



“Summer” 2019 Newsletter for Gustavus

# NURSING ALUMNI

VOLUME 28, NUMBER 1

***The Baccalaureate Nursing Program at Gustavus Adolphus College is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education: (<http://ccneaccreditation.org>)***

## ***NEWS FROM BARBARA ZUST...***



Dear Alumni,

Thank you for all of the support, encouragement, innovative ideas and help you have given us throughout the years! You have played a large role in the success of the Gustavus Nursing Program so far, and we are very grateful for you!!

This has been a year of completions! Heidi Meyer and Jessica Stadick graduated with their PhDs in Nursing from South Dakota State University earlier this Spring! Lynnea Myers is returning to Gustavus, having completed her PhD in Nursing from Vanderbilt and a PhD in Neuro-Science from Karolinska University. All of this “completion” has inspired me to step aside, completing my role as the Chair/ Director of the Nursing Program as of June 1, 2019. Heidi Meyer is our newly elected Chair/ Director. She is enthusiastic, innovative, loves technology, and is exceptionally organized. She will be refreshing for our program.

The one downside for me, of not being the Chair/Director is that I won't have any reports to write all summer, which was my excuse for not cleaning out my garage for the last nine years. However, this is the only part about writing reports that I will miss ☺ !

I will continue teaching OB and Mental Health, and work with our students in the Utqiagvik, Alaska rotation. I will have some time this summer to become more engaged with the MN Prison Doula Project, and

potentially find ways of introducing our students to nursing opportunities in correctional agencies. I'm looking forward to creating a new J-Term experience to Madagascar with my brother, Todd this summer. Todd has been a co-leader with me for our J-Terms in Tanzania.

Thank you, again, for all that you do! We all love to hear about what you are doing and where you are. We welcome any thoughts or ideas you have for the Gustavus Nursing program. Afterall, you are a very important part of the Gustavus Nursing family. Carry on!!

With deep gratitude,  
Barb

P.S. If you have not done so, please sign up on the GAC Nursing Mentor Facebook page.

## ***NEWS FROM JESSICA HELGET...***



*Greetings from Gustavus Nursing Department!*

Another year has come and gone up here on the hill!

I have continued to work in the department as the Lab, Simulation, NCLEX Prep and Clinical Coordinator.

During fall semester, my main role was working in lab with the first semester students. Teaching students in the lab setting has helped our students find comfort in caring for patient's hands on. Additionally, I continue to work



at Mayo Clinic Health System on a telemetry and Progressive Care Unit (ICU step down). I have thoroughly enjoyed the challenges and high acuties in the patient population I see along with the always changing of evidence based care. Being able to bring specific teaching and learning experiences to the students from the acute care setting is rewarding for me as both an educator and a practicing nurse.

Simulation becomes my main role during the spring semester, primarily working with the Advanced Med-Surg Senior Students in a simulation based course. We use high, mid and low fidelity manikins, along with role players. Our students continually rave at their experiences and knowledge intake from simulations. This has become a true passion of mine and love the realism!

We have been fortunate enough to have wonderful relationships with many clinical sites, all of which we appreciate so much. Many of these relationships were formed through Alumni and friends' engagements. Our students gain invaluable experiences, unable to replicated-so THANK YOU working nurses and clinical sites for ALL you do for our students!

It has been a wonderful year here at Gustavus and, as always, I look forward to the next academic year with great excitement!

Sincerely,  
Jessica Helget

### ***NEWS FROM HEIDI MEYER...***



*Greetings, Gustavus  
Nursing Alumni!*

How does the year pass so quickly?! Another successful year in the books for Gustavus Nursing with some fabulous students. It's been such a pleasure to watch the students develop from novice learners in the fundamentals skills lab to becoming RN role ready in their

capstone clinical and advanced simulation experiences. Our Gustie nursing students continue to be full of creativity and have a sincere passion in advocating for

their patients, families, communities, and the larger global society. I am so thankful for our students and alumni who bring this passion to their everyday professional role. This makes me excited for the future of healthcare!

