Nursing Academies have been established across the country to address the shortage of nurses in critical service areas. Crouse Hospital has become the first local hospital to embrace this concept to meet the demand for nurses specially trained to join key units. This new initiative embraces Crouse Vision 2, building a dynamic work environment where all are valued, respected and are provided the opportunity for personal and professional growth.

The first such nursing academy at Crouse, developed in partnership with the Crouse Hospital School of Nursing, has begun in preparation for the opening of the state-of-the-art Witting Surgical Center in 2011.

**Perioperative Academy Welcomes First Class**

Employees in the Perioperative Nursing Academy will spend time training in this “mock” OR, housed in the Marley Education Center. The training room replicates one of the 18 rooms planned for the new OR suite.

The Perioperative Nursing Academy is forming its first class, which is ready to begin a nine to 12 month in-depth orientation to the challenges and rewards of the surgical suite. A second class is expected to be formed early next year. Acceptance is competitive, and internal and external candidates who are selected and enter the academy will remain...
Quality Coaches Help Units Create Winning Outcomes

by Betty O'Connor

Last fall Crouse Hospital participated in “Quality Coaches,” a quality initiative sponsored by The Greater New York Hospital Association. More than fifty hospital employees, including bedside staff, participated in a two-day seminar designed to prepare them for guiding the hospital in future quality initiatives.

The seminar prepared staff by teaching them more about the national patient safety and quality goals, the importance of patient satisfaction and methods for coaching peers.

A quality coach is a member of the hospital staff who leads, supports, mentors and informs peers and other members of the healthcare team as they work to improve quality outcomes. To further improve patient care, a quality coach will also communicate to their immediate supervisor barriers and issues related to patient safety and quality.

Quality coaches use their coaching skills within their already defined hospital duties, and take advantage of everyday work opportunities to improve patient care, patient flow, communication and the environment in which they work. For example, a tray passer from dietary may notice that a patient’s call light has gone unanswered. Instead of merely ignoring this situation, the tray passer would ask the patient about his or her need and would then find a floor staff member to tend to the patient.

Through their enhanced role, quality coaches endeavor to encourage all of us to improve the service we provide to patients.

The first project that unit quality coaches have been asked to assist the Nursing Department with is our Patient Satisfaction Project. Each unit is working to improve responsiveness to call lights, providing patients with thorough information about their health condition and one unit-specific item. The nursing units receive an updated graph from Quality Improvement showing the unit’s progress with the project each month.

Based on the data, the quality coaches from nursing will coach and mentor their colleagues to design and implement improvements. The quality coaches will need the passion you bring for improving patient care. Find out who the quality coach on your unit is and offer to help!

Perioperative Academy

continued from page 1

Crouse Hospital has recently subscribed to the national surgical quality improvement program (NSQIP). This is a powerful risk-adjusted surgical program that will allow us to evaluate our surgical outcomes and benchmark them with other hospitals across the country.

Lynne Wolfe, RN, is the surgical clinical nurse reviewer (SCNR) for the program. Her role is to collect 97 data points on surgical patients. This includes pre-op, intra-operative, and 30 day’s post-op data, which is then collated into risk-adjusted observed-to-expected ratios (O/E).

Dennis Brown, MD, is the surgical champion for the program. His role is to interpret the data, present it to the surgical staff and develop processes of patient care improvement.

For more details about the program, contact Lynne Wolfe at x2735.

Currently, the perioperative area is the only nursing academy being offered, but various specialties are being considered for future nursing academies at Crouse. The Perioperative Academy, and any others to be established, provide unique career advancement opportunities for mission-focused RNs and recent nursing school graduates.

The academy experience includes PeriOp 101 (an online course developed by AORN); hands-on training in our state-of-the-art simulation lab; specially trained mentors and preceptors; newly-developed service-specific clinical pathways; and ongoing feedback and evaluation.

Those selected are employees of the hospital and are expected to remain with their area of specialty for two years after completing the academy.

To learn more about future nursing academies at Crouse, contact Human Resources at x7521.
Imagine being pregnant, in a high-risk situation, having to endure long stretches of bed rest, not at home, but in the Kienzle Family Maternity Center.

Our nursing team on 7 South Irving cares for antepartum moms who require extended stays, some up to 8 to 12 weeks. We wanted to do something to help patients get through this stressful time, especially because many of their families are often out-of-town.

