizant of how I talk with patients. I take the time to listen, and my patients like having someone they can check in with,” Hamrick said.
Where commitment meets excellence

As a nurse, you have many options in your nursing career. At DeKalb Medical, we are seeking nurses just like yourself who value a commitment to excellence and compassion. The unique talents and specialized skills of our people continue to earn our patients’ trust, every day.

We currently have outstanding leadership, education and staff nursing opportunities available in a variety of areas:

Med-Surg • Women’s Services • Critical Care • Emergency • Surgery

DeKalb Medical at North Decatur
DeKalb Medical at Hillandale
DeKalb Medical at Downtown Decatur

DeKalb Medical is more than just a hospital—we are a not-for-profit health system, composed of three hospital campuses, known for our premier clinical services, the latest technological advances and a caring and highly trained staff.

▶ DeKalb Medical is truly a place to learn and grow in your nursing career.
▶ We have an open communication policy and a strong support system in place—from senior leadership to peer networking.
▶ We excel at matching nurses to roles that showcase their strengths and highlight their expertise.

Realize your potential and bring your nursing talents to DeKalb Medical.

For more information or to be contacted by one of our nurse recruiters, visit us at: www.jobs.dekalbnurse.com

To apply for one of our outstanding nursing opportunities, visit us via mobile or online at: www.dekalbmedical.org/careers. EOE