In addition to teaching this past year, I was able to successfully complete my PhD studies. My dissertation was entitled *Understanding Emotional Intelligence and Its Relationship to Clinical Reasoning in Nursing Students: A Mixed Methods Study*. Through quantitative analysis, I found that a relationship exists between certain aspects of emotional intelligence and clinical reasoning in senior BSN students. A descriptive content analysis as completed to analyze the qualitative data, which resulted in three categories: (1) Sadness for..., (2) Shifting Emotions, and (3) Presence. While I had considered myself more of a statistical person, I thoroughly enjoyed reading through the qualitative responses to the reflection prompts of how students used their emotions in clinical learning experiences. There is so much more to uncover about the role of emotions in the provision of nursing care. I look forward to continuing on this research trajectory.

Heidi

### ***NEWS FROM JESSICA STADICK...***



*Happy Greetings from the  
Gustavus Nursing Program!*

Each year I continue to teach the Introduction to Pre-Health Professions: An Interdisciplinary Approach, Medical Surgical Nursing Across the Lifespan I, Advanced Medical Surgical Nursing Across the Lifespan and a clinical section for the Transitions to Professional Practice course. Each of these courses provide me with the opportunity to observe the progression of the students from novice to RN role ready.

This spring I successfully defended my dissertation and have earned my PhD in Nursing from South Dakota State University. This educational journey has been extremely rewarding and challenging at the same time. I



am deeply grateful to my colleagues, current and past students, and to Gustavus for providing me the support and inspiration to complete this journey. I have been able to apply much of what I have learned in my teaching and research.

Overall, I feel very fortunate to have been able to engage in various remarkable experiences my sixth year here at Gustavus, and I look forward to the next academic year with great excitement! I am eager to meet the incoming juniors and watch the seniors complete their final year as they strive to become professional nurses.

Thank you to those of you who mentor our students, to those of you who continue to precept our students, and to all of the ways you continue to give back to the college and program.

Kindly,  
Jessica

### ***NEWS FROM LYNNEA MYERS...***



*Greetings again from Stockholm, Sweden!*

This is my last greeting from Stockholm as we will be returning to Minnesota later this year and I will be resuming my position at Gustavus for the Spring 2020 semester. I look forward to being back on campus with the students and working with my wonderful colleagues in the nursing program!

I am wrapping up my doctoral program here at the Karolinska Institute this fall and will defend my thesis on November 22, which is titled “Morphological Variants in Neurodevelopmental Disorders”. The defense process is really unique here in Sweden and includes an international expert as an opponent. The scholar first presents his work, the PhD candidate presents his or her work, and then the opponent is allowed to ask the candidate questions for as many hours (or in some cases, days) as he or she would like! My

opponent will be Dr. Meng-Chuan Lai from the University of Toronto. He is an international expert on Autism Spectrum Disorders, with a focus on gender differences in the disorder. I am very excited to take part in the process and look forward to a lively discussion on my work!

The other exciting news is that we just welcomed a baby boy in June. We hope he joins his big sister Malin as a future Gustie in about 18 years! I was able to experience the Swedish healthcare system again for this delivery and it was a remarkable experience! The approach to both prenatal care and the labor and delivery process is almost entirely nurse-centered here in Sweden, with nearly all births attended to by a nurse midwife and a nursing assistant. The interventions they are able to provide based on their nursing background and the approach to the birthing process and post-partum care is something that I am really fortunate to have experienced. They also have a wonderful aftercare system for both the baby and mom and we will be having a nurse come to visit us in our home in just a few days to make sure everything is going well! There is a lot I will miss about Sweden when it comes to the care they provide families and especially children from birth on in terms of health, early education, etc., but I hope to be able to share what I have learned in my four years here with Gustavus students for years to come!

*--Lynnea Meyers*





## Research: NCUR and Creative Inquiry

**Jessica Dirks '19:** "An ethnographic exploration of the meaning of subsistence living among the Inupiaq people in northern Alaska." Presented April 11-13, 2019 at the National Conference of Undergraduate Research in Atlanta, GA, and at Creative Inquiry at Gustavus, May 3, 2019. Jessica's poster received honors at the Creative Inquiry.

**Ann Dornon '19 and Laura Wilberts '19:** Nursing students perspectives of an immersion public health experience in northern Alaska. Presented April 11-13, 2019 at the National Conference of Undergraduate Research in Atlanta, GA, and at Creative Inquiry at Gustavus, May 3, 2019.

**Marisa Paule '19, Kaitlyn Olsen '19, and Mariah Geer '19:** The lived experience of nurses 'gut feelings' in birthing units. Presented April 11-13, 2019 at the National Conference of Undergraduate Research in Atlanta, GA, and at Creative Inquiry at Gustavus, May 3, 2019.

