

The

2007 Nursing Celebration Issue

Nurses' Lounge.com

Greater Houston Edition

November/December 2007



Jackie Stiernagle & Monique Huntley
Memorial Hermann Hospital - The Woodlands



**Latest two Houston area
Nurse-Friendly
Hospitals**

Also in this issue:

- ▶ Up close with Beth Cloyd
- ▶ 20 Outstanding Nurses

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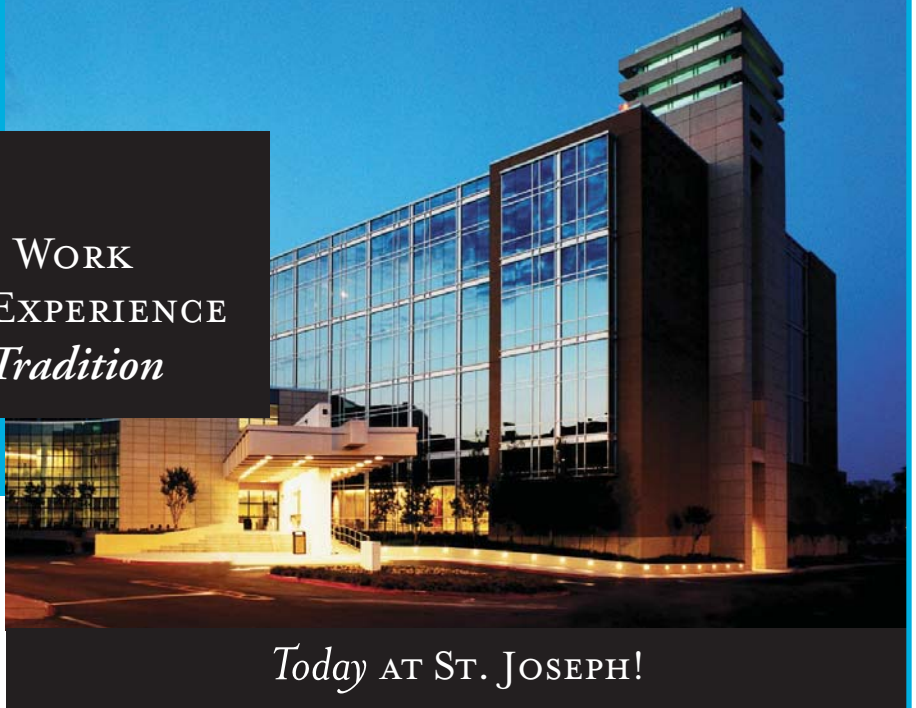
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www.nurseslounge.com**editor@nurseslounge.com****LETTER** from the **EDITOR****"December Magic"**

The holiday season is moving forward with a quick pace, nurses are decking their white halls with red and green holiday decorations, and there is a sense of anticipation and end-of-the-year magic in the air. So in this issue, The Nurses' Lounge celebrates those who are making magic every day.

First, we would like to congratulate this year's 20 Outstanding Nurses from TNA, District 9. We have devoted a large portion of this issue to recognizing this year's honorees. Find out what inspires outstanding nurses and share their best memories in our special 8-page section.

The Texas Nurses Association has awarded its prized Nurse-Friendly hospital designation to three local hospitals. The Nurse-Friendly designation actually started out as a graduate project, designed to study nurse retention and patient outcome. Their 12 criteria for being Nurse-Friendly are potent ingredients in improving nurse retention and patient outcomes. It's interesting how the quality of patient outcomes is tied to nurse retention. Perhaps this is because, as professionals, we like to go where we are appreciated, where we are allowed to contribute, and where we can do the most good.

Finally, Elizabeth Cloyd, the new Executive VP of Clinical Operations and Chief Nurse Executive for the Harris County Hospital District, is on a mission to change the way patients and staff think about the district. Turn to page 14 to read about her vision and how the HCHD is planning to grow in 2008.

The Nurses' Lounge would like to wish you a happy holiday season. As we move forward into 2008, we have special surprises in store for you in the Nurses' Lounge. Keep an eye on www.NursesLounge.com for updates and announcements. If you'd like a sneak peek at what's in store, create a profile for yourself and join America's soon-to-be-favorite online social network for nurses, so you can connect with others in the Nurses' Lounge.

See you in the lounge!

Anthony Armstrong,
Editor-in-Chief, Nurses' Lounge

FACES IN THE CROWD

Bayshore's Candi Mastracchio

A Down-to-Earth Astronaut's Wife

by Tracy Morris



Mission Specialist Rick Mastracchio unfurled a Bayshore Medical Center Flag on the space shuttle STS-118 mission to the International Space Station.

When there's talk of "stars" in the suburbs southeast of Houston, the conversations are often more about celestial bodies than celebrities. **Candi Mastracchio**, RN lives particularly close to the stars – her husband, Rick Mastracchio, is an astronaut. **Bayshore Medical Center** is one facility that proudly employs family members of NASA workers.

Rick was most recently a Mission Specialist on the space shuttle

STS-118 mission to the International Space Station from August 8 through 21, where he unfurled a Bayshore Medical Center flag (printed

with "Soaring Above the Rest") that he later presented to Bayshore CEO, **Jeff Holland**.

Candi and her children, along with other families of the crew, were able to view the launch from the roof of the Launch Control Center.

This was the second trip to the space station for Rick, previously going seven years ago on orbit for two weeks on space shuttle mission STS-106.

Candi said she's often asked about

her feelings when Rick is launching on the shuttle and then walking in space, which he did later during this year's mission.



From left: Lisa Mastracchio, Anne Mercado, Michael Mastracchio, Candi Mastracchio, David Mastracchio

"Even though I work in the medical field," Candi, the Director of Bayshore's Neonatal ICU and Newborn Nursery says, "I support and believe in the space program and understand the risks that it carries. It is difficult to explain all the emotions you have throughout the mission, from launch to landing. A sense of pride, excitement and concern are all rolled into one."

The space shuttle Endeavour and its crew completed a 13-day journey of more than 5.2 million miles in space. Rick, along with Canadian Space Agency astronaut Dave Williams, and station flight engineer Clayton Anderson, with the help of their crew mates, made four space walks to accomplish construction tasks including adding another truss segment, a new gyroscope and an external spare parts platform to the International Space Station. The spacewalkers also completed work in preparation for upcoming assembly missions, such as relocating an equipment cart and installing support equipment and communication upgrades.