The “Glow as You Grow” program was born. We want to keep our patients occupied, so we provide access to laptop computers and DVD players, along with a collection of movies, magazines, books, puzzles, games and cards for their enjoyment. Many of these items were purchased or donated by members of our staff. We are indebted to the Gigliotti Family, who established the Molly Fund, which provides sundry and entertainment items for our moms-to-be. This fund, through Crouse Health Foundation, has helped Glow as You Grow go from idea to reality.

Beyond keeping patients engaged, we wanted to make them feel pampered and cared for. Partnering with Volunteer Services, the program features a licensed massage therapist who visits once a week and offers neck, face, hand, and foot massages, all with the consent and approval of the patient’s physician. Wayne Gilbert, LMT, has been volunteering his services.

The massage work is done with light pressure, and the soft, rhythmic strokes of massage on skin and muscles can allow the body to relax and the mind to rest, as well as promote circulation. Another important benefit is the break in the hospital routine it provides. A full massage session lasts 15 to 20 minutes; the feeling of relaxation lasts far longer.

This service is available to enhance comfort and well being, as is pet therapy at the bedside, for patients who miss their pets back home. Specially trained pets, with their handlers, visit the bedside of patients seeking this form of comfort therapy. For those seeking diversional relaxation therapies, Reiki is also available to our patients.

We also provide constant encouragement, and post a pretty certificate of achievement in a patient’s room for each week of difficult pregnancy she successfully completes.

The evaluations we receive from patients indicate they love the program. As one patient stated, Glow as You Grow “differentiates Crouse Hospital from other hospitals.”

Belinda Blanck is a Charge Nurse in the Kienzle Family Maternity Center on 7 Irving. She can be reached at x7778 or belindablank@crouse.org.

Retired Crouse Nurses Gather for Bi-annual Reunion

The Crouse Retirees Group keeps alive the spirit of camaraderie and pride former employees shared while working at Crouse Hospital. Each June and October, retired Crouse nurses and employees from other departments gather at Barbagallo’s in East Syracuse to exchange current news in their lives and remember their time as active members of the Crouse team. A special treat for the former nurses at each June event is the presence of Lu Hymes, a long-time Director of Nursing at Crouse, beloved by many of her colleagues. Lu travels from Florida for the reunion. Ellie Sorbello and Jan Bonnell coordinate the get-togethers. If you are retired from Crouse, or know someone else who is, the Crouse Retirees Group invites you to join in the fun. Contact Barb Ferro at 315-470-5905 for information.

Retired Crouse nurses and other employees met during their June 2008 reunion, including former Director of Nursing Lu Hymes, in the first standing row, third from the right.
An Ounce of Prevention

Lutein Reduces Macular Degeneration Risk

by Liz Casazza

When taking care of yourself, don’t forget your eyes. We can each take measures to prevent injury and promote eye health.

The Central New York summer is a great time to enjoy all types of outdoor activity, so don’t forget your sunglasses. Make sure those stylish shades have both UVA and UVB protection. The sunglasses should cover from the eyebrow to the top of the cheek and wrap around the sides to give maximum protection. Your anonymity is protected along with your eyesight behind those Foster Grants!

Now for the inside scoop on eye health. Lutein is the major carotenoid found in the macula in the retina. According to the University of Michigan Healthwise Knowledgebase, people with the highest intake of dietary lutein have a more than 50% risk reduction for macular degeneration, a major cause of blindness. Lutein also reduces the risk of cataract development.

Lutein is an antioxidant in the carotenoid family found in green leafy vegetable like kale, spinach, romaine lettuce, peas and egg yolks. If you find that these are not in your diet in adequate supply, oral supplements are available in a variety of over-the-counter vitamin preparations.

For more information, visit the University of Michigan website at www.med.umich.edu/healthcontent or your healthcare provider for more details. And have a healthy green meal from the garden often this summer because your eyes need it.

A Pound of Cure

Diabetic Retinopathy: No More Sunsets and Rainbows

by Coleen Balch

A patient I recently cared for had a cavalier attitude about the diabetes he was not controlling. He wasn’t worried about potential complications despite the angina with which he had been admitted. As we talked, he confessed hearing about people losing legs and ending up on dialysis, but he never considered retinopathy and never saw an ophthalmologist.