**Elizabeth Her '19, Hannah Lemke, '19, and Sabrina Smith '19:** The relationship between interprofessional collaboration competencies and emotional intelligence in Nursing students. Presented at a Celebration of Creative Inquiry, Gustavus, May 3, 2019.

**Hunter Hiemstra '19:** Exploration of Undergraduate Nursing Student's Interprofessional Collaborative Competencies. Presented at a Celebration of Creative Inquiry, Gustavus, May 3, 2019.

**Brittany Luethmers '19, Jill Farniok '19, & Anna Neeser '19:** Exploring test anxiety in undergraduate business students. Presented at a Celebration of Creative Inquiry, Gustavus, May 3, 2019.

### \* \* \* NOTABLES \* \* \*



**HUNTER HIEMSTRA** has been commissioned as a Second Lieutenant into the Minnesota Army National Guard, as a Medical Services officer with the 834th Aviation Support Battalion, located in Arden Hills Minnesota. He previously served his first contract as an enlisted Infantry Mortarmen with the HHC 2-135 IN. located in Mankato, Minnesota. As a Medical Services Officer, he is in charge of around 20 Combat Medics and ensuring they have the necessary resources and supplies they need to effectively complete any mission. Hunter is a nursing graduate of the Class of 2019.

The Gustavus Nursing program has given me the opportunity enhance and further develop my clinical patient care skills and knowledge, as well as my leadership abilities. I am proud to be known as a Gustavus nurse and having been taught by such experienced professional faculty. I hope to share my skills as a nurse and as an Army officer, to further advance the Minnesota National Guard's 834th Aviation Support Battalion.



## FEBRUARY'S FEMALE STUDENT ATHLETE OF THE MONTH

**CONGRATULATIONS TO MAGGIE WEBSTER** for being elected by her fellow Gusties to be the female student-athlete of the month! Maggie is on the swimming and diving team and a Nursing graduate of the Class of 2019.

## NURSES DAY ON THE HILL



Every year there is a day specific for student Nurses to be recognized and informed. That day is called *Nurses Day on the Hill*, this year that day was March 19, 2019.

“The day will focus on briefing students about legislative priorities and facilitating their lobbying efforts with legislators. We aim to educate students about the Minnesota Nurses Association and the political process, and ultimately influencing elected officials on nursing issues.” –MNA

With that being said, the Nursing students from Gustavus Adolphus College decided to take action and participate. Here are a few things they managed to take part in.

*(Pictured Left to Right: Luke Schavey, Jessica Radzak, Kaitlyn Olsen, Marissa Paule, State Representative, Blake Heiman, Hunter Kraling and Hunter Hiemstra)*

The students pictured are senior nursing students enrolled in NUR 393 (Mental Health). They got together and decided to take a trip to the capital and urge their Senator to increase funding for school-linked mental health service. They did this in order to advocate for those in need of some form of medical help and are not able to speak up for themselves.

These senior Nursing students brought Representative Mike Freiberg support for the Bill H.F. 1182. The purpose of this bill is to bring more funding and education to the public related to the importance of vaccines. These students took it upon themselves to also advocate for those who live in rural communities with families that might not have the opportunity to afford necessary vaccinations.



*(Pictured: Front L-R) – Jessica Dirks and Mariah Geer  
(Back L-R) – Liz Mellgren and Marina Chapman*



These ladies are also senior Nursing students and they took a trip to go visit Jim Nash from Waconia, Minnesota.. He is the representative of the A47 district for the Minnesota House of Representatives. They went with intentions of addressing similar topics as the previous two groups had and also gave him a letter.

*(Pictured Left to Right: Brittany Luethmers, Jill Farniok, Anna Neeser and House of Representative, Jim Nash)*

## 2018 MINNESOTA STATE COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES CONFERENCE



***ROSE JOST '63*** received the Outstanding Dedication to Local Public Health Award. Pictured are all Gustie Nurses who attended the conference who also work in Public Health.



## *Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing*

Thirteen members of the Class of 2019 were inducted into Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing (STTI), Chi-at-Large Chapter. The ceremony was held at Gustavus Adolphus College on November 10, 2018.

