



# HYPODERMIC

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**North Carolina  
Association of  
Nursing Students**

## A Time For Renewal

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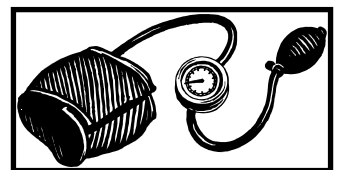
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Hi,  
Go ahead and release the pressure of the past semester! Congratulations on completing yet another chapter of your life as a nursing student! As you take a breath of the sweet air of summer, may you uninhibitedly enjoy the freshness of the moment. If you are a nursing graduate, like me, I truly wish you the best as you prepare for the NCLEX and move into your first nursing job.

As you are enthralled in your summer days as whether they are golden, I am delighted that you did not forget to take the opportunity to peruse the latest issue of the Hypodermic. In the pages of this issue, you will find articles that you hopefully will relate to, such as Generation X. Perhaps the Tar Heal Exploration article will inform and inspire you to implement a similar breakthrough to nursing and community service project in your own community.

As you read, remember to think about sending me your own contribution to the Hypodermic. If you do it is likely that the next time you read the Hypodermic your eyes will come across your own name and article.

Happy reading,  
**Shalia S. Gregory**  
Shalia S. Gregory  
Hypodermic Editor



## The Right Fit For Me

**By Kati Bloedau**

I know that there are some nursing students who can answer without hesitation: L&D, heme-onc, dialysis, cardiac ICU. What a relief that must be! I've gotten so much practice answering the question, "Why do you want to be a nurse?" in

scholarship essays and discussion board assignments, and I'm feeling a bit unprepared to answer "Where do you want to be a nurse?" As a non-traditional student, I've been so excited about finally having made up my mind about nursing school

that it's a little disconcerting to now have to think about life after school!

It seems that after someone finds out that I'm in nursing school,

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## The Right Fit For Me (continued)

the very next thing they ask is where I want to work. It's nice to know that the word has gotten out that there are a thousand settings in which nurses practice; people obviously know that I could work anywhere. They often seem to look a little sad when I say that I'm not excited about working as a bedside nurse.

When I'm talking to nurses who began their career as a med-surg nurse and still believe that new graduate nurses should put in a couple years of med-surg before making any other decisions, these nurses look a little stern and give me a lecture about the good foundation of med-surg nursing. What about the thrill of the ICU...and the nurse-patient ratio there? What of the pace and satisfaction of working in a community clinic?

I know that med-surg will give me excellent procedural experience. I know that it's full of opportunities to practice with multidisciplinary communication. Of course, there is nothing ordinary or typical about a day of bedside nursing. I know when we talk of the nursing shortage; it is at the bedside that short-staffing is most poignant.

However, I also know that many new grads do a year or two in a hospital and then leave the bedside, often because that year or two was at an unsustainable pace...too full of procedural experience. Without a culture

"Finding the right environment for my first job as a graduate nurse is something I worry about a lot."

that nurtures new nurses and effective training in communicating with other health care personnel; without a personal confidence and strong self-image, I know that many new grads adopt a smile-and-nod persona that degenerates to grumble-and-blame.

From now on, when people ask me where I'd like to work as a nurse, my first response is going to be non-committal. This tactic works for two reasons. I truly have no idea where I'd like to practice right now, and the person is often hoping for a chance to share their own experience and opinion. I think I might say to a nurse, "I haven't made any decisions yet. Where did you enjoy practicing most? What kind of setting do you think

would suit me best?"

Finding the right environment for my first job as a graduate nurse is something I worry about a lot. I worry about it in the same way that I worry before the shift begins. I can make the start of the shift less stressful by reviewing my procedures, reviewing the patho and charts of my patients, and by identifying mentors who I can turn to for help. Yet, in the end, I have to simply get in there and do the work. Finding a good place to work is something I talk about with new nurses and old nurses, with nurses who seem to love their job and nurses who hate their job. What I've learned so far is that there is a lot you can do to increase your chances of finding a good fit; on the other hand there's also an element of luck, of chaos; there's some things that can't be foreseen. So, I'm going to do my homework, and employ all the tips I've gathered on interviewing and decision-making. But in the end, I have faith that I'll learn something wherever I am, and wherever that happens to be is right where I should be.