For Candi, she and her husband are more connected than separated by his out-of-this-world job.

"It's interesting when I see something in the medical field that has been developed by NASA for the astronauts or the space program," she explains. "We in the medical field do benefit tremendously from some of the spin-offs, research and scientific data that NASA has produced."

Like other NASA families and astronauts' spouses, Candi's life has a lot in common with anyone else. "After all," she muses, "my husband is just like any other man going to work, and I was just waiting for him to come home safely at the end of the day." -NL

SNAPSHOTS OF EXCELLENCE

17th Annual Nursing Celebration

20 Outstanding Nurses honored for accomplishments

The **17th Annual Nursing Celebration** was held on November 15 at the Four Seasons Hotel in downtown Houston.

Nursing Celebration represents the efforts of TNA, District 9 to recognize the outstanding contributions of professional nurses in all areas of practice to health care, the community, and the profession. These nurses were selected by blind review based solely on their special accomplishments as outlined by peers.

Additionally, the **President Award** is given to a recipient who is selected by the President and approved by the board. The winner is one who demonstrates a commitment to nursing as well as leadership and mentorship to others in the profession.

This year's recipient of the President Award was **Susan M. Distefano, MSN, RN, CNA, BC**, Senior VP, Patient Care Services and Chief Nursing Officer at Texas Children's Hospital.



Susan M. Distefano

Susan is an adjunct clinical faculty at TWU in Houston, as well as an adjunct clinical instructor at the UT Health Science Center-Houston. In 2002, she was recognized as a distinguished alumnus of the School.

Involved in supporting the community of



nursing through her involvement with the Greater Houston Partnership to improve the work environment for nursing, Susan is also active with TNA on the Competency Task Force and through the MD Anderson collaborative (HASP program) which set up an alternative reporting system for nursing errors. Her recent national presentations include topics such as patient safety, motivation and rewards, and disaster management. Community activities include participation as a board member for the Greater Houston Immunization Partnership and The Depelchin Children's Center.

On being notified of the award, Distefano commented, "It is truly an honor to be recognized by my peers for my contributions to our profession, as well as to the pediatric patients in our community. I am always humbled by the many ways in which nurses give

of themselves to support the needs of patients and families. It is exhilarating to be a part of this important profession!"

Nursing Celebration also offers an opportunity for the district to give research grants and scholarships to those nurses who conduct research in the areas of practice in patient care, education, management and to nursing students who play a key role in defining the future of our profession. A research grant has been awarded this year to **Mary Anne Vincent**. This year's scholarship winners are: **Joseph Abaya, Karen Janssen, Adaku Ofoegbu** and **Agnes Wiafe-Ababio**.

Look through the next six pages and read what this year's honorees had to say about the things and people that inspire them toward great nursing careers.



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Rita Dello Stritto
RN, BS, MSN,
PhD, CNS, ENP

Texas Woman's University, College of Nursing
23 years in nursing

Rita Dello Stritto, RN, PhD graduated from Texas Woman's University in May 1984. She currently works as an Emergency Nurse Practitioner at the Liberty-Dayton Community Hospital Emergency Department in Liberty Texas. Rita is also an Assistant Professor at TWU, teaching both undergraduate and graduate programs.

What inspired you to become a nurse?

I was a medic in the Air Force, and I worked on the OB unit. I enjoyed the work, but I wanted to be able to do more. I wanted to be like the nurses I worked with -- I was awed by what they knew and how they could figure out when something was going wrong with the delivery, and how they knew exactly what to do. I wanted to be able to do that. The nurses were very encouraging to me and convinced me that I could do it. So, I was honorably discharged from the USAF and started nursing school.

I am always fascinated by how one person can influence the life of others and how there can be a continuum of that influence. I remember one day working in a local emergency department while I was precepting one of my professors from nursing school and working with one of my previous students. Here we were, three generations of nurses working together on the same team. My professor had a tremendous influence over me to become a nursing instructor and an emergency nurse, and I had influence over my previous student in becoming an emergency nurse.



Charley Elliott
RN, MSN, CNNP

Texas Children's Hospital
19 years in nursing

Charley Elliott currently works as Director of Advanced Practice Nurses at Texas Children's Hospital.

I was a high school drop-out in the 10th grade. My husband inspired me to obtain my GED, which I did. Then he encouraged and supported me to attend a community college to take liberal arts courses. Once I got my foot in the door, it was all the inspiration I needed to keep going. I applied to Fort Sanders School of Nursing in Knoxville, Tennessee. I worked hard the first year and was afforded the opportunity to obtain my bachelors in science. After graduating from East Tennessee State, I worked in many areas of nursing and really wanted to advance my education. I then began a journey of advanced nursing education in the area of neonatal nursing that has since become my passion. I have a great deal of respect for the field of nursing and consider it a privilege to work with some of the brightest and most compassionate people in my profession.



Janet C. Gilmore
RN, MSN

The Methodist Hospital
37 years in nursing

Janet Gilmore is the Director of Perioperative

Services at The Methodist Hospital. She's been a nurse for 37 years. Her two most important role models were her grandmother and mother, both nurses. Janet's mother also worked at Methodist.

Would you care to share any memorable anecdotes about your work?

I recall many wonderful experiences in making a difference for patients & their families as a staff nurse in CCU & MICU, here at TMH. Everything I learned at the bedside, I was able to transfer into my management position and improved my skills as a mentor & teacher.



Nancy May Hurst
RN, DSN, IBCLC

Texas Children's Hospital

Nancy Hurst, a nurse since 1972, is assistant director of the Lactation Program and Mother's Own Milk Bank at Texas Children's Hospital. She also has academic appointments as assistant professor at Baylor College of Medicine and University of Texas Health Science Center-School of Nursing.

What inspired you to become a nurse?

When I was in 8th grade, I was told by one of my teachers that I should become a nurse. I don't know why she made the statement, but it stuck with me. I love to read biographies, and had been inspired by Florence Nightingale's story. As soon as I hit 13 years old, I volunteered as a candy striper at a local hospital and knew I had found my niche! Two years ago, I was fortunate to visit the Florence Nightingale museum in London. What an experience!

