



# WELS Nursing Today

## Nursing Ministry at *New Beginnings – A Home for Mothers*

By Linda Olson BSN, MSN

Since arriving in May 2011 at *New Beginnings – A Home for Mothers* (the home for single mothers' ministry of Christian Life Resources), I have been in awe of the large community support we receive. Every week shipments of various-sized boxes arrive at the home. They are filled with all sorts of surprises such as handmade greeting cards, blankets and quilts, baby and cleaning supplies, gift cards, and monetary donations. They also receive occasional phone calls from individuals, groups, or congregations wanting to fund *New Beginnings* projects. Praise the Lord!

Many times I have asked myself whether we are returning as much as possible to benefit the poverty-stricken mothers God has given us to serve. Our residents are between the ages of 18 and 30 years, they are unmarried, about half have completed high school and some have other children who are not in their custody. In our work with the residents, we focus on spiritual, personal, and family growth. Through daily devotion and interactions, weekly Bible classes, weekly group activities, household chores and rules, and a spiritual tone that permeates it all, we hope to

give each mother the opportunity to experience life in a God-pleasing manner. We all enjoy many hugs and love to see the babies grow from newborns to toddlers. My answer to the question posed above is a resounding, "Yes, through God's grace!"

Providing life coaching for mothers is a natural pathway for a nurse. After all, assessing signs and symptoms are the things a nurse is good at! My nursing background has helped me recognize the need for interventions. Life coaching helps to foster economic self-sufficiency by encouraging the mothers to develop a vision for their future, to stay in school, to find a job, to plan for future pregnancies and ultimately for future success. There are many community sources to tap into here in Colorado, including state and federal programs for our special group. We also have many WELS congregations in the area that enthusiastically assist us in our ministry.

Assisting as a health care advisor—along with the many other "hats" a volunteer houseparent wears—adds another dimension to living and working at

Continued on page 2

New Beginnings. Thank you for allowing me to share some information about this unique ministry. If any of you visit the Denver area, please stop by and visit!



*Pictured left to right: Mia and Ariel, Hiyaw, Tara*

## Community Health for Milwaukee area Participants

By Kaili Eagon and Dan Mulrain, nursing students at Wisconsin Lutheran College

The Wisconsin Lutheran College nursing program and the surrounding community had the opportunity in March to listen to a presentation about community health by the Milwaukee Commissioner of Health, Bevan Baker. The presentation was eye-opening in regards to the infant mortality rate here in Milwaukee.

More importantly, the presentation was eye-opening in regards to community health. Infant mortality is an indicator of the health of a community, and Milwaukee's infant mortality rate is nearly double the rate of the rest of the United States despite the state-of-the-art hospitals and resources Milwaukee has to offer. Statistics alone show that an obvious divide exists somewhere within Milwaukee's healthcare system because African American infant mortality rates are

three to four times higher than Caucasian infant mortality rates. Commissioner Baker referred to these upsetting statistics and disparities as "the tip of the iceberg." Countless factors contribute to the problem, including racism, education, poverty, and many more.

The City of Milwaukee Health Department is taking action to improve Milwaukee's disparities through programs, research, direct service, public education, and partnerships, but individuals entering the health care field can also make a difference. By simply being knowledgeable about these problems within Milwaukee, students and healthcare workers can make a difference. Healthcare professionals are not only responsible for academics pertaining to their job, but must also understand the political and social structures that surround their career. These structures can have a huge impact on healthcare and healthcare disparities.

Commissioner Baker effectively reminded the Wisconsin Lutheran College community that it is part of the Milwaukee community. As such WLC has a great opportunity, to be a light to other colleges and organizations in general by being directly involved in community health. WLC already has connections to the community through the Granville neighborhood health center where work is being done to help the underprivileged of the Milwaukee community.



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## “It’s Alzheimer’s—It’s Time for Extraordinary Love.”

By Jan Zimmerman RN

More than 80 people, some from as far as 90 miles away, gathered on March 24, 2012, at Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School in Jackson, Wis., for a workshop reaching out to those with Alzheimer’s and those who care for them. This event was sponsored by The Lutheran Home Association out of Belle Plaine, Minn.