STTI is the second largest nursing organization. STTI was founded in 1922 by six nursing students from the University of Indiana. The honor society's name is derived from Greek words for Love, Courage, and Honor. Students who are inducted into STTI represent the top third of their class in academics, leadership and service. The following students were inducted from the Class of 2019:

*Alexis A. Billins*

*Jill C. Farniok*

*Anna L. Neeser*

*Laura M. Wilberts*

*Marina J. Chapman*

*Blake E. Heiman*

*Sabrina M. Smith*

*Paul R. Dahlen*

*Brittany J. Luethmers*

*Rebecca L. Thayer*

*Ann T. Dornon*

*Nikki N. Neequaye*

*Drew C. Weis*



Pictured Front row from left to right: Anna Neeser, Laura Wilberts, Nikki Neequaye and Sabrina Smith.

Back row from left to right: Brittany Luethmers, Jill Farniok Paul Dahlen, Marina Chapman, Blake Heiman, Rebecca Thayer, and Drew Weis. (Not pictured: Alexis Billins and Ann Dornon)

## *Faye M. Hershey Prize in Nursing*

*The 2018 Faye M. Hershey Prize was presented to:  
Hollie J. Peterson, Class of 2020*

Established in 1992 by Barbara Knight Kaiser to honor the memory of her grandmother, Faye M. Hershey, a dedicated volunteer worker in nursing throughout her lifetime. This is an annual award made to juniors in nursing, who show promise as a prospective nurse and whose activities include volunteer work.





## *Class Of 2019 Pinning Ceremony*



### ***PINNING CEREMONY KEYNOTE SPEAKER COL. CHARLOTTE JERNEY RECEIVES THE EXCELLENCE IN NURSING AWARD***



**Col. Charlotte Jerney '64 RN, BAN** served as a nurse in the 44<sup>th</sup> Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) six months after graduating from Gustavus in Nursing. This unit was the closest hospital to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea. She was assigned to Walter Reed Army Hospital before being stationed at the 95<sup>th</sup> Evacuation Hospital in Danang for which she was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for meritorious achievement in ground operations against hostile forces. Charlotte represented women in the Armed Forces when she was asked to speak at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. on Memorial Day, May 30<sup>th</sup> 2016. Currently, Charlotte was recently elected for an alders position for the City's Common Council in Verona, WI. She was nominated by the alders because she introduced ideas that had not been considered before, such as "instituting civic minded police programs to combat the rising opioid crisis, inclusivity, and diverse perspectives to make a high functioning council, promoting public health practices and paying attention to environmental conservation." Charlotte currently serves on Gustavus Nursing's National Advisory Board.

### ***Nursing Department Academic Excellence Award***

*The 2019 Academic Excellence Award was presented to:  
Nikki N. Neequaye, Class of 2019*

Each year nursing presents an award to the student with the highest grade point average. While all students who are admitted to the Gustavus nursing program are the cream of the crop, achieving this academic feat is a notable accomplishment.







## ***NEWS FROM OUR ALUMNI...***

### ***How have you used your liberal arts education in exceptional, creative & interesting ways?***

**Carolyn Kruger '64** Much of Carolyn's nursing career has involved overseas work in maternal and child health with World Vision, Project Concern International, and more recently with Project HOPE. In recent months she has been a consultant for Project HOPE with the newborn initiative in Sierra Leone establishing two Kangaroo Mother Care Units, 2 Special Care Baby Units and community Mother Care groups to address the high neonatal mortality rate. She planned to begin helping 3 HOPE countries establish post-basic neonatal nursing programs. Africa has only one such program. She hopes to have the needed energy to continue this project. Carolyn and her husband, Wally Johnson, have organized two preschools in Malawi for HIV/AIDS orphans and other vulnerable children totaling 110 children under the title of GENESIS, Inc. In March a cyclone struck three countries in Africa but the two preschools survived with needs for blankets and repair for the latrines. Carolyn and Wally are trying to encourage the preschools to become self-sustaining through sewing uniforms, providing taxi service, and other projects. Besides all this, Carolyn and Wally opened an Airbnb on their farm in Virginia and are enjoying the families who enjoy getting out of the crowds in D.C. to the quieter life on their farm. Carolyn received the Gustavus Nursing Excellence Award in 2010.