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**Lola Denise
Jefferson**
RNC, BSN,
CVRN

St. Luke's
Episcopal
Hospital
19 years in nursing

Lola Jefferson graduated from TWU with a bachelors degree. She plans to obtain a Masters of Business Administration, and is currently a Nursing Supervisor at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital.

What inspired you to become a nurse?

My mother inspired me to become a nurse. She stated that she wanted me to be a teacher or a nurse. Since I love caring for people and I love teaching, I thought that I could get the best of both worlds. So I became a nurse.

I founded the Fort Bend County Black Nurses Association, which is the largest chapter for the past five years in the National Black Nurses Association. The organization is fantastic -- we have educational symposiums, health fairs, and many other activities. Our chapter has won many national awards.



**Janice
Johnson-
Umezulike**
RN, BSN, MN,
CNS, DNS

Lee College
ADN Program
23 years in nursing

Dr. Umezulike received her BSN degree at McNeese State University in Lake Charles, LA. She continued her education at LSU Medical

Center, New Orleans, LA, earning a Masters in Nursing and Doctor of Nursing Science degree. She works as a Professor of Nursing at Lee College in Baytown, Texas. She also works as a consultant, has published a variety of nursing articles, and also owns her own business – Dr. Johnson-Umezulike NCLEX Review for RNS and LVNs. She has continued professional experience in nursing research, legal aspects in nursing, and test taking strategies.

What inspired you to become a nurse?

Providing nursing care to the public as well as educating others to become nurses has been my primary source of inspiration.



Debra Lanclos
RN, BSN, CNA,
BC

Texas Children's
Hospital
23 years in nursing

Debby Lanclos is the Assistant Director over the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Texas Children's Hospital. She counts family members as her primary source of inspiration. Her mom is a nurse, her dad is a doctor, and she also has aunts and uncles who are in the medical field. *I guess it is in my blood,* Lanclos says.

Would you care to share any memorable anecdotes about your work?

There are so many moments that I can think back on and say, 'I am lucky that I was able to share in the joy of this family.' The first time a mom and a dad lay eyes on their new baby is priceless. Their eyes light up and their face is aglow with joy. Most of the time they are concerned they might hurt their baby if they touch them, but when the baby holds their finger in their hand, everything else disappears but that moment.



Johnie Leonard
RN, MSN, CEN,
CAN

The Methodist
Hospital
34 years in nursing

The director of the Emergency Department at The Methodist Hospital, Johnie's been a nurse for 34 years – and employed at Methodist all that time. She's worked as a staff nurse, charge nurse, manager and now director. Most of her nursing career has been in emergency nursing, a field that she loves to lead.

The challenges are many, but the opportunity to work with staff to make a difference is tremendous -- and the personal reward is just as great. I tell my staff all the time that I have the best job in The Methodist Hospital, Leonard says.

What inspired you to become a nurse?

It seems that I always wanted to be a nurse. When my grandfather became ill, I helped my mother care for him. I would visit him in the hospital and would see the nurses in their starched white uniforms, caps and white shoes, hustling up and down the hallways, going in and out of rooms. It looked like they were in charge, and it seemed that they were important and doing something important. I said, 'I want to be like those ladies.' Also, my mother would tell me 'you should be a nurse.' That sealed the deal for me. I joined the future Nurses Club in high school. I took a patient care assistant course while in high school. There's no career that I can think of that would be more rewarding. It just seems that God created me to be a nurse.

I just feel blessed that I know why I am here on this earth. I know my purpose... it is to be a nurse. There is no higher calling.

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Barbara A. Montagnino
RN, MS, CNS

Texas Children's Hospital
34 years in nursing

Barbara Montagnino is the Clinical Nurse Specialist for the Progressive Care Unit at Texas Children's Hospital. She's been a registered nurse for 34 years.

What inspired you to become a nurse?

My mother was a registered nurse whom everyone relied upon whenever a health crisis arose. She was the person I most admired. She lost her battle to breast cancer when I was 12. I decided I could best honor her memory by following in her footsteps.

Would you care to share any memorable anecdotes about your work?

Too numerous to list. However, the most unusual anecdote involves assisting with surgery on a grizzly bear at the Houston Zoo.



Paula Rupert
MSN, APRN-BC, FNP

The Methodist Hospital
16 years in nursing

Paula Rupert works for The Methodist Hospital as a Nurse Practitioner in an acute care post-op setting. A nurse for 16 yrs now, she remarks, *I love it more each day, and I can't imagine any other career that would have been as fulfilling and frustrating at the same time!*

What inspired you to become a nurse?

I believe my desire came from my great interest in health and a thirst for knowledge. I love interacting with others and being capable of providing care, whether it's physical, emotional, or medical. I feel so blessed to have the ability and compassion to make a difference. As nurses, we often must look beyond the obvious. This is true not only physically, but emotionally and spiritually, too. No matter where we work, nursing is hard. In the current health care environment, we are constantly trying to place a monetary value on what we do in nursing. Never forget -- not all things counted actually matter, and not all things that matter are counted. How do we bill for compassion? Unmeasurable appreciation will always be in the eyes and touch of those we care for, not in the dollars collected or spent.



Teresita Santiago
RN, BSN, CPAN

St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital

Teresita Santiago is a staff nurse and charge nurse in the PACU. She's says that she's been a nurse long enough to see traditional charting become sophisticated electronic charting.

What inspired you to become a nurse?

Truly, what inspired me to be a nurse was when I took care of my mother in the hospital, doing what a nurse would do at an early age. I was fascinated with the white, crisp uniform, white stocking and shoes and nurse cap. The genuiness of dedication, professionalism and constant giving of service inspired me to be one like them.

Would you care to share any memorable anecdotes about your work?

Everyday is a new day, a new adventure, not knowing the outcomes, hoping for the best. One special event that I cannot forget occurred when a patient expressed that she was scared and asked me if I could pray with her. Without hesitation, I held her hands and we both said The Lord's Prayer. She thanked me for listening and being there... Sometimes we take things for granted, not knowing that small little things we do for our patients mean a lot to them.



