Extra: Lives Outside the Hospital

Rock That Party: Nurse DJ at Work
by Candace Pearson

Not many nurses travel with their own fog machine and high-performance turntables, but not many nurses have another life as a professional DJ—like Grace Magaling, RN, BSN.

When Magaling isn’t on duty in the Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit (CTICU) at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, she might be found spinning tunes at family anniversaries, wedding receptions, and Sweet 16 and bachelorette parties.

She’s been a professional DJ since 2003, when she taught herself the skills to earn extra money while at California State University, Sacramento. Her performances attracted the attention of a major promotions company in Northern California. Soon she was hired to provide music for corporate and political events, preconcert parties and new-music launches. She hosted an iTunes radio show and even met her husband, Mark Magaling, when both Djed an event.

After college, she was offerred the opportunity to travel and provide music for celebrity events. “But I had already been accepted into nursing school,” she says. “I knew I wanted to be a nurse.”

So she put her DJ gear aside to study and, later, complete the Versant RN Residency in Pediatrics at Children’s Hospital. Still, music—particularly classical—helped get her through nursing school by keeping her calm and focused, she says.

She uses the same method to help her young charges in the CTICU. When a patient is stressed, Magaling plays soothing music or suggests a playlist to the parents. “Sometimes, trying the non-pharmaceutical intervention first works,” she says.

Grace Magaling, RN, BSN spinning tunes at her own wedding

When playing the piano (something she’s done since age 5), she favors Beethoven and Bach. When working the turntables, she likes “anything from old-school R&B to hip-hop and country.” A good DJ can make or break a party, Magaling says. “You play to the crowd and see how they react. There’s an art to it, which I enjoy.”

A Strong Advocate for Education
by Elena F. Epstein

Leticia Boutros, NP, at the recent CHAMP program

Leticia Boutros, NP, (Surgical Admitting) is one of six siblings raised by a single mother who consistently stressed the value of education. Boutros, a Children’s Hospital Los Angeles nurse for 26 years, speaks with great pride of the fact that all her siblings have graduated college and are enjoying professional careers.

It is those values of hard work, perseverance and learning that Boutros wants to instill in the young women she meets and mentors through her various volunteer work.

Each year she runs several workshops for young minority women through the Pasadena Youth Center’s annual Adelante Mujer Latina Conference (Latin Women Moving Forward), which draws more than 2,000 middle- and high school-aged girls representing 134 schools from throughout Los Angeles, Ventura and Riverside Counties.

“It’s so important for girls to set goals and consider different career options,” says Boutros, who began the workshops in 2008. “If they have the motivation, they will find the opportunities to succeed.”

Boutros also volunteers with the Children’s Hospital Careers in Health and Mentorship Program (CHAMP), where she has talked to high school students in the Greater Los Angeles community, encouraging and promoting post-high school education and health care careers.

This year, Boutros has also become involved with Hermanas Unidas de UCLA, a Chicana/Latinas student organization that combines academic, community service and social activities. Boutros meets quarterly with the college students to chat informally about various issues ranging from nutrition, diagnostic examinations and personal health to sexually transmitted infections. In addition, she has participated in the organization’s annual career conference.

“We usually meet in the student apartments, where I present health and resource information to the students, and this is followed by a discussion session,” says Boutros.

By the end of the evening, the students typically start to open up and share their questions and concerns. With every information session, Boutros is one step closer to her goal of empowering as many young adults as possible through education.
ill children tend to get frustrated more easily by day-to-day annoyances ... while I am nothing less than thrilled my family is healthy and able to go out and live each day to seek and learn for themselves what is important in life.

“I have taken care of children with end-stage lethal diseases who have told me they would love nothing more than to go to a normal school, attend their prom, or go to the mall and shop one more time,” she adds. “It's unfathomable the things I would take for granted before I became a nurse.”

Matich recounts a life-changing event early in her career, at another hospital, when she cared for a newborn with a severe brain hemorrhage. After the decision was made to remove the baby from life support, the boy's parents asked if the nurses would read children’s stories and sing Christmas carols to him—activities he would not grow up to experience. They agreed, fighting back tears through each page and song.

