250 Sydney Nursing School alumni, staff, students, family and friends joined forces to pack 5000 birthing kits in the Great Hall.

The Birthing Kit Packing Day in the Great Hall at the University of Sydney was a great way to end a successful year at Sydney Nursing School.

After hosting a birthing kit packing day at Sydney Nursing School two years ago, alumna Rebecca Bartlett (2009) was keen to host another packing day on a grander scale, drawing attention to the estimated 500,000 new mothers who die each year in developing countries due to infection from childbirth.

“A birthing kit is something we can provide very simply to help reduce the number of women in resource-poor countries who die each year from complications related to childbirth,” Rebecca said.

It was a fantastic day, with 250 people enthusiastically responding to Sydney Nursing School’s call for volunteers to assemble the birthing kits in the Great Hall. Badged as an Alumni event the packing day also attracted staff, students, researchers, families and friends. Tracey Beck, Director of Alumni Relations at the University of Sydney, remarked that “this was a really tangible way that alumni can support both the University, Sydney Nursing School and the international community.”

The contents for each birthing kit was purchased from the Birthing Kit Foundation (Australia) for $2 per kit, using funds raised by students and alumni of the University. In just a few hours, 5000 birthing kits were packed and sent to women in Papua New Guinea and Kenya. We hope to organise another similar event in 2012 and invite you to be involved. View the video highlights: http://sydney.edu.au/nursing/video/birthing_kit_071211.mp4
DEAN’S MESSAGE

Welcome to another exciting year at Sydney Nursing School. Whether you are joining us as students, alumni, staff, organisation partners, affiliates or friends we welcome you to the families of nursing and midwifery at the University of Sydney.

It is with tremendous pride that we commence 2012 with a fantastic new cohort of nursing students.

“After a number of years of dreaming, lobbying and planning we are particularly excited to be welcoming our new Bachelor of Nursing (Advanced Studies) students. While it may have taken some convincing to establish this exciting new program, the very healthy number of students who have enrolled in the program speaks for itself.”

We certainly remain very committed to our highly regarded combined degrees and graduate entry program but I do believe it’s crucial that a prestigious nursing school such as ours is able to offer a quality Bachelor of Nursing program at the pre-registration level.

This year we also welcome another cohort of postgraduate coursework students, our Bachelor of Nursing (Post-registration) students both in Singapore and here in Sydney, and an expanded cohort of higher research degree students. In December it was absolutely terrific to see four of our PhD students graduate after many years of hard work. Congratulations to Margaret Hall, Lesley Halliday, Peta McVey and Luisa Toffoli.

This year we also welcome new academic and professional staff. Coming from a variety of backgrounds I am confident that they will help contribute to our commitment to quality teaching and research at Sydney Nursing School. There will be many opportunities throughout the year for you to meet them.

Sydney Nursing School continues to go from strength to strength and here I mention just a few achievements by way of example. I am delighted with our ongoing relationship with the Singapore Institute of Management (SIM) for the delivery of our Bachelor of Nursing (Post-registration) in Singapore. Last year the University was audited by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA). The Singapore nursing program was assessed and evaluated as part of the audit process. I am delighted with the outcome as one of 18 commendations received by the University “for the quality of its offshore provision of the Bachelor of Nursing (Post-registration) program which provides a model to the University for offshore provision, paying appropriate attention to market needs, strategic alignment, the assurance of academic standards, and the student experience, and for sustaining a strong relationship with a quality partner”.

The success of the Singapore program relies on the dedication and commitment of our teaching staff, SIM, and the support of the hospitals in Singapore who recommend this program to their nursing staff.