Florence Schaefer
MS, RN, CNS-AH, APRN, BC

St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital
30 years in nursing

Florence Schaefer is marking her 30th anniversary of becoming a registered nurse, having graduated in 1977 from Pilgrim Psychiatric Center, School of Nursing in West Brentwood, New York. She is now an Education Specialist in the Nursing and Patient Education Department at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital. Her roles include the orientation and training of new employees, working on various task forces and committees, and developing programs aimed at introducing nursing to middle and high school age children. Schaefer is also loaned adjunct faculty at Texas Woman's University as a Clinical Instructor to first semester nursing students.

What inspired you to become a nurse?

I went back and forth between nursing and teaching. I enrolled in a high school course entitled Nursing Co-op. We went into the hospital 12 hours per week to work as assistant nurse aides. This course helped to solidify my

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decision to become a nurse. I am happy that for almost 15 years, I have been able to combine nursing and teaching into my role.

Would you care to share any memorable anecdotes about your work?

There are many stories and memories that hold special meaning for me that would not for anyone else. I can say that I am happy to have spent my career doing something that I love -- nursing. I continue to try to add an element of fun into everyday. And I am truly grateful for the flexibility nursing has afforded to me as my children have grown.



**Brenda Schiavone
RN, MSN,
CNAA**

*The Menninger
Clinic
28 years in nursing*

Brenda Schiavone has been a nurse for nearly 28 years and is currently a clinical education specialist at The Menninger Clinic, a specialty psychiatric hospital.

What inspired you to become a nurse?

I cannot remember ever wanting to be anything else but a nurse, or ever wondering what I would be when I grew up -- I just knew I would be a nurse. My sister was a nurse. I recall being in the 5th grade and involved in a debate; it was during the time of the first heart transplant being done in Cape Town, South Africa. My interests have always been in healthcare and nursing.

Would you care to share any memorable anecdotes about your work?

I feel so privileged to have such a rewarding profession. There are never two days that are the same. Relationships with so many extra-

ordinary professionals stand out. I have always tried to treat my patients in a way that I would want one of my family members to be treated, with respect, dignity, and compassion.



**Linda Stafford
RN, PhD, CS**

*University of
Texas Health
Science Center
40 years in nursing*

Linda Stafford currently serves as the Division Head of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing in the Department of Integrative Nursing Care at UT-Houston.

She was influenced to choose nursing as a career in the 8th grade and went through a period of reading all she could about Florence Nightingale, Edith Cavell, Clara Barton and others.

Would you care to share any memorable anecdotes about your work?

Years ago, a man in his 50s had been hospitalized for a brutal, incapacitating bout of depression. I remember walking with him as he paced the halls--sometimes mumbling to himself... unable to eat or sleep. After several weeks of treatment, he looked 20 years younger, regained his appetite, and was soon to be discharged home to his family. As I placed an evening snack for the patients in the solarium (usually consisting of cheese, crackers & juice), he approached me to tell me he was glad that day, saying, 'Things are always a little nicer when you're here.' I don't know what our brief encounter meant to him, but I found myself reflecting that maybe the way I had fussed over making a visually appealing snack tray spoke to him in a way that I had no words for at the time.



**Charlotte Stephenson
RN, DSN**

*Texas Woman's
University, College
of Nursing
40 years in nursing*

Charlotte Stephenson is a Clinical Professor for Texas Woman's University, College of Nursing in Houston. Of her inspiration, Charlotte explains, To me, nursing is a 'calling'; a means of serving God and people.

Would you care to share any memorable anecdotes about your work?

Nursing usually means 'caring' for others. However, one encounter helped me understand that the nurse-family interaction is more than a one-way process. As a young nurse, I was in charge of a small pediatric unit on the 3-11 shift. A seven-year-old child who'd been in ICU following a bicycle-automobile accident was admitted to the unit. He was comatose and the long-term outlook was poor. While providing care I talked to the child, even though he did not respond, and to the child's father who sat with him each evening. The father showed pictures of the child before the accident and told about all the activities they shared together. We even discussed life issues and spiritual concerns. The physicians said that the father was in denial about the child's future prognosis, but I came to a different conclusion after spending several days with him. I believed the father wanted acknowledgment that the child, who was so severely injured, had a life before the accident. The father had wonderful memories of a precious child that he wanted to share. This father's faith about the future regardless of the outcome was meaningful to me because I had a child of the same age. He taught me that nurses not only give but also

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receive, that nurses have the privilege of being with people during life's difficult times, and that families do cope with unbelievable situations with grace and dignity.



Pat Varvel
RN, BSN, MS

Houston Baptist
University
42 years in nursing

Pat Varvel has been an Assistant Professor in the College of Nursing at Houston Baptist University for 11 years and a nurse for 42 years. She started working in Medical/Surgical Nursing and then moved to Obstetrics/Women's Health. Before becoming a teacher, she worked in staff nurse positions and management.

What inspired you to become a nurse?

I can't remember when I didn't want to be a nurse. My parents thought I might not be able to administer injections (I hated them as a child), and they certainly didn't think I could avoid clashing with supervisors (I was pretty headstrong). They were amazed when I became a nursing manager! I told them that I wanted to make a difference and that was the best way to do it at the time. Today, staff nurses control their own practice in many areas and make significant changes all the time that improve the lives of their patients. It is certainly an exciting time to be a nurse.

Would you care to share any memorable anecdotes about your work?

There are so many that I wish I had kept a journal – I could write a book. Peers, patients, families, bosses (good and bad) have all helped me to grow individually and as a professional. I have many sad, inspiring, funny or otherwise memorable stories and I use

them frequently as 'war stories' to emphasize a point with my students.



Mirian Vazquez
RN, MSN

Debaquey VA
Medical Center
20 years in nursing

Mirian Vazquez is a Clinical Practice Manager at the Debaquey VA Medical Center.

What inspired you to become a nurse?

Honestly, I was about five years old and just loved the way my sister-in-law looked in her white uniform. She was an RN working in a N.Y. Metropolitan hospital. In addition, I admired her assertiveness and authority when she spoke about her profession.

Would you care to share any memorable anecdotes about your work?

I have spent the majority of my career taking care of Veterans. Coming in to work every day is a blessing as I serve the men and women who have somehow sacrificed part of their lives in order for me to enjoy my family. I wake every morning feeling confident that besides God, there are men and women looking out for all of us.