That experience taught Matich the importance of cherishing simple pleasures, like reading and singing to a child, but also reminded her of the key role nurses play in a family’s painful recovery. “No matter how difficult it was for us, their request was important to the parents and their healing. Our role was to help them get through a difficult period in their lives,” she says.
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“My job allows me to get a glimpse of our patients’ lives,” she adds. “I try very hard to make a difference, keep things in perspective and focus on what really matters.”

She remembers one patient whose family was given little hope prior to arriving at Children’s Hospital. The toddler needed another heart surgery and both parents, faced with losing her, “were remarkable,” Faire says. “[The pressure] never came across—they were grateful and understanding, even when we didn’t have all the answers. They taught us how to carry on.” Faire notes that the girl, now 8 years old, is thriving.

In dealing with families in crisis, she has become more empathetic. “I always put myself in someone else’s shoes and treat them the way that I would want to be treated.”

While it’s not easy being exposed to patients who are suffering or have a difficult prognosis, Gallardo says it’s rewarding knowing she’s making a difference in someone’s life and seeing “miracles that come through the hospital’s hallways day in and day out.”

Loera adds, “I may not be able to save a child, but I may be able to save a family. Five years down the road, I want them to say, ‘I’m so glad she was there to take care of us.’ I want to make an impact so they remember me.

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Sue Matich, RN, PNP

Pam Faire, MSN, CPNP-PC/AC (Cardiothoracic Surgery) has learned her share of life lessons from patients and families. “The parents are so scared and have a ferocious love for their child, but they show such grace and strength,” she says. “I have learned something from all of them and I hope I give them something back.”

Forty-seven nurses and staff from Children’s Hospital Los Angeles attended the American Nurses Credentialing Center National Magnet Conference in Orlando, Fla., in October. Mary Dee Hacker, MBA, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, vice president of Patient Care Services and chief nursing officer, was introduced as a new Magnet Commissioner. There are only 11 Commissioners around the world.

Posters
Kelli Anderson, RN, (5 West), Gloria Verret, RN, (6 West) and Jennifer Buchanan, RN, (Institute for Maternal-Fetal Health): “RN Remedies: A Nurse-Driven Blog Program Reaches Out Globally.” Sandy Hall, RN, (RN Residency), Diane Altounji, RN, (4 West), Laura Rohnert, PT, Joan Godell (Health Sciences) and Felicitas dela Cruz, RN, (Nursing Research): “A Staff-Driven Initiative to Improve Evidence-Based Practice at the Bedside.” Noreen Clarke, RN, (Craniofacial/UCEDD), Kathryn Smith, RN, (UCEDD) and Cecily Betz, RN, (UCEDD): “Let’s Get Involved: Advocacy on the Local, Regional, State, National and International Level,” and “Creation of Nurse Directed Clinics for Children with Special Health Care Needs.”

Presentations
Susan Crandall, RN, (Magnet and PICU): “Taming the Beast: Conquering the Demographic Information Form and Harnessing Data to Transform Your Organization” and “Magnet Sustainability: Infusing the Magic of Innovation Through Designation, Redesignation and Beyond.” Nancy Blake, RN, (Critical Care Services) and Kathleen Stevenson, RN, (Nursing Supervisor): “Disaster Preparedness: Nurses Partnering With the Community to Influence Policy and Response.” Cecily Betz, RN, (UCEDD) and Kathryn Smith, RN, (UCEDD): “Promoting Inclusive Health Care for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities.” Nancy McNeill, RN, (Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit): “Improving Patient Satisfaction and the Patient/Family Experience” (a Magnet exemplars panel).
Gratitude. This time of year we think a lot about the people and things in our lives that we are thankful for. I personally feel so blessed to have my family, friends and a rewarding career. I’m grateful for the opportunities I have had, especially for the honor of working with such a dedicated group of colleagues. In this issue of FloSheet, you’ll read about nurses in our Hematology-Oncology unit who have brought Beads of Courage to our patients, another nurse who spends her free time mentoring young Latina students and our never-ending quest to find answers via leading-edge research through a new, innovative collaboration with the UCLA School of Nursing.