He had no idea he should. Because he didn’t read much, I steered the conversation to things that are beautiful and asked him to consider a world where he could no longer enjoy sunsets and rainbows. This was the one thing that did bother him. And well it should, because once it happens there is little to change the progression to blindness.

Diabetic retinopathy is one of the leading causes of new cases of blindness in the adult population (ADA, 2008; Morello, 2007; Nguyen, & Do, 2003). Nearly all type I diabetics and most type IIIs will develop retinopathy. Even in its advanced stages retinopathy can be asymptomatic. Without treatment, microvascular occlusions occur just like they do in the coronary, renal, and peripheral vasculature, resulting in retinal ischemia and, eventually, proliferative retinopathy (ADA).

Treatments called laser photoocoagulation can be utilized, but a recent study demonstrated something interesting. Called the Early Treatment Diabetic Retinopathy Study (Singh, et al., 2006), it was found that truly strict glucose control combined with laser therapy provided a significantly improved outcome in 29.1% as compared with 21.3% in the partial glucose control group. With the emphasis now on tight glucose control, these low numbers should influence any diabetic not to hold out for the pound of cure lest there be no more sunsets and rainbows.

No matter who you talk to these days, it seems we are all under a lot of stress. Between job responsibilities, family routines and all the other activities that make up our daily lives, we are constantly on the go and running from place to place. The one sure thing about stress is that it will catch up with you at some point, affecting the immune system, pain levels, and your ability to cope.

One easy way to deal with stress is by receiving a Reiki treatment. Reiki is an age-old energy therapy technique brought to the forefront in the early 1900’s by Dr. Mikao Usui in Japan. A Reiki practitioner utilizes universal energy through a series of hand positions on the client’s body. What does that mean, you might ask.

The client usually feels a wonderful radiating heat coming from the practitioner’s hands. The client’s body absorbs the heat and uses it to unblock the body’s energy fields. Stress and pain are released, and most people feel a deep sense of relaxation and peace.

Reiki has been known to decrease muscle aches and headaches, among other discomforts, and boost the immune system, bringing the body back to a state of balance. One treatment is very effective, and the more sessions you receive, the more those effects are multiplied, increasing your sense of well-being. Reiki is very easy to learn, and a Reiki practitioner can also give self-treatments.

Reiki is used for patients and staff in many hospitals around the country and the world. Decreasing patients’ stress levels promotes faster healing and provides additional pain relief. Patients sleep better and recover more quickly. Reiki is a very caring and nurturing therapy we can offer our patients beyond the traditional medical regimen. You may want to visit www.reikiinhospitals.org to learn more about the benefits of Reiki and view the hospitals that are already offering this service.

Crouse Hospital is in the beginning stages of instituting a formal Reiki program for patients. Classes will be offered for interested staff, and a volunteer program is being set-up to provide Reiki treatments for patients by request.

Seek out a Reiki practitioner for a session. You’ll feel marvelous!

Joyce Appel, RNC, a Usui Reiki Master, works in the NICU from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. She can be reached at x7577 or joyceappel@crouse.org.

Career Fair Opportunities – We need you!

By Kathy Truex, Recruiter/Job Placement Coordinator
School of Nursing

We can all agree that recruiting potential students into the nursing field is a group effort. Bringing more qualified students into nursing school will, in turn, produce more qualified nurses in the field.

There has recently been a concerted effort to speak to students at younger ages to make them aware of what nurses do and the opportunities nursing has to offer. We receive several requests during the school year to speak at elementary, middle and high school career fairs. Each offers a slightly different venue but the message is the same: become a nurse, because we need you!

We are looking for interested nurses who could become Crouse Hospital and School of Nursing Ambassadors at these fairs and in response to other speaking requests the hospital receives during the year. The fairs are generally short, fun and always rewarding, and I can give you materials and ideas to get you started. Likewise, the speaking requests we receive don’t require much time, and the Communications Department can assist you in developing a presentation or handouts.

If you are interested in educating students about their future in nursing, please contact me so I can make you aware of events this fall. I can be reached at x2711 or by e-mail kathytruex@couse.org. If you are also interested in talking to community groups about a specific nursing topic or medical specialty, contact Cheryl Abrams, who coordinates our Speakers Bureau, at x7123 or at cherylabrams@crouse.org.