Evangelina T. Villagomez
PhD, CCRN,
CDE, CS, APRN

University of
Texas Health
Science Center

Evangelina Villagomez is a professor at the

University of Texas Health Science Center-Houston, Acute & Continuing Care Department, Critical Care Division. She is lead faculty for the Clinical Nurse Specialist program for Acute care, Emergency, Geriatric and Adult specialty tracks. She co-leads the Acute care nurse practitioner program as well. Her research focus involves chronic illness, minorities with an emphasis in psychometrics and research with children and obesity. She is an advanced practice nurse in critical care and advanced diabetes management. She has been a nurse for over 25 years.

What inspired you to become a nurse?

I knew without a doubt that I wanted to make a difference with vulnerable populations in one way or another in relation to the burden that acute illness and diabetes has had in the State of Texas and particularly in the bordering counties of the state. I realized early in high school that nursing afforded a way to utilize clinical skills, critical thinking, the research process and educational interventions to change the quality of a patient's life. No other profession could do that!

Would you care to share any memorable anecdotes about your work?

Many, many times, patients on ventilators, on dialysis, with amputations, a child abandoned to burn and others with desperation have looked at me without saying a word, tears rolling down their eyes, holding on to my hands tightly, noting their enormous gratitude. Little did they know that they gave me strength, hope, and fulfillment, forever touching my life and empowering me to be the best nurse educator, clinician, and scientist that I could be as a minor way of giving back to those whom I will never, never forget.

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**Teresa Walsh
PhD, RN**

Texas Woman's
University, College
of Nursing
25 years in nursing

An RN for over 25 years, Teresa Walsh is currently Assistant Professor in the College of Nursing at Texas Women's University, teaching community health nursing. With a minor in Library Science, she also teaches Literature Review in the doctoral program. Teresa is in her 5th year at TWU.

What inspired you to become a nurse?

I have always liked working with people, and nursing was a really good fit for me from the

beginning. There's such a community feeling working in a healthcare setting, no matter where you work! The people work together to accomplish goals and help people... in nursing, work is always special.



**Karen White
RN, MBA,
CNOR**

Lyndon Baines
Johnson General
Hospital - HCHD
22 years in nursing

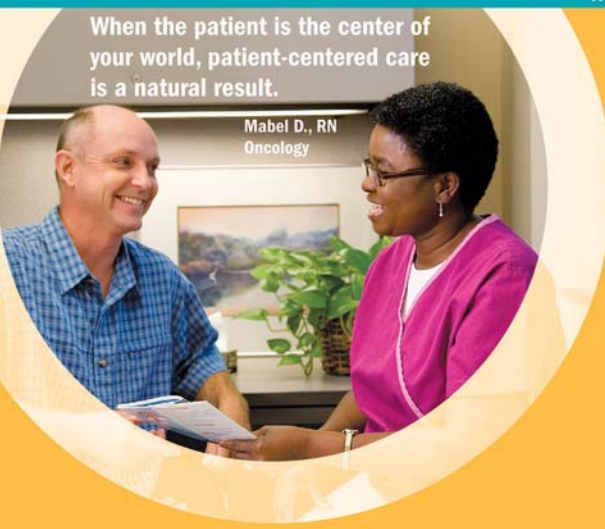
Karen White is the Nursing Director at the Ambulatory Specialty Center in Lyndon Baines Johnson General Hospital. She's been a nurse for 22 years. Karen's mother, who was also a nurse, was her main inspiration, and she also

cites an innate love of art and science.

Would you care to share any memorable anecdotes about your work?

Being a change agent in the clinical arena where I can revolutionize patient care operations is very rewarding to me. This year, I was pleased to continue the concept with the Harris County Hospital District with an event called "Dessert with the Doctors." This concept allowed the community an opportunity to ask physicians from various specialties vital healthcare questions. It also allowed clinicians to hear directly from the community and to see how critical their input is to patient care. Not only did attendees obtain key information, they also feasted on a variety of scrumptious desserts!

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Mabel D., RN
Oncology

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SNAPSHOTS OF EXCELLENCE



2008 Officers of Texas Emergency Nurses Association -- front row: Christi Dutton, Wally Fears, Cam Brandt, Sally Snow, back row: Will Stewart, Doug Havron and Stacey Kirkpatrick.

TEXAS EMERGENCY NURSES INSTALL OFFICERS FOR COMING YEAR

The Texas Emergency Nurses Association State Council elected and installed the following 2008 officers at the October 13, 2007 meeting in Arlington, Texas:

President: **Wally Fears**, RN, CEN - ED/Trauma Program Coordinator at Christus Spohn Health System in Corpus Christi, Texas;

President Elect: **Will Stewart**, RN, BSN, CEN, ENT-LP - Nurse Manager at Covenant Health System in Lubbock, Texas;

Secretary: **Stacey Kirkpatrick**, RN, MSN - ED Staff Nurse at Covenant Health System in Lubbock, Texas;

Directors:

1) **Doug Havron**, RN, BSN, MS, CEN - Administrative Director at Southwest Texas Trauma Regional Advisory Council/Regional Hospital Preparedness Council in Houston, Texas; and

2) **Cam Brandt**, RN, MSN, CPN, CEN - ED Educator at Cook Children's Medical Center in Fort Worth, Texas.

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Worth, Texas.

Treasurer: **Christi Dutton**, RN, MSN, ENP, ACNP-BC, CEN, CLNC, Emergency Nurse Practitioner with Staffing Solutions in Marlin, Texas will serve the second year of her term.

Sally K. Snow RN, BSN, FAEN will serve as Immediate Past President.

TEXAS ENA AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS & HONORS TO STUDENTS AND NURSES

The Scholarship Committee of the Texas Emergency Nurses Association announced the Texas State Council scholarship recipients for the 2007-2008 academic year. Recipients were required to garner superior standing in criteria such as knowledge of their field, motivation and maturity, research and teaching abilities, and interpersonal skills. The recipients are:

Lindsey Waldrep of Lake Jackson, attending UTMB for initial nursing degree, \$2500

Erin Cameron of Houston, attending UT Houston School of Nursing for initial nursing

degree, \$1500

Bridget Hudson, RN of North Richland Hills, attending TWU in Denton part-time ADN to BSN, \$1500

Paul Clark, RN, MSN of San Antonio, attending UT at San Antonio seeking a PhD in Nursing, \$2500

Frank Cole Advanced Practice Scholarship, \$4000: **Jeanne Barnes**, RN, BSN of Houston, attending the ENP program at UT in Houston

In addition, President's Awards were presented by 2007 Texas ENA President **Sally Snow**, RN BSN FAEN. The Texas ENA Legacy Award went to **JoAnn Lazarus** RN, MSN, CEN. The Wind Beneath My Wings Award went to **Vicki C. Patrick**, RN MS, APRN, BC, ACNP, CEN, FAEN

Snow, who is Director of Trauma Services at Cook Children's Medical Center in Fort Worth, detailed her thoughts on choosing this year's recipients.