The University of Sydney’s Strategic Plan, published in 2011, affirmed the University’s resolve to improve our approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, research and engagement. This year Sydney Nursing School will consider ways in which we can contribute to the University’s recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples through the University of Sydney Integrated Strategy. Led by Deputy Vice Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy and Services) Dr Shane Houston, this Strategy “seeks to contribute to a just and cohesive Australia by empowering students, staff and our community to engage in practical, purposeful reasoning, to think, analyse and to transform knowledge and contribute to local, national and international society”. We in the nursing and midwifery community take seriously our professional, social and moral responsibilities to the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and I look forward to Sydney Nursing School’s contribution to this strategy.

Curriculum review is a constant in higher education and I’m pleased that this year we will start developing a curriculum for a graduate certificate, diploma and master’s in Primary Health Care. This program will be consistent with our commitment to the philosophy of primary health care – that is, providing accessible, coordinated, and equitable health care to all people regardless of where that care is delivered.

Our strength also lies in our commitment to research and we are proud to announce a research partnership through a government-sponsored Collaborative Research Network with Southern Cross University. Designed to improve research capacity of smaller rural and remote universities we are pleased to commence this work through research on nursing workforce issues, children, young people and families, and mental health.

Sydney Nursing School encourages and welcomes nursing and midwifery alumni to be actively involved in the life of the school. We certainly appreciate and thank those of you who contributed so generously last year to our various development campaigns which help fund life-changing health care initiatives and support for our nursing students. And as a School we were truly overwhelmed with the support of alumni who gave their time to help organise and participate in our Birthing Kit Packing Day in the Great Hall. What a fabulous way to end a successful year in 2011 and a true testament to the power of nurses and midwives (and the many others who helped) who were ready to roll up their sleeves and get a job done. In just a few hours 5000 birthing kits were packed and sent to assist mums-to-be in Papua New Guinea and Kenya give birth in more hygienic environments.

A new year brings new energy and new opportunities and I wish you all the very best for a wonderful, productive and positive year.

– Warm regards, Jill White
The renewed emphasis on primary health care as part of national health care reforms heralds good timing for *Primary Health Care Principles for Practice*, a new and unique self-directed learning resource for nurses working in rural health acute care settings.

Launched by Chief Nursing Officer, Adjunct Professor Debra Thoms, at the Lockhart Community Health Centre in December 2011, *Primary Health Care Principles for Practice* was produced through an exciting collaboration between the Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD), Sydney Nursing School and the Centre for Primary Health Care and Equity, Faculty of Medicine, UNSW. Associate Professor Yun-Hee Jeon from Sydney Nursing School is Project Lead. “This project is unique in its approach to instilling the notion that primary health care begins at the hospital door. For acute care nurses this is where they first meet their patients but certainly not where health care ends.”

Consultations with nurses and managers working in smaller rural health care facilities found various levels of nursing staff were keen to improve their understanding of primary health care and have the skills to deliver it. However, their capacity was often constrained by resource limitations, communication barriers and fragmentation of services which were compounded by geographical challenges.

“A greater understanding by health care professionals working in hospitals about the need for comprehensive, coordinated, accessible and equitable health care will assist patients to get the care they need, especially those with chronic illnesses,” Yun-Hee Jeon said.

Nurses in the MLHD will now have access to the learning resources. Sydney Nursing School is supporting the rollout of the initiative, working closely with senior nurse management. A one-day induction program will be held in March for managers and clinical educators who will champion the initiative in their hospitals.

NEW FACES IN 2012

We are delighted to welcome a number of new academic and clinical staff to Sydney Nursing School who will contribute to quality teaching and research:

Christina Aggar
Lecturer, Acute Care/Care of Chronic Conditions

Cassandra Bartford
Associate Lecturer, Clinical Education Specialist

Sybele Christopher
Lecturer, Acute Care/Primary Health Care

Amanda Jane Currie
Lecturer, Acute Critical Care

Jacqui Fong
Lecturer and Clinical Support Coordinator

Dr Janice Gullick
Coordinator and Senior Lecturer, Critical Care

Lisa Haxell
Associate Lecturer, Clinical Education Specialist

Dr Vanessa Hughes
Senior Lecturer, Bioscience

Dr Nathaniel Marshall (Nat)
Coordinator and Senior Lecturer, Clinical Trials

Dr Peta McVey
Lecturer, Care of Chronic Conditions

Shannon Philp
Lecturer and Coordinator, Cancer and Haematology Nursing

Sarah Sisson
Associate Lecturer, Clinical Education Specialist

STUDENT AMBASSADORS

Our student ambassadors did a brilliant job representing Sydney Nursing School in 2011:

