



# WELS Nursing Today

## Prepare for the worst and pray for the best

By Char Friedrich, RN, MLC Health Services

My journey at MLC began in August of 1998, after receiving an afternoon phone call from President T. Olsen, requesting me to interview for the RN position (unknown to me). Also, what I did not realize, was that since the diagnosis of my husband's brain tumor, in March 1996, my husband had been praying for a position with benefits, better hours, and flexibility. After all, I was a hospital-trained RN with experience in OB/GYN, Medical/Surgical, and Critical Care, including supervision. I worked 8 to 12 hour nights, weekends, and holiday shifts. When hired for this position, this job truly was by the grace of God and an "unknown referral."

Through life, I learned to "prepare for the worst" and "pray for the best." As a result, God has helped me through my days. My prayer everyday as I drive to work, is asking God to give me the knowledge and skills to do well for the students, staff, faculty, and guests of MLC. During the five years of my husband's battle with cancer, I learned that taking life one day at a time helped me to live life TODAY in God's time and his plans for a future. One of my favorite Bible verses has been Jeremiah 29:11.

Under the direction of V.P. of Student Life Jeffrey Schone, the MLC Health Service is a one-person, RN director. The mission is to help maintain physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health during an academic year for the students, staff, faculty, and guests. My duties include:



physical assessment/triage of illness/injuries, provide supportive care and medical supplies, maintain records, chauffeur students to appointments, and respond to emergencies. I also teach AHA CPR/AED classes for the campus family.

I have dealt with almost all types of health issues/injuries during my years at MLC – some that stand out the most are head injuries/concussions with complications, diagnosis of AV Malformation and Pulmonary Emboli, diabetic emergencies, hospitalized cases of Mono, cancer, high/low blood pressure with complications, seizures, syncope, heart issues, pilonidal cysts with surgery and post care, appendectomy's (no ruptures), allergic reactions/epi pens, etc. I come to work, not knowing what will cross my path today, so I "prepare for the worst, and pray for the best."

## Assisting veterans with their transition back home

By Carlo A. Piraino, DNP, RN

*Carlo is a Navy veteran and is married to an Army veteran. He has served one combat tour while serving with the United States Marine Corps as a United States Navy Hospital Corpsman. Carlo currently serves U.S. military veterans at the South Texas Veteran's Health Care System, Kerrville, TX campus as the associate chief nurse.*

The long-term impact from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) caused by improvised bombs will be felt for years. As of 2012, according to the VA's health system, more than 270,000 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans have sought treatments for PTSD, and the agency's disability system had awarded PTSD benefits to more than 150,000 of them, with many still pending.

*"I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me"  
(Matthew 25:36).*

As Parish Nurses we are in a unique position to assist in the healing of these veterans. We may not be the nurses who will provide the tertiary care to these veterans, but we are the nurses who will live among them after they separate from the military. It is our role to look out for them and recognize when they or their family need a referral back to the local VA.

*"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God"  
(Matthew 5:8-9).*

Subtle symptoms are easy to notice if you know what you are looking for. The hardest part is identifying who the veterans are in your community, screening new members with a simple question such as "Have you served in the military" and a follow up question consisting of "years served" and learning if they served in combat.

The hard part is asking these questions while still keeping the veteran comfortable and not appearing like you are "overly concerned" or prying. How do we do that? We ask questions that acknowledge their military career. We thank the veteran for their service and then ask them to be a part of our community. We involve them in activities that support their needs and the needs of their family. It may be a young adult group outing to the park or it may be offering free babysitting of their children as they enjoy a couples night out.

Veterans will open up to friends. They will discuss their experiences with people who they believe can empathize and understand what they went through. If you have a large enough congregation, consider starting a veterans group that can share their experiences and assist each other with re-integration back into the community.

Warning signs that we should be aware of include:

- Isolationism
- Uncontrolled anger
- Suicide ideation
- Neglecting personal welfare
- Deteriorating physical appearance
- Expressing feelings of excessive guilt or shame
- Trouble sleeping
- Acting recklessly or engaging in risky activities
- Giving away prized possessions
- Seeking access to firearms, pills, or other means of harming oneself

These symptoms indicate a veteran who is struggling with mental health issues and should see a VA mental health professional as soon as possible.

How do you refer someone to the VA? The VA Crisis hotline (1-800-273-8255) can be utilized by both veterans and their families. Another way to receive support is via text messages. By sending a text to 838255 the veteran can receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year.

*The King will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40).*

## CA&R Oklahoma Disaster Relief Volunteer

By Marladene Mohr, RN



In June of 2013 I had the privilege of participating in a WELS Christian Aid and Relief project in response to the Moore, Okla., tornado of May 20th. For 11 days I served in Christian fellowship with volunteers from all walks of life.