"This year, as President, I wanted to honor two individuals who have given years of service to Texas ENA.

JoAnn Lazarus has served Texas ENA for many years as a member of our state council. She served on the Board of Directors as a member-at-large and was President in 2003. JoAnn has served National ENA as Secretary/Treasurer in 2007 and as a Board member-at-large. She was the first President to develop a strategic planning process that moved Texas ENA into the 21st century, leaving a legacy of professionalism and planning in the organization. She believes very strongly in the legacy of nurse leaders and growing a new generation of emergency nurses who are committed to furthering the mission of our association. She is a deserving recipient of the Texas ENA legacy award.

Vicki Patrick is one of the founding members of Texas ENA. She was in the original group of 63 nurses who attended an organizing meeting in Dallas in 1970 for the State Chapter. As a new nurse to ENA in 1982, I attended the

national ENA Annual meeting in New Orleans as a delegate. Vicki was the national president that year. After that meeting, we became dear friends and she has been my mentor for 25 years. She has been a confidant and has guided me through many professional growth years as a new and now seasoned leader in Texas ENA. She is a recognized expert in education and trauma nursing and has guided many emergency nurses on the path of active ENA leadership. She has truly been the 'wind beneath my wings!'

TOMBALL REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

Leslie Hart-Hair, a Home Health nurse, has been with **TRMC** for 16 years and was nominated at the employee of the month for November. "Leslie is very dedicated to the organization and



Leslie Hart-Hair

patients love her," said **Glenda DeWeese**, RN, Director of **TRH Home Health**.

Ellen Starratt, Certified Nursing Assistant for **TRH Home Health**, has been named the employee of the month for December.



Ellen Starratt

"Ellen has the "mother" effect; patients are very comfortable with her as she helps them with personal needs while maintaining their dignity," said DeWeese. ❧



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AROUND TOWN



Receiving the Nurse-Friendly plaque on behalf of The Menninger Clinic from Dr. Suzy Sportsman (second from left), president of Texas Nurses Association and dean of the College of Health Sciences and Human Services at Midwestern State University, are, left to right: Jane Mahoney, DSN, CNS-P/MH, BC, director of Nurse Practice & Research,

TNA NAMES HOUSTON-AREA HOSPITALS NURSE-FRIENDLY

Texas Nurses Association (TNA) awarded its prized Nurse-Friendly hospital designation for Fall 2007 to **The Menninger Clinic** in Houston, **Memorial Hermann The Woodlands Hospital** in The Woodlands, and **Christus St. Catherine** in Katy.

Awarded just twice a year – in the Spring and the Fall – the designation was presented at a special awards ceremony held during TNA's 7th Annual Nursing Leadership Conference, a two-day event in Austin that brought together some of nursing's foremost researchers, thought leaders and policy makers.

TNA's Nurse-Friendly designation confirms that a hospital has in its practices, policies and procedures the 12 essential elements of the ideal nursing practice environment – as defined by nurses and research – that allow nurses to practice safe, quality patient care and to pursue a level of professional development and career satisfaction that retains them in the

profession and at the bedside.

Of the approximately 581 licensed hospitals in Texas, 53 facilities have now achieved the Nurse-Friendly distinction. "Hospitals who

apply for the designation," explained **Susan Sportsman**, PhD, RN, president of TNA, "must demonstrate through a quite rigorous process that they're committed to supporting a nursing practice environment that is consistent with excellent patient care. Then, a majority of the hospital's nurses must confirm that fact through a confidential survey."

The Menninger Clinic, a specialty psychiatric hospital in Houston, is the first freestanding psychiatric hospital in Texas to achieve this designation.

"The Nurse-Friendly designation is an important benchmark for us in our journey to accelerate nursing excellence," says **Pam Greene**, PhD, RN, vice president of Patient Care Services. "It reflects Menninger's commitment to supporting nurses as they provide safe, quality patient care."

In accordance with the Nurse-Friendly application process, Menninger conducted a confidential survey of its nurses, asking them to verify the presence of the criteria in hospital practices and policies. Nearly 90 percent of



Representatives from the nursing team at Memorial Hermann The Woodlands traveled to Austin to receive the TNA Nurse Friendly Designation award. Pictured (L to R): Chief Patient Care Officer (CPCO) Susan Griffin, RN; former CPCO Pat Goodpastor, RN (she retired in June after 22 yrs of service); Director of Emergency Services Juanita Wamble, RN; Director of Trauma Services Cheryl Dykes, RN; and Director of Staff Development Forstine Morris, RN.

Menninger nurses participated in the voluntary survey, which required at least 50 percent participation and a certain score in order to receive the certification.

"The designation indicates that Menninger is a place nurses want to work," says **Brenda Schiavone**, MSN, RN, CNAA, a clinical education specialist who coordinated the six-month application process. "It also informs nurses, patients and family members that they can expect to receive the highest standard of nursing care at Menninger."

The designation's strict application process hinges on the confidential validation of the nursing staff. At least fifty percent of the nurses on staff have to participate in a confidential survey. Of those that respond to the survey, at least seventy-five percent have to validate validating that the hospital meets the twelve criteria.

"After all the documentation, completing the survey is the real kicker," says **Susan Griffin**, RN, Chief Patient Care Officer at Memorial Hermann. "But once it's done, we have established our professional



Susan Griffin, RN

work environment as one that's confirmed by the staff. This shows that we are a quality organization that values and supports our nurses."

"We are truly pleased to receive the TNFD

at CHRISTUS St. Catherine Hospital," says **Barbara Lazor**, MBA, BSN, RN, and Chief Nursing Officer. But I want to give full credit to the participation of our nurses at St. Catherine. As we strive



Barbara Lazor, MBA, BSN, RN

for exemplary patient care in a compassionate and caring manner, it is important to know that the success of our organization depends on the interaction of a team committed to excellence while focusing on our mission to extend the healing ministry of Jesus Christ."