Think about becoming an Ambassador—you could change a life!
Nurse Of The Year

Heidi H. Cross was selected as the recipient of UOAA’s WOC Nurse of the Year Award for 2008. Heidi, now with SUNY Upstate Medical University, has been affiliated with Crouse for some time. She continues to organize and run the Ostomy Support Group at Crouse.

The United Ostomy Associations of America, or UOAA, is a national association of affiliated, non-profit support groups who are committed to the improvement of the quality of life of people who have, or will have an intestinal or urinary diversion. Each year the 262 affiliated support groups of UOAA are requested to nominate a WOC Nurse who has contributed of their time and professional talent to make their group’s mission attainable.

Based upon the submission by the President of the Crouse Hospital Ostomy Support Group, the Selection Committee rated Heidi Cross as the most qualified and worthy nominee for this year’s award. She has touched the lives of countless patients and contributed directly to their surgical rehabilitation and adjustment to their new life situation.

Integrative Medicine in Modern Healthcare Conference
Saturday, September 20 - 7:30 to 2:45 p.m.
Marley Education Center

For Physicians, Physician Assistants and Nurses

Join us to learn more about the science, theories and modalities of integrative medicine that patients today are increasingly seeking to augment their traditional medical care.

For information, call 315/470-7441 or email IntegrativeMed@crouse.org.

Accreditation Statement

This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the Essential Areas and policies of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) through the joint sponsorship of SUNY Upstate Medical University and Crouse Hospital. SUNY Upstate Medical University is accredited by the ACCME to provide continuing medical education for physicians. SUNY Upstate Medical University designates this educational activity for a maximum of 5 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)™.

Crouse Hospital Educational Services is an approved provider of continuing nursing education by the New York State Nurses Association, an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Commission on Accreditation.

5.5 contact hours

Nursing + Computers = Dream Job at Crouse

by Suzanne Badman

I am a proud 1989 Crouse Hospital School of Nursing graduate, and have worked as a nurse for 19 years in various specialties, including Med-Surg, Telemetry, Nursery, Extra Care Nursery, Post-partum, Labor and Delivery, Medical-Psychiatric and as a Quality Improvement Manager. My undergraduate degree is in Philosophy (Medical Ethics). I have taken many computer and programming courses, and am currently working on a master’s of Information Science at Syracuse University.

Here at Crouse, I found the perfect marriage of my nursing education and experience and my computer skills and interest. Last April, I became a Clinical Information System Specialist in the Information Technology Department.

My background has laid the foundation for this exciting position in which I am tasked to implement the nursing assessments into the computerized formats. This is a dream job for me, as it requires me to pull from all my experiences and create something that will affect each patient who enters our doors.

Working under the direction of Victor Convertino RN, BSBM, CNOR, Senior Project Manager, the computer programmers and I, along with nursing leadership, are actively discussing each assessment screen for wording to reflect accuracy of current practice.

State, agency, federal regulations, as well as hospital policy and procedures, are continually being reviewed to ensure the most effective system that reflects the highest level of safety for the patient, their families, and our hospital including our nurses and physicians as well as all the other departments that make our facility “Simply the Best.” Education for the roll-out units will begin in mid-August and continue until go-live in September this year.

If you have any questions about my role at Crouse, or the nursing assessment screen project, please email me at suzannebadman@crouse.org or call x8955.
School of Nursing Recognizes Graduates

Crouse Hospital School of Nursing recently recognized 69 graduates at its 92nd annual commencement ceremony on May 24 at Hendricks Chapel on the Syracuse University campus. Keynote speaker was Rebecca M. Patton MSN, RN, CNOR, president of the American Nurses Association, the nation’s leading professional nursing organization representing the major health policy, practice, and workplace issues of registered nurses in the United States.

This year’s Award of Excellence, presented to the student who demonstrates excellence in academics and who has made significant contributions to the school and the nursing profession, went to Jennifer Scutari. The Clinical Excellence Award for excellence in clinical practice was presented to Desiree McCoy and Heather Waldron. Erin Heberle earned the Crouse Hospital Nurses Alumni Award for a student continuing on with her nursing education. Stephen Stewart received the Faculty Leadership Award, which goes to a student who is a leader among his/her classmates.