Initially, I wondered what I would have to put on hold in order to answer this call to serve. But something that was said about working on a mission field struck a chord with me. I was reminded of how profoundly affected I'd been by my three years with CAMM in Africa. Being a partner in the mission field with others who have answered Christ's call was a very rewarding experience. In Oklahoma, there was a sense of being one in a greater family unit. I was able to see and understand the drive behind fellow Christian volunteers in helping others to put some sense of order back into their lives. Several volunteers shared their stories about why they volunteer during disasters. A majority of them have had life-changing experiences and this was a way for them to give back to their Lord.

As members of the team of volunteers we had many opportunities to share our Savior's love. Every day we wore bright, yellow vests that identified us as relief workers and we were rewarded with words and acts of appreciation from many people in the community. An example was when a youth volunteer group had worked to clear a fence line. The woman wanted to treat the youth to ice cream so she gave us the money to go to the ice cream shop. We arrived dirty, hot, smelly, and

tired. Another local woman (who had lost her home in the tornado) wondered why we all wore yellow vests and looked and smelled the way we did! After explaining who we were and what we'd been working on all day, she treated everyone to ice cream. That meant we could get ice cream two days in a row!

We were housed in the vacant principal's home of Gethsemane Congregation. Between 8 – 15 volunteers at a time slept on air mattresses in shared bedrooms. Each day began with a thought-provoking scripture lesson pertaining to things we might encounter during our work in the mission field. One that stands out in my mind is when Pastor Born of Gethsemane congregation talked about the role of ants. Ants demonstrate to humans the importance of working together and accomplishing much. Seeing the destruction from the May tornados did create a feeling of being overwhelmed. But despite being as small as ants in God's universe, we all play an important role in God's plans.

I was often touched when talking to other Christians who survived the destruction of that May tornado. They demonstrated such strong faith in their Savior knowing he would provide them with what they needed. The way they were coping with their losses, accepting what had happened and being hopeful for the future was an incredible demonstration of God's majestic power.

My background as a nurse in the corporate world teaching emergency care served me well in my role on the mission field. I remembered well the need to be flexible when dealing with medical issues. The issues I treated in Oklahoma were: heat exhaustion, a puncture wound, a finger caught in a door, and a chainsaw leg injury.

Thank You WELS Christian Aid and Relief for the opportunity to partner in providing medical care in the mission field. I will treasure my Servant's Heart pin as my reminder of the sacrifice Christ made for us so that we might have eternal life with Him.

*"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially those of the family of believers." Galatians 6:10*

## • Fall 2013 News and Notes •

**Our annual Fall Parish Nurse gathering** is scheduled for October 19, 2013, at Christ Lutheran Church in Pewaukee, Wis. The theme for the day will be, "As we have opportunity...Galatians 6:10" We are excited to have Pastor Joe Radsek and his wife Dawn (RN) of WLIM to speak to us on "The Journey of Grief – Implications for Parish Nurses." Rebekah Carey, RN, director of nursing at WLC and advisory committee member of WKW Lutheran Health Alliance will join us to introduce the exciting work at the LHA. Cost will be \$15 this year and will include a catered lunch by Daniel's Catering. Students can attend for free but we ask that they register online as well. Registration is online and easy to do! Or call Sue at 262-677-3485.

### **WELS Kingdom Workers nurses**

WKW's Lutheran Health Alliance is posting a six month to one year position in Mahahual, Mexico, as a "Healthy Family Project Coordinator" for this fall. Fluency in Spanish is needed as well as a degree and post-graduate training in a health-related field. More on [www.welsnurses.net](http://www.welsnurses.net).

### **WELSNA goes to synod convention**

Four of our WELSNA nurses were present at the 2013 synod convention in New Ulm, Minn., this summer. Char Friedrich, RN, coordinator of Health Services for MLC; Connie Sauer; Sue Bolha; and Pat Schlosser were there to serve their Lord and his people in a variety of ways. Blood pressures were taken, opportunities to start parish nurse ministries explored, and great conversations with many of the delegates in attendance. Even the teens that were helping on the convention floor added to the enjoyment of our time there by rearranging the arms and legs of our bright pink skeleton, "Olivia," who was made to look like she was dancing a jig while handing out a cup of water.

We never anticipated being called upon to use our professional skills, though, as one of the convention guests suddenly became ill. Char was very helpful, in that she accompanied the sick gentleman and his family to the hospital, making sure they found it and the care he needed quickly. He spent three days in ICU and we are thankful to report that he is now stable and back home. His family reports, "We really do see his attendance

that day, your presence at the convention, and the care/attention he received as a blessing from the hand of God. We don't want to think about what may have happened had he been alone or in a place where immediate care was not available to him. The WELS Nurses are truly a blessing from God and I thank you again for your service to your Savior...and to Dad!"

It is our privilege to serve!



### **WELSNA challenge entry**

Don't forget to send us your WELSNA challenge entry. We challenged our nurses to organize and perform a service or educational project this year and we would like to hear about it. Please send us a story and pictures about your project, by November 1st to [welsnurses@wels.net](mailto:welsnurses@wels.net). All submissions will be entered into a drawing for an Amazon gift card. The stories will also be featured in the winter 2014 newsletter. So put on your thinking caps and join in the fun! We hope to hear from you!

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