MEMORIAL HERMANN BAPTIST BEAUMONT HOSPITAL EARNS NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR NURSING EXCELLENCE

It is one of the highest levels of recognition a hospital can achieve. Memorial Hermann Baptist Beaumont Hospital has achieved magnet designation for excellence in nursing services by the American Nurses Credential Center's (ANCC) Magnet Recognition Program.

"The Magnet recognition is a tremendous achievement for Memorial Hermann Baptist Beaumont Hospital, but it does not change who we are," stated **Nancy Sims**, RN, MBA,

Chief Nursing Officer. "It simply recognizes the excellent work our nurses and patient care givers do each day and reflects the commitment of our entire staff to serve as a team, providing the highest quality care possible for the people of our community."



Nancy Sims, RN, MBA

Only three percent of the nation's 7569 hospitals - including the Mayo Clinic, John Hopkins Hospital and Cedars-Sinai Medical Center - have achieved Magnet status. Memorial Hermann Baptist Beaumont Hospital is just the 18th hospital in Texas - along with St. Luke's Episcopal, Texas Children's Hospital and The Methodist Hospital - to have earned the highest award in nursing. .NL

CONGRATULATIONS!

Karen White is being recognized by the Texas Nurses Association as one of Houston's Great 20 Nurses.

Thank you, Karen, for your dedication and commitment to improving the health of our community. You should be proud of the exceptional job you do, we certainly are.



Karen White, RN, MBA, CNOR

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AROUND TOWN

A New Era in Harris County

by Tracy Morris



“We’re here to take care of the staff – I know you hear that hundreds of times, but. . . if that doesn’t happen, then they can’t do their jobs, caring for patients.”

Following **Elizabeth Cloyd** down the hallway of **Ben Taub General Hospital** is a slow process. Every few yards, she’s stopped by yet another staff member who wants to give her a hug. In turn, she introduces each by name and anecdotes.

With her quick and ready smile, she may not appear to be a leader in a revolution, but Elizabeth Cloyd, MBA, RN is just that – an agent for change. As the new Executive Vice President of Clinical Operations and Chief Nurse Executive for the **Harris County Hospital District**, Cloyd is on a mission to change the way patients and staff think about the district.

HCHD is the primary provider of public healthcare to the nation’s third most populous

county, employing nearly 2,000 nursing professionals at three major hospitals, 12 community health centers, 13 homeless shelter clinics, eight school-based clinics, four mobile health units and a dental center. While its mission – to improve the community’s health by delivering high quality health care and by training the next generation of health professionals – still stands, Cloyd and others are embarking on a journey to refresh and broaden perceptions of the District that was created in 1965.

Cloyd came on board about three years ago for the purpose of building relationships with the two medical schools – Baylor College of Medicine and University of Texas – to centralize activities and interfacing with the contract-

ed physicians of HCHD. She was charged with examining their work environment and how it could be improved to allow HCHD to see more patients with the resources at hand. Eventually, it became apparent that the needs of physicians and nurses are virtually the same.

Cloyd explains how her new role developed. “The two driving forces are physicians and nurses, and now they’re united under the same person. For both groups, we have to look at what their work environment is like and what they need to make it fun. We have to give them the information they need, when they need it and really join together the best ties to do the work that we’re all here to do.”

She says that nurses now feel like they have an identified voice of support in physician relations. “It’s been very synergistic.”

Just about a year ago, while serving as the Executive Vice President of Medical Support Services, staff changes warranted an abrupt assignment. Cloyd quickly became the Chief Nursing Officer at Ben Taub Hospital. The result was both exciting and difficult. “It’s sort of addicting when you’re back in the hospital and you can’t get enough of it,” she recalls. It was a tough period for staff – accreditation was understandably dissatisfied with how some things were being done. Cloyd offers as an example that staff meetings were filled with un-

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happy faces. "They looked demoralized."

She says things look very different now, and she credits the vision of inspired leaders like **Jeff Webster**, Administrator of Ben Taub General Hospital. "We've communicated that mistakes happen, but if you dwell there instead of focusing on what we can do to make it better, nothing changes. It was time to get in there, rally the troops, and tell people we care about them and their issues. We're here to take care of the staff – I know you hear that hundreds of times, but it's really true. We are doing a better job of taking care of staff. If that doesn't happen, then they can't do their jobs, caring for patients."

Cloyd joined Webster in sifting through staff issues for nearly a year to determine the necessary next steps. "It's no longer a hierarchical environment," she explains. "People at the top don't necessarily make the best decisions alone."

Besides her strong will and effervescent demeanor, Beth Cloyd works from a deep understanding of the human condition, knowledge crucial in the world that is HCHD. "Nobody comes to work to do a bad job. If you don't put things in the work environment to help them do their best work, they're going to do just what it appears you want, based on the message you send."

HCHD staffs understand the difference in their patient population, says Cloyd. Patients go to HCHD facilities in most cases because they have nowhere else to turn for healthcare. Cloyd is happy to say that in addition to the organization's mission to serve the underserved, they also want to be the provider of choice for those who can go elsewhere. "We want them to say, 'I have the opportunity to go to the Harris County Hospital District, to Ben Taub or LBJ [General Hospital]. The first order of business is to continue identifying work environment issues so we can stabilize our workforce, in conjunction with professional development support programs, marketable salaries, the basics.'"

In the District's exceptionally honest new ad campaign, Magnet status is the stated goal. The vehicle: a "positively charged nursing environ-



Elizabeth Cloyd, MBA, RN

"People are happy to meet challenges when they know that you're going to work right alongside them to get it accomplished."

ment" that combines clinical excellence with a "personal touch." Cloyd is amused at the ad's reference to her "iron will" and "magnetic personality" yet those who know her say it's true.

"I can't make this organization go where we need to go by myself," Cloyd remarks, "but what I found here [at Ben Taub Hospital] was that energizing the staff didn't require a lot. I was here constantly, rounding day and night, being visible. Nurses just want to know that someone cares for them and their concerns."