Miranda Agyemang, Rachel Cheng, Rebecca Elfes, Vanessa Fries, Christina Ha, Sarah Hudspeth Stevenson, Louise Heather, Rebecca Karraz, Marcel Mariano, Rita Muscat, Megan Payne, Tom Schrader, Deborah Thomas, Charles Tian, Lauren Whalan, Grace Willson, Bertina Wong and Winnie Teo Sook Ying
TRAUMA NURSE CASE MANAGEMENT RECOGNISED

Associate Professor Kate Curtis was awarded the Frank McDermott Award recognising a project for its excellence and impact.

It was a bright day for Sydney Nursing School when Clinical Associate Professor Kate Curtis and Master of Philosophy student Rebekah Olgivie won two separate awards at the National Trauma Research Institute (NTRI) conference in Melbourne in November 2011.

Kate Curtis was awarded the prestigious Frank McDermott Award for her research into ‘Trauma Nurse Case Management - improving patient outcomes, communication and resource use’. The award recognises research completed and published in the last 10 years and judged to have led to the greatest improvements in care of severely injured patients in Australia or New Zealand.

Kate led a study in 2001 at St George Hospital in Sydney which evaluated the effect of Trauma Case Management. Patient care at this hospital was (and continues to be) overseen by a trauma nurse specialist, from resuscitation to discharge.

The study used practice-specific outcome variables, such as in-hospital complication rates, length of stay, resource use, allied health service intervention rates and communication effectiveness. It found a range of improvements, including:

- the time taken for patients to progress to physiotherapy and social work consultations
- decreases in the occurrence of in hospital complications such as deep vein thrombosis
- reduced length of stay, particularly in the paediatric and 45 to 65 years age group
- significantly fewer pathology tests and a reduction of 819 bed days.

“Patient care by a trauma nurse specialist results in significant health benefits to the trauma patient and their families and financial savings to a hospital and the health system,” Clinical Associate Professor Curtis said.

Results have changed the way specialist trauma hospitals function. The groundbreaking research has since been translated into health policy and stimulated the implementation of the Trauma Case Management model in trauma hospitals around Australia and New Zealand, dramatically improving patient care.

Clinical Associate Professor Curtis is now finalising a multi-centre study aimed at identifying the real cost associated with treating trauma patients.

Against tough competition Rebekah Olgivie won Best Paper for her paper “Surviving Traumatic Physical Injury - A Systematic Synthesis of Current Knowledge”. 

Another year, another dollar! At the end of 2011 a count of tips from staff, students and visitors to the Mallett Street Cafe totalled $342 – enough to purchase fishing ponds and clean water for a school in Laos through Oxfam Australia.
Clinical practice in health facilities is an integral component of Sydney Nursing School’s pre-registration nursing program. For four students, the opportunity to undertake additional clinical practice in Vietnam over the summer semester break was an incredible opportunity. To be sent on a once-in-a-lifetime Hoc Mai scholarship was even better.

The Hoc Mai scholarship is a donation-driven program that sponsors University of Sydney medical, allied health and nursing students to stay in Vietnam for a four week period to undertake clinical practice in city hospitals. This year Anna-Louise Hollows, Louise Khan, Cassie King and Nikki McAlpine were awarded scholarships. The promise of challenging and rewarding experiences and their desire to improve their clinical skills for patient care had led them to apply.