**COL (R) Charlotte Olson Jerney '64** Char received the 2019 Gustavus Nursing Excellence Award on May 4, 2019, and was the keynote speaker for the Pinning Ceremony that afternoon. In April, Char won an alder position in District 3 of her Verona, Wisconsin, town. Since the mayor and other alders are in their thirties and forties, Char calls herself the elder alder. Char is an Army Veteran with over 27 years in the Army Nurse Corps, including a tour in Viet Nam. She earned the rank of Colonel. She continues to be active in nursing as a consultant, especially in surgical units, in many hospitals throughout the country.

**Amazing Class of 1969 GAC Nurses!** Their Reunion weekend this year was a wonderful time for hugging and sharing memories over breakfast, lunches, dinners and in the dorm!! At breakfast, they raised \$2180 (matched by Lynn Fox to make it \$4360) to start a fund for new Patient Simulation Equipment!! This is a jump start for grants and more donations from all the nursing classes!

During the Alumni Weekend, Barb Züst asked if they would share their nursing stories with her, so she can share them with students and the administration, in order to show the importance and broad scope of Nursing. The 1969 Alumni shared their stories in a circle during a breakfast. The stories were enlightening, inspiring, and "down right impressive"! Cheryl Gelbmann '69 volunteered to contact everyone in the class to get their stories written and compiled as well to share with the Nursing Department. It would be incredible if every class of alumni would do this when they hit the 50 mark and beyond! ( Or maybe the 25 mark and beyond.)

**Marjorie Schaffer (Aasness) '71** Is collaborating with colleagues, Sue Strohschein and Julia Ashley (Minnesota Department of Health), on updating the evidence for the Public Health Intervention Wheel, a framework for public health nursing practice. The update features a new Wheel graphic and integrates new evidence into practice examples and intervention basic steps. This framework, used nationally and internationally, names the work of public health nurses. Look for the Wheel update on the Minnesota Department of Health website soon.

**Vicki Odegaard 75'** Greetings from the beautiful Pacific Northwest fellow Gustie Nurses! Where have the years gone? After 31 years as a Army Nurse Corps (ANC) officer, I retired from Tripler Army Medical Center. As I relocated my husband and daughters for many years, it was their choice to select where we would settle as a retired military family. My husband and daughters selected the Evergreen State, Olympia, Washington, to settle and it is where our roots have been planted for the past 14 years. After retirement from active duty, I taught in the Army Practical Nurse Course at Joint Base Lewis McChord for 3 years and then moved to McChord to assist with the opening of the first joint Air Force Army Family Medicine Clinic in 2008. After 5 years, the opportunity to serve as a leader in the Quality Services Division at Madigan Army Medical Center was available and since 2014 I have been serving as the Chief of the Quality Services Division at the 240-bed tertiary teaching facility. Quality safe patient care and High Reliability has been focuses of our



organization and I am so proud to be part of Military Medicine. Our eldest daughter graduated from West Point in 2014 and is a Captain in the Army and our youngest, graduated with her BSN and is a 2LT ANC officer at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

**Rebecca (Becky) Burnison 80'** I continue to work through my nursing business, Covenant Legal Nursing, LLC. My main work is case management, which I love. My case management experience came in handy to help my mom in her last three years especially.

**Karen (Vangness) Schultz 80'** After retiring as a hospital executive in Hawaii in 2016, I moved back to Minnesota in 2017. I have a great retirement job as a Behavioral Health Joint Commission Surveyor. I work 3 weeks a month travel the entire US. Nursing allows you to work in many venues and I am so thankful.

**Terri (Bergeron) Elsbernd 85'** I am currently the Pediatric Trauma Program Manager at the Level 1 Pediatric Trauma Center at the Mayo Clinic Hospital Rochester. This year I was elected to serve as President Elect for the Pediatric Trauma Society (PTS) and will become President at the annual meeting in San Diego in November of 2019. PTS is a national professional organization composed of professionals from all disciplines who want to improve care for injured children.

**Dawn Soong 93'** Happy to share I was a graduate from the nursing program at Gustavus in 1993. We were the first year that Gustavus had the program on GAC's campus. We were a class of 17, if my memory serves me right. I still share the stories relating to our use of the Gustavus van when making our trips at 4am into Minneapolis to get acute care clinical experience. One tired nursing student and a "co-pilot" nursing student getting the group safely to our destination, heading North on Hwy 169, while the others slept was nothing short of adventurous! When we discovered the vans clearance was not supported in the Abbott NW parking garage, we were horrified. It's a story that still fills me with laughter. I've had almost no interruption in work as a RN since graduation from Gustavus. Fairview Southdale, in Edina to Desert Springs and Valley Hospital, in Las Vegas to CardioVascular office and rounds work to travel nursing at Tripler Army Hospital in Hawaii. I took a travel job at Abbott NW and while there decided Vegas needed to be my permanent home. I am married now 18 years, have identical twin daughters that are 16, and currently work as a nurse consultant for a pharmacy here in Vegas. Life has been good! And I thank my education at GAC for a role in it. Good luck to all the new graduating nursing students! Let the field take you places.