Cloyd says she's persistently steered by a moral compass that includes honesty and integrity. "People are happy to be engaged in meeting challenges when they know that you're going to work and do it right alongside

them to get it accomplished."

"I never wanted to do anything other than nursing, from the youngest age," she says, though no one in her family had ever been in medicine. She says her grandfather was an early role model. "My grandfather finished only up to the eighth grade, and wound up a corporate executive in New York. He was very driven and academics were so important because of his background." His primary lesson to his granddaughter was that "the only person who can get in your way is you."

The energetic leader balances her life with a fanciful hobby. She built a large aviary in her backyard where she can listen to the songbirds she's collected. It provides a meditative environment that also connects her to the neighborhood.

Beth Cloyd's professional experience includes a lot of geriatric care, which came into play on a large scale during the District's efforts to care for Hurricane Katrina evacuees at the Astrodome in 2005. The elderly were particularly vulnerable in the confusing mass of people, especially if they had lost some of their daily living essentials like eyeglasses and wheelchairs. Cloyd's knowledge of both the aged and indigent populations guided her work with other administrators in quickly creating a tool to triage and protect the welfare of the temporarily housed survivors. The resulting publication by the American Medical Association and Baylor College of Medicine, "Recommendations for Best Practices in the Management of Elderly Disaster Victims" can be downloaded from the AMA website (http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/415/best_prac_elderly.pdf).

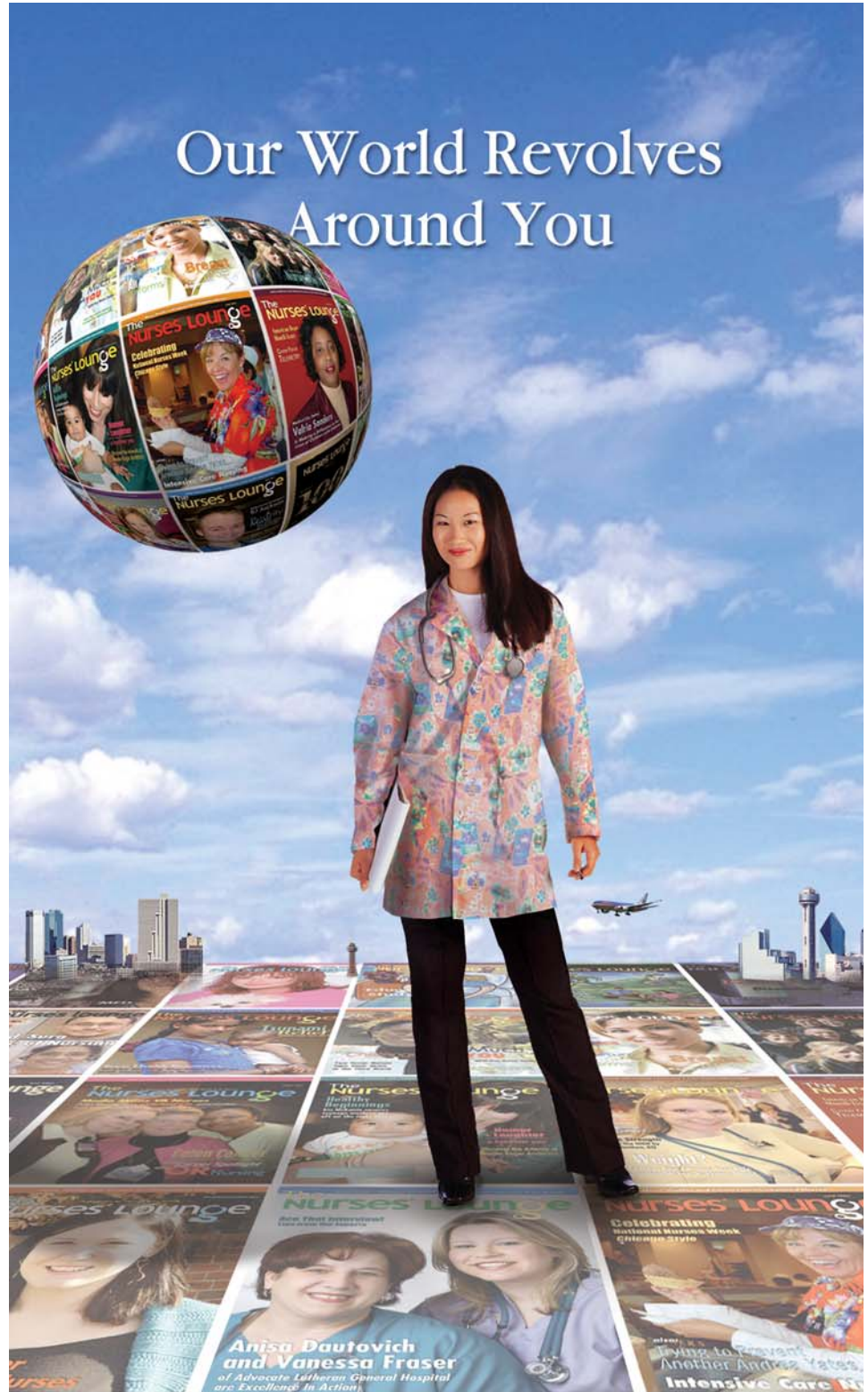
When asked what kind of individuals she hopes to bring on board for the District's re-vamping, the single mother with over 24 years of nursing experience behind her expresses a holistic comprehension of how her staff differs from those at hospitals with primarily affluent patient populations.

"On the surface, it's easy to question how we can compete with healthcare settings that have a primarily insured and affluent patient group,"

Cloyd explains, "but we can. Will we ever pay top in the market? No. However, if you walk the halls and talk to nurses here, you find out why they're here and why they stay. It's the mission of servitude. They are committed to serve our particular patient population."

"I like to say that whatever you think of a county hospital, it isn't what here is," Cloyd says with sincerity. "We don't have fountains and marble steps, and I don't think we ever will. But if what you get when you walk in here is greetings with a genuine smile, and that experience follows you through your stay – that's more important than a piano player in the lobby."

Cloyd says they frequently see staff return after previously leaving for higher paying positions elsewhere, because of their personal passion for the mission of the District's facilities. "You can see it and feel it when you walk through these hospitals. The nurses here know that we can't do everything for all of our patients, but we're all convinced of what we can do for them." -NL



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