## The Pursuit of Professional Happiness

By Brooke Englert

My life journey has many roads that have come together to make me who I am today. You see I am from Generation X. Someone born after the hard working, dedicated, and loyal baby boomers; but before the high-tech, entrepreneurial Generation Y. Margot Hornblower in Time Magazine stated, Generation X'ers "were supposed to be slackers, cynics, drifters." My generation was caught in the middle, we didn't know what we wanted, and were in no hurry to figure it out.

As a child, I was going to be a firefighter when I was five and watched Emergency. Then for a while I was going to be a marine biologist so I could play with dolphins. In high school, I decided on the noble profession of becoming a doctor. That stuck around for a while. I was going to eradicate disease, and save people's lives; thereby being instrumental in saving the world. If that didn't work out I could always work at the mall. See my generation

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## The Pursuit of Professional Happiness (continued)

wants to have it all, but doesn't necessarily want to work for it and definitely wants to know what's in it for them.

Before my fellow Generation X'ers get mad, let me say "We've come a long way baby." We have found our niche in the world. Not the way the baby boomers did it with long dedicated careers for the same company, or how the Generation Y rode the Internet Super Highway to wealth and prestige, but by exploring and searching out whom we are and the difference each one of us can make.

I did graduate from college right after high-school with a Communications degree. By this time I was a single parent and becoming a doctor was more work than I had time for. So, I got a job that made me feel like I was helping people and making a difference, but it didn't really pay the bills. So, I rode on the Generation Y high-tech super highway for a while. I have even owned my own company, providing customized software for small businesses. I combined my passion for helping people and technology to provide for my daughter and I. Little did I know this super highway was going to turn into a massive interstate development project that took every hour in my day just to keep up. Don't get me wrong, the money was great, but I had no time for my daughter or myself. Call me a slacker, all I wanted to do was sit on the back porch with my feet up on the weekend.

**We still have the power to make a difference.**

**I sold my business, got married, started taking classes again, and had a baby...I took the time to see where I fit in the picture. Today, I am a professional nurse...I get firsthand experience of how nurses make a difference in people's lives, in public policy, and in shaping the future of nursing.**

I remember when my life changed. It didn't happen in one moment or even because of just one event. My grandmother had a stroke. The healthcare professionals working with her cared so much for this woman I admired my whole life, it re-sparked my interest in medicine. While that was niggling at the back of my brain September 11, 2001 transpired. I learned the Pentagon was hit, my mom's voice on the other end of the phone line said that they did not know where my father was...they hadn't heard from him. No high-speed Internet or computer technology, cell phone, pager, blackberry or any other high-tech contraption was going to make a difference. People were going to make a difference: in finding others, helping each other grieve, and providing hope for tomor-

row.

Life is too short. So what if my generation drifts from job to job in search of what they want, take the time to lounge and do nothing, or feel cynical about what tomorrow has to offer us. We still have the power to make a difference.



I sold my business, got married, started taking classes again, and had a baby. I was enjoying life for every moment it had to offer. I was exploring my opportunities in this world. I became a CNA and watched doctors and nurses work side by side, and observed the specialties in healthcare professionals from respiratory therapist, to physical therapist, and social workers. I took the time to see where I fit in the picture.

Today, I am a professional nurse. I coordinate the care of my patients with the experienced guidance from doctors and the collaborative help of the specialized healthcare team. I completed my Associate Degree in Nursing in 2007 and will complete my Bachelors of Science in Nursing this fall. The pursuit of higher education enlightens me about the multiple opportunities in this amazing profession. I am an active member of my pre-professional nursing organizations and currently sit as president on the State Board of the North Carolina Association of Nursing Students. I have also chosen to be a member of the American Nurses Association and North Carolina Nursing Association. I get firsthand experience of how nurses make a difference in people's lives, in public policy, and in shaping the future of nursing.