**Faith (Handevitd) Wagner 96'** Within the past 2 years I have taken a new position as a nurse practitioner with Marathon Health at the Kwik Trip Center for Health. This company runs worksite clinics providing a full range of primary care, wellness and health promotion services.

**Kasey (Stecker) Paulus 03'** Kasey has been appointed to chief nursing officer at Park Nicollet Methodist Hospital and vice president of the hospital's inpatient services. Most recently Kasey served as Park Nicollet's vice president of quality and safety, advancing safety improvement, infection prevention and quality initiatives. Her leadership helped pave the way for numerous awards, including top ratings from Leap Frog, HealthGrades and IBM-Watson Top 100 Hospitals. In her role, Paulus will be responsible for nursing practice across the organization, while creating an engaging environment for clinicians to provide care. The 15-year Methodist Hospital veteran has an MBA from the University of Phoenix and a Bachelor of Arts in Nursing from Gustavus Adolphus College. She is a member of the Minnesota Hospital Association quality and safety committee and past chair of the statewide falls committee.

**Ann (Humburg) Crofton 04'** Worked full time for nine years at St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester. In 2013 shortly after the birth of our first child, we moved back to my hometown of Blue Earth, MN where I became the licensed school nurse for the Blue Earth Area School District. I still work supplemental at St. Mary's, and I love going back to my first love of bedside nursing. I will say that school nursing is a whole different challenge, and that I often miss working alongside other nurses every day. However, I love building relationships with students and getting to know them on a personal level. This is public health nursing at its finest!

**Kirsten (Hubert) Pettit 05'** I've been working in the solid organ transplant field since August of 2005. I am currently at Penn Medicine in Philadelphia, PA and have been there since October 2006. In November 2019, I will be presenting on



our Uterus Transplant Program (one of only two programs in the United States) at the International Transplant Nursing Society's (ITNS) Annual Conference.

**Emily (Buck) Moe 08'** I just finished my second year of my DNP/FNP program, two more years left. It's going great and I can't wait to be a nurse practitioner!

**Laura (Peterson) Lenz 09'** I obtained my Family Nurse Practitioner degree and now work in Emergency Medicine for EPPA in the Twin Cities.

**Alyssa Gaulrapp 10'** I am starting a position as Patient Care Supervisor on 5th Floor Neuroscience at Children's Minnesota in St. Paul. For the last year, I have been Interim Patient Care Supervisor for three different units at Children's, while being a Float Team nurse. I also just passed my Certified Pediatric Nurse exam. I have been involved in our unit council as co-chair, champion member of our Journey To Zero team, and have volunteered for multiple superuser positions.

**Angel (Matthes) Yackel 10'** It was my junior year, shortly after officially beginning nursing school, that I found myself in Gustavus Health Service more than I would have liked. I don't remember what it was that initially brought me there, but I do remember two things: first, that my blood pressure was high—like 190/100 high, and I wasn't sure why; second, that based on first impressions I quite liked Nissa Fell, the new-to-Gustavus nurse practitioner with whom I was meeting. During that time in the state of Minnesota, nurse practitioners still needed collaborative agreements with physicians, and when something was out of the ordinary, it was prudent to consult. Needless to say, a 20-year-old with sky-high blood pressure was not so ordinary, and a consult was necessary. The local physician who had never met me looked at my numbers and promptly advised I be put on a beta blocker. I wasn't fond of that idea, nor was Nissa. She looked at me as a whole person, newly entering an extremely stressful program, and counseled me on other things I could do — stress management through exercise as well as healthy and wholesome eating — to manage my blood pressure, and advised following up regularly to ensure I fully embrace a more healthy balance in my life (and a normal blood pressure). Lifestyle modifications helped immensely, and in no time I was back to normal, without using medications.