Bragging Rights

Candy Nestor from the NICU received her BSN from Utica College.

Elizabeth Bonham graduated from SUNY Upstate Medical University with a BSN.

Julie Corsoniti, who is pursuing her MS degree at Le Moyne College, was inducted into the Nursing Honor Society in May.

Jackie Carr recently completed her bachelor’s degree in Nursing from Keuka College.

Jennifer Dunbar, a licensed practical nurse, graduated from the Crouse Hospital School of Nursing. She will remain in the Recovery Care Center as a Registered Nurse.

Linda Soukup and Rusty Haas from the Emergency Department obtained their National Certifications in Emergency Nursing (CEN).

Pat Mahony, Teri Marks, Michele Popps and Diane Willis obtained their Critical Care Certifications (CCRN).

Deborah Patterson attended the WOCN National Conference in Orlando in June, where she updated her knowledge on the latest techniques and products. In early July, she served as a WOC nurse at a camp in San Diego for amazing teens called The Youth Rally, a gathering of 100 or so teens from all over the country who have diversions of the bowel or bladder.

Faculty member Debby Farnsworth received her master’s degree in Nursing from SUNY Upstate Medical University this past May.

Faculty member Pattie Amedro was recently inducted into the Omicron Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau, the international nursing honor society, based on her academic success, leadership in nursing and professional achievements throughout her nursing career.

Brittany Benjamin and Desiree Dutcher from S South successfully completed their NCLEX exams.

Welcome to New School of Nursing Faculty

We are pleased to welcome the following new members to the School of Nursing faculty.

Anne Jacobs, MS, RN – Was an assistant professor at St. Joseph’s College of Nursing. Anne will be teaching Nursing Process for Adult Care III and Pharmacology.

Peg Ryan, MS, RN – Is a Crouse grad who most recently worked at the VNA as Quality Improvement Manager and Peds CNS. She is teaching pediatric nursing.

Eileen Sharp, MS, RN, PNP – Is a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner who was an assistant professor at St. Joseph’s College of Nursing and an adjunct faculty member at OCC. She is also teaching pediatric nursing.

Amber Sitterly, BS, RN – Came from Auburn Hospital, where she was an education coordinator for nursing and respiratory departments. Amber is teaching Nursing Process for Adult Care II to our 2nd semester nursing students.

J oAnn Romanzi Herne, faculty member and Student Health Supervisor, was asked to be a presenter at the American College Health Association annual meeting in Orlando this past June. Her topic was “Options in Bariatric Surgery: What’s Right for Your Client?” JoAnn has had a long-standing interest in the subject and found obesity to be an increasingly common problem on college campuses. “In 2000, 16 percent of college students were obese as compared to 8 percent of college students in 1991. The prevalence rate of obesity in college students has doubled in 10 years, notes JoAnn.” Bariatric surgery may be a viable option for students who have tried and failed repeatedly using traditional weight loss methods, which can have a two-year failure rate as high as 95 percent.
During April and May, Rosemary Gates, RN, a student in the master’s program at Excelsior College, presented poster sessions of her work titled “Therapeutic Communication Simulation: an Interactive Teaching Strategy” at three conferences: Upstate Medical University College of Nursing and the Omicron Alpha Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing; the Council for Associate Degree Nursing in NYS; and the “Towards Excellence in Promoting Productive Learning,” sponsored by Saint Anselm College and Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center. Attendees were very enthusiastic about the need for improved strategies for teaching therapeutic communication. Rosemary developed a live simulation activity to evaluate students’ use of therapeutic communication skills and their knowledge of the therapeutic relationship. As a result of the simulation activity, students and faculty have reported increased confidence in using these essential skills.

Todd Olrich RN, MSN, Medical-Surgical Clinical Nurse Specialist gave a poster presentation during the “Clinical Nurse Specialists: Leaders in Clinical Excellence” conference sponsored by the National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists last March in Atlanta. Todd’s poster, “Hourly Rounding: Shaping Nursing Culture to Achieve Nursing Quality Outcomes,” highlighted the successful reduction in falls achieved by 4 South during the study period between July and December 2007 after hourly nursing rounds were implemented on the unit.