My exploration isn't over, but I have found a balance in my life that combines those things I think many of my fellow Generation X'ers were looking for: time to slack; the conviction of those around us to pursue tomorrow, even through our cynicism. We might not be drifters out in the sea of productivity, our boat just might sail around longer in search for that perfect sunset where all the colors melt together and the right balance of richness and pleasure is achieved. So while many people believe nursing is a selfless profession of givers and self-sacrifice. I feel it is a profession of balance: The ability to work a schedule that provides time to rest, multi-generational opportunities for guidance and direction, a renewal of hope and fulfillment of personal satisfaction through helping others. All while exploring new opportunities to find the right fit for each of us.

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## Take a Break...and Exercise!!!

By Bonnie Kluttz

We'll do anything to improve our grades, right? We stay up all night, buy a bunch of help books, pay for expensive reviews and even skip lunch for one more cram session! We get to that point where we can't even think, so we just try to concentrate even harder. With all this additional effort do you feel like it's working?

We don't have time to exercise, because that will just contribute to our sleep deprivation and make us more tired and take up a lot more precious time. Well, research shows we've got it all backwards. Studies by the Society of Neuroscience suggest that "voluntary exercise can increase the number of brain cells in the hippocampus." That is the learning and memory center, remember? A study by the California Department of Education conducted in 2002 suggested that



there was a direct link between higher test scores in math and reading and higher levels of fitness. Some students have even reported feeling more awake and alert after exercising.

Are you ready to run a marathon before that next exam? Start small by taking a ten minute brisk walk every day. When you hit the books, take a ten minute break every hour to walk to the end of the street and back, the cold wind will wake you up too. In addition to good nutrition and sufficient sleep, the research is clear: exercise is correlated to better health and better grades!

# Nursing: The Power to Make a Difference

By Amy Jensen



In an effort to promote the profession of nursing to the young people of North Carolina, the Association of Nursing Students at UNC Chapel Hill organized Tar “HEAL” Exploration Day on January 2, 2008. Over 140 girl scouts of Central North Carolina came to the event to learn more about the work of a nurse and to earn a Nursing Exploration Patch through the North Carolina Center for Nursing. Over 200 nursing students, faculty, NCNA, and UNC School of Nursing alumni volunteered to make this second annual event a success.

Throughout the day, scouts rotated through a series of stations where they learned about different aspects of health and the nurse’s role in health care. The first aid station allowed scouts to practice basic first aid techniques on each other. Another station taught the importance of water in our bodies. A “Panel of Nurses” made up of RNs, undergraduate, master’s, and doctoral nursing students shared their experiences and answered questions from the scouts. With the help of our interactive patient simulator, “Stan the Man,” the scouts learned how to do a basic assessment, and get hands-on patient care experience.

The Smoking and Drug Awareness station was a favorite! The students saw the effects of smoking on the body. They were also given opportunities to practice how they can “say no.” The importance of good nutrition and physical activity was demonstrated at a station where scouts were taught the effects of maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle. Another station taught about healthy hearts, and gave scouts the opportunity to listen to healthy and irregular heart sounds. The girl scouts were each given a disposable stethoscope and taught to how to auscultate heart sounds.

Tar “Heal” Exploration Day was a great opportunity for Nursing Students at UNC to give back to the community, and empower young people to consider a career in nursing. Some people may underestimate the knowledge and abilities that are needed to become a nurse. UNC Chapel Hill Association of Nursing Students wanted to assure that the young girl scouts know that nurses are highly intelligent professionals that have a vast knowledge of many disease processes, keen assessment skills, and a vital role in healthcare.

The first Annual Tar “Heal” Exploration Day was awarded “Best Community Health Project” by NCANS at the October 2007 Annual Convention in Winston Salem, NC. If this event is of interest to you, please consider participating in the Break-Through-to-Nursing project of NCANS, <http://www.ncans.org/BTN.html>.