We also talked to our nurses about the profound influence our profession has on how we view gratitude. We are privy to life’s most challenging times. We have all sat with anxious parents following a critical accident or illness. We have been there when the news has been too much to bear and we have been there when the joy can be felt throughout the unit. Our work at Children’s Hospital is demanding, both physically and emotionally. Does this career change us? Absolutely. For me, I know I have become much more appreciative of what might sound like such ordinary moments—feeling the sunshine on my face when I go for a walk in the morning, chopping vegetables for a Sunday family dinner, chatting with a good friend. These simple moments are what fill me with joy. They remind me that every day is a gift—a gift I’m very grateful for.

As we celebrate the holidays and look forward to a new year, I urge you to appreciate those precious moments in your lives. As you check off your to-do list of presents to buy and holiday gatherings to plan, take a few minutes of quiet and reflect on what you’re grateful for. I truly believe that through gratitude we find true joy.

In the halls of the Division of Hematology, Oncology and Blood and Marrow Transplantation at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, colorful strands of beads dangle from IV poles. Inside the patient rooms, children huddle with their parents, adding new beads to their hard-earned assortment.

These are the Beads of Courage®, an arts-in-medicine supportive care program that enables children to tell their own stories of resilience and survivorship.

The nationwide program—developed for children with cancer, blood disease or other chronic illness—launched at Children’s Hospital July 14, 2013, when excited patients, family members and staff crowded into the fourth-floor Family Lounge. Children and teens received their first beads and the strand-stringing party was underway.

“The beads give the children a sense of bravery and pride—they’ve overcome something and have a ‘badge’ to show for it,” says Rita Secola, PhD, RN, CPON, FAAN, Patient Care Services director, Hematology-Oncology.

Secola and Diane Altounji, MSN, RN, CPON, 4 West, and Peggy Townsend, MSM, RN, CPON, clinical manager, 4 East, led a group of “nurse champions” who completed a three-month training in the nurse-run program. The program at Children’s Hospital received key support from two organizations—Chai Lifeline West Coast and Integrity Ingredients Corp.

Each glass or ceramic bead a child receives represents a challenge overcome. Beads are given for clinic visits, hair loss, fever, central lines, tests, transfusions and more. There’s a star bead for surgery, a tortoise for a lumbar puncture and “bumpy beads”—with swirls, dots and other designs—for particularly tough challenges, such as a medication change or needle stick.

Completion of treatment—a particularly cherished milestone—warrants a purple bead. “That’s our favorite to give out,” says Altounji.

Children keep a “daily bead journal” and often corral caregivers with requests for beads. The number one rule for nurses—“no bead withholding,” says Secola with a smile.

In reflection of the hospital’s research-based approach to care, Secola is conducting pre- and post-launch surveys of patients and families to determine if the program makes a difference in strengthening coping skills and emotional resilience.

Nurses say the beads also boost morale for caregivers, who get their own strands. “As nurses we often bring difficult news—another injection, medication or test,” notes Townsend. “This allows us to bring our patients something fun.”

Nurses in the Division of Hematology, Oncology and Blood and Marrow Transplantation
UCLA Partnership Focuses on Nursing Research

by Candace Pearson

Children's Hospital and UCLA will exchange scholarly information to keep clinicians and researchers abreast of best practices. The partnership also is expected to usher in new, joint educational efforts, including training, conferences and other scientific meetings on subjects of mutual interest.

Four PhD-level nurses at Children's Hospital will join the UCLA School of Nursing faculty—Nancy Blake, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, critical care nurse; Lori Marshall, PhD, MSN, RN, administrator; Joan Clark, PhD, RN, critical care nurse; and Rita Secola, PhD, RN, CPON, nurse researcher.

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The hospital will establish a Center for Nursing Research within The Saban Research Institute at Children's Hospital Los Angeles to support nurses in designing projects, analyzing data and presenting findings. In addition, nurses from Children's Hospital and UCLA will exchange scholarly information to keep clinicians and researchers abreast of best practices.

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