Pastor Curt Seefeldt, author of the book—“It’s Alzheimer’s—It’s Time for Extraordinary Love—” and the chaplain at The Lutheran Home: River Falls, Wis., was the keynote speaker. He talked about the Christian approach to and understanding of the disease, giving all present the reassurance that Alzheimer’s is not a punishment for our sins. Through Christ, our sins have been forgiven. Jan Zimmerman RN, the director of Nursing at Heritage Homes in Watertown, Wis., discussed diagnosis and treatment. She addressed common issues surrounding the physical and emotional challenges of caring for someone with Alzheimer’s. The presenters suggested ways in which congregations can reach out to and support those with Alzheimer’s and the family members who love and care for them. Laurie Rehm, administrator of Heritage Homes, talked about the role of assisted living in helping care for a person with dementia. She also described the unit designed specifically for memory care at Heritage Homes.

Closing the program, a panel headed by Sue Bolha, Diane Brandt, Debbie Przedpelski, Pastor Curt Seefeldt, and Jan Zimmerman, discussed the value of caregiver support groups. The audience asked questions and shared ideas. It was a wonderful event providing an opportunity to learn from professionals, more importantly, from those who are living with Alzheimer’s on a daily basis.

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## Rummage Sale and Blood Pressure Table

By Artie Runnions—RN-BC, WELS Parish Nurse

What better time to launch the Parish Nurse Program than at the annual rummage sale. Although the day started out cool, with dark clouds, it quickly became

sunny and warm. And, the warmth of Christ’s love was evident on the faces of all the church volunteers, especially the WELS Parish Nurses.

A small contingent of five nurses, Linda Begley, Leigha Chadwell, Lynn McNamee, Helen Runnions, and Artie Runnions, were kept busy as a steady flow of folks passed through the narthex to have their blood pressure monitored. Most important was the information handed out to the visitors—and church members—on how to better control their blood pressure through diet, exercise, and weight loss. Some of our “patients” who exhibited slightly elevated B.P.s admitted to missing their antihypertensive medications that day. A gentle reminder of the importance of medication compliance was the order of the day, in those cases.

The best part of working the B.P. table was having the opportunity to invite people to church and to witness as led by the Spirit. But, even better than that was seeing some of those same people the next morning at one of our two worship services. The biggest shock for them—was when they were greeted and recognized from the previous day.

Christ the King Church, under the leadership of Pastor Phil Huebner, with assistance from Vicar Jacob Hoff, is truly a Christ-centered church. The love, and light of Jesus Christ shines through the members of this church from the top down.

This may have been our first venture as a new WELS Program, but by the will of God, it will continue to grow to serve our community, especially the church.



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• News and Notes •

**WELSNA Nurses On The Road This Summer!**

Rebekah Carey and a group of her nursing students have traveled to Zambia, Africa, as part of their international nursing studies. Closer to home, there was a WELSNA presence at the Western Wisconsin, Southeastern Wisconsin, and Western Wisconsin District Conventions giving pastors an opportunity to learn about WELSNA and take information back to their churches.

WELSNA also attended the annual Campus Pastor's Staff Conference in Milwaukee encouraging the campus pastor's to refer any WELS student nurses to WELSNA.

Plans are also under way for another Minnesota "WELSNA Meet & Greet" on June 14, 2013, at Christ Lutheran Church in the Twin Cities area. Also, WELSNA will attend the Ministry for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Annual Conference in Shakopee, Minn., August 4-5 and the OWLS Convention October 9-11. More information can be found at [www.welsnurses.net](http://www.welsnurses.net) calendar of events.

The WELSNA Council met on June 5 to set the direction for this year and next. Plans are even being made for next year's conference! Watch for details.

**Interested in hosting a WELSNA "Meet & Greet?"**

The WELSNA council is developing a "Meet & Greet Tool Kit" this summer, giving ideas on how to host your own evening to gather with like-minded nurses who love the Lord. It will be posted on the Web site or E-mail us at [welsnurses@wels.net](mailto:welsnurses@wels.net) with your thoughts!

**Parish Nurses Gathering in Fall**

Plans are being made for the WELS Parish Nurses to gather October 20, 2012 at Christ Lutheran in Pewaukee, Wis., for a morning of spiritual encouragement, education, and networking. The focus for the morning will be "Parish Nurses supporting our U.S. Military and families in our congregations." The group is also extending an invitation to any WELSNA nurses who might be interested. More information is coming soon!

**Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing National Convention**

The next convention will be held Aug. 4-5, 2012, at Living Hope Lutheran Church, in Shakopee, Minn. The theme will be "Undiscovered Souls—Reaching Out and Bringing the Word of God to All." *Registration started April 1.* For more information, visit [www.wels.net/special-ministries/deaf-hard-hearing](http://www.wels.net/special-ministries/deaf-hard-hearing).