It's been 10 years and this set of encounters had more of an impact on me than any encounters with any other providers in my memory. I knew that someday I wanted to make a difference for people the way Nissa did for me. My nursing journey has taken me to a wide range of places during this time. First, I was a clinical and birthing assistant at a free-standing birth center. When the 24/7 call got to me, I transitioned into public health, an area I was fond of during clinicals, and worked a couple of years as a nurse in Head Start. It was during this experience that I realized I wanted to become an advanced practice nurse. At first, I thought I wanted to go into pediatrics after working with only preschoolers, but later, decided to become a family nurse practitioner. I wanted to be able to provide primary care and education to help prevent (and when necessary, manage) illness. Throughout my APRN studies, I did some work as an RN in a simulation lab at a nursing school and in a children's clinic.

I became a nurse practitioner in 2015 and immediately my mind and heart went back to those encounters I had with Nissa. My ultimate goal upon graduating was to find a position in college health. These positions are very few and far-between, but I happened to live very close to a college town, so I was consistently looking for job openings at two different schools. The openings never came, so I found myself working in family practice, then urgent care.

Fast forward three years to a summer night last August. My spouse and I were at a wedding he had officiated and we were talking about how cool it would be for him to do some teaching or chaplain work on the side at one of the colleges in Northfield. I pulled out my phone to look for positions for him, and there it was: a vacancy at Carleton College for a Nurse Practitioner in Student Health and Counseling. My dream was before me at a time that I wasn't even looking. My first instinct upon hitting "send" on my application was to go to the Gustavus website and check to see if Nissa was still there, then to email her to ask for any pointers she had. She was super helpful in encouraging me to share my passion and worth with Carleton, and having her advice, I went into my interview with confidence.



I've now been at Carleton for almost a full school year, having started last October. Providing care to college students is extremely rewarding, and being able to work with them on healthy behaviors like getting enough sleep, eating enough food, moving their bodies, and practicing safe sex truly has become my passion. The chance to take time to get to know my students, get to know their health habits, and walk alongside them as they discover what it means to care for themselves is truly a privilege that I do not take lightly, and I hope to be able to make a difference for these students for many years to come.

**Erin Kotzenmacher 13'** Is currently working at the University of Washington Medical Center-Prostate Oncology Center.

**Claire Gabler 17'** I work for Washington County in Cottage Grove with the Family Health Nursing team as a Public Health Nurse. Fun fact, my manager, Jill Timm, is also a Gustie and graduated in the class of 94. Our team provides in home services to help support parents with breastfeeding, parenting, growth and development, and fostering social emotional skills. I will be starting Graduate school this Fall at St.Catherine's for my Masters in Global Health!

**Jessica Neuman 18'** I have a good nursing experience story for you- I work nights on the spine/medicine unit at United Hospital in St. Paul. A couple months ago, I had a couple nights in a row where it just seemed like everything that could possibly go wrong, did! Now, I laugh about how crazy it was, but I got into one patient's room for report from the evening shift and the patient was having a hard time breathing unsure why, we checked her chest tube only to discover it had become disconnected for who knows how long. Luckily, it didn't come out of her chest but still not great. Later I was in this same patient's room and I hear my coworker yelling for me from a room of one of her patients, only to find the patient unexpectedly not breathing and no pulse. So I participated in my first code that night. That was the first code that had been on my floor since I started working last summer. Not good for the patient obviously but neat to see the live saving interventions we study and practice in action. Fast forward to the very next night, I had a patient who I'd had the night prior who had leg pain; the doctors thought it was spine related. Turns out the patient probably had a hairline fracture of some sort because I got them up to the bathroom and their femur snapped in half! I've never seen someone's thigh bend 90° it was surreal. I think my exact words to the on call doctor were "Please come to the floor, the patient has a second knee." Haha! He hadn't seen anything like it either. He asked the patient if he could take a picture, they were a good sport about it! The next night I took on call, don't think I could have chanced another crisis for the third night in a row! Haha



## **GAC Nursing Mentors on Facebook**

*Hello GAC Students and Alumni!*

Our mentorship program for nursing students and grads is on Facebook: GAC Nursing Mentors, and allows students and alumni to connect, foster relationships, and engage in meaningful discussions. It's meant to be a place for encouragement, advice and connection for all nurses! You can find the group at the web address below and request membership from me once there (Ana Gronseth Bartz DNP FNP-C - Admin).

Hope to chat soon! <https://www.facebook.com/groups/624999747648862/>



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