The four travelled to Hanoi with a team of students from the disciplines of speech pathology, physiotherapy and medicine. They were posted at two hospitals, Viet Duc University Hospital and Bach Mai Hospital. They spent most of their time in the Emergency Department with tasks including recording vital signs, as well as contributing to initial patient assessments, giving medications and assisting in resuscitations.

Echoed by her classmates, Nikki McAlpine found that one of the biggest challenges during the month-long placement was the language barrier. However, she said, “touch and compassion can be universally applied so we were able to calm patients to some degree.”

First-hand experience with death and dying was also a confronting fact of everyday life. Cassie was quick to point out that among the sad experiences, “there were many happy ones with a visit to the obstetrics ward providing the opportunity to watch natural births and caesareans”.

Anna-Louise, Cassie, Louise and Nikki all agree that the biggest learning curves came in the form of personal growth. Nikki describes how she learned “to read facial expressions and not rely solely on patients having the opportunity or capacity to verbally communicate their problems or pain.”

It’s opportunities like these that make the Hoc Mai scholarship such a unique experience and one which our nursing students will carry with them throughout their nursing careers. The Hoc Mai Australia Vietnam Medical Foundation is a non-profit organisation which was established in 1998 to improve medical education in Vietnam. More details at: http://sydney.edu.au/medicine/hocmai/about/
NEWS FROM THE LABS

Sydney Nursing School’s state-of-the-art clinical simulation laboratories are ready and waiting for an expanded cohort of students in 2012.

We now have more electronic equipment and have refurbished the practice labs to provide more opportunities for students to practise. With five new electric beds we now have nine beds and medium fidelity manikins ready for students to practise their skills. We encourage students to sign up for practice sessions at the beginning of each semester. According to Clinical Simulation Laboratory Manager Evelyn Dalton, “Practice makes perfect!” Indeed anecdotal feedback from students has found that those who do practise their clinical skills feel much more confident in their Clinical Practice Assessments (CPAs) and better prepared for their clinical placements.

Evelyn Dalton, Clinical Simulation Laboratory Manager, and Annette Hill, Clinical Simulation Assistant, encourage students to practise their clinical skills in the labs.

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH NETWORK

The focus of the Australian Government’s Collaborative Research Networks (CRN) program announced in 2009, is to encourage smaller, less research-intensive and regional higher education institutions to develop their research capacity and adapt to a research system driven more strongly by performance outcomes.

A team from Southern Cross University (SCU) has been successful in a bid to establish a CRN comprising three project elements, led respectively by the universities of NSW, Sydney and Queensland. The overall objective of this collaboration is to develop high quality, internationally recognised research through a project entitled ‘Policy and Planning Research for Sustainable Regions’. It is intended that all participants in the collaborative network will benefit from the partnership.

In Element 2 of this project the School of Health and Human Sciences at SCU has teamed up with the Development Portfolio of the University of Sydney Research Office, Sydney Nursing School and School of Public Health to explore ‘Social Sustainability in Health and Nursing’.

This two-year project will build on SCU’s already identified strengths in health and nursing research: nursing workforce development (advanced practice), mental health and the health of children, young people and families. Associate Professors Jenny Fraser, Kim Foster and Donna Waters and Dr Tom Buckley, from Sydney Nursing School with considerable expertise in these areas, have commenced work on the project and are currently designing research capacity building projects.

Associate Professor Jenny Fraser is “looking forward to spending time working in Lismore and across SCU campuses with SCU staff, aiming to produce joint publications, working towards competitive grants and increasing the number of jointly supervised research students”. Sydney Nursing School will also be welcoming SCU staff to Sydney to participate in a range of activities, including research mentoring and participating in early career researcher workshops. These will be supported by masterclasses at SCU.

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Evelyn Dalton, Clinical Simulation Laboratory Manager, and Annette Hill, Clinical Simulation Assistant, encourage students to practise their clinical skills in the labs.