Year of the Nurse: Vols on the Front Lines
Dear colleagues, alumni, and friends:

In recognition of Florence Nightingale’s 200th birthday and in honor of the work nurses have done over the past two centuries, the World Health Organization named 2020 the Year of the Nurse and Midwife! Today more than ever, as nurses serve on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world recognizes the tremendous impact nurses have on care. The pandemic has had unprecedented effects on all of us—our college, our alumni, and, most importantly, our students.

The world has changed drastically over the past several months due to COVID-19. Spring semester courses, including simulation and experiential training, shifted to online delivery immediately after spring break for most students. Our learning and simulation labs packed up extra PPE and delivered it to a local hospital in need. Our faculty members provided information to the community through radio shows, op-eds, and other sources. Several students and alumni also stepped up to the plate to make a difference.

As you will see in this edition of The Volunteer Nurse, our students, faculty, and alumni—nurse scholars and aspiring nurse scholars—we committed to leadership, service, and improving health. I invite you to learn about a few of the many ways they are moving forward through this pandemic and how their leadership and service will leave a lasting impact on our world.

The College of Nursing remains committed to meeting health care challenges and addressing critical health needs by preparing nurses who have a broad understanding of the profession, public policy, and leadership. Fueled by our commitment to communities, families, and individuals, we seek partnerships to create innovative solutions that improve health for all.

Thank you for making a Volunteer difference in the lives of those you touch.

Sincerely,
Victoria Niederhauser
Dean and Professor | Twitter: @UTKNURSINGDEAN

Dean’s Message

IN THIS ISSUE

-on the cover
College of Nursing graduates Erin Anderson, left, and Abby Delisi, right, on the front lines of COVID-19 in New York City.

CONTACT US

The Volunteer Nurse is published by the UT College of Nursing. Comments and letters can be sent to the editor at

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ON THE COVER

College of Nursing graduates Erin Anderson, left, and Abby Delisi, right, on the front lines of COVID-19 in New York City.

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THE VOLUNTEER NURSE
Fall 2020

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE COLLEGE OF NURSING
KNOXVILLE, TN 37996

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Precious Prints Expands Beyond East Tennessee

The Precious Prints Project, an initiative of UT’s Student Nurses Association, has welcomed its first academic partner. Following months of planning, nursing students at Union University in Jackson, Tennessee, will implement the project in the Nashville area in collaboration with their peers in UT’s College of Nursing.

Precious Prints, which offers free fingerprint charms to families who have lost a child, launched at East Tennessee Children’s Hospital in January 2012. The charms are now available at all major hospitals in Knox County.

To date, more than 3,000 Knoxville-area families have received a strolling silver charm bearing the fingerprint of their child, made by Knoxville-based company Precious Metal Prints. The charms provide a lasting memory for parents. Fundraising and project management are handled by the Student Nurses Association. The students collect donations through events like the Sprint for the Prints 5K, which had more than 300 participants in its seventh annual race in September 2019.

This development comes after Dean Victoria Niederhauser and Lynee Miller, clinical instructor and director of the Precious Prints Project, created a plan to expand the project to nursing schools and health care facilities across the nation.

Nursing faculty and student representatives from Union University recently visited UT to learn implementation strategies, best practices, and how to conduct staff education and training. They also visited one of UT’s partnering hospitals to learn about the process firsthand.

Graduate Program Earns National Ranking

The Doctor of Nursing Practice program climbed eight spots in U.S. News and World Report’s 2021 Best Graduate School ranking. The program is now 27th among public universities nationwide and 11th overall.

In late 2019 and early 2020, U.S. News sent statistical surveys to administrators at more than 2,000 graduate programs and compared them with reputational surveys completed by more than 24,000 academics and professionals to derive the rankings.

While U.S. News ranks programs in business, education, engineering, law, medicine, and nursing every year, programs in the sciences, social sciences and humanities, health fields, and other areas are ranked only periodically.

“These rankings are a direct result of the hard work and dedication of our amazing nursing students as well as our faculty and staff, who work tirelessly to support excellence in nursing education,” said Dean Victoria Niederhauser.

Niederhauser Appointed to New Leadership Roles

College of Nursing Dean Victoria Niederhauser has been selected to serve on the board of directors for East Tennessee Children’s Hospital, Leadership Knoxville, and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing.

“My best asset is my long history of partnerships and initiatives at Leadership Knoxville. Through Dean Niederhauser’s work at UT and in the community, we know that she will make a wonderful addition to our board of directors. We look forward to the year ahead as our community continues to develop a continuum of leaders from youth to seniors,” said Joe Childs, the hospital’s chief medical officer.

“Victoria Niederhauser is a recognized leader who is passionate about helping Children’s Hospital continue to provide the best possible expert care to our community’s children,” said Samantha Edvardson, director of strategic partnerships and initiatives at Leadership Knoxville. “Through Dean Niederhauser’s work at UT and in the community, we know that she will make a wonderful addition to our board of directors.”

The hospital is one of four certified comprehensive regional pediatric centers in Tennessee and is accredited by the Joint Commission. Its board of directors is composed of 21 community leaders who are committed to the hospital’s mission of improving the health of children through exceptional comprehensive family-centered care, wellness, and education.

Niederhauser is one of four new members selected to join the board. Niederhauser was also selected to join the board of directors of Leadership Knoxville. She will serve as the chair of the Leadership Knoxville Board of Directors Committee during her time on the board.

“Victoria Niederhauser, a graduate of the Leadership Knoxville Class of 2014, was chosen to serve because of her commitment to the students at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and to our vision: Every Leader a Servant Leader,” said Samantha Edvardson, director of strategic partnerships and initiatives at Leadership Knoxville. “Through Dean Niederhauser’s work at UT and in the community, we know that she will make a wonderful addition to our board of directors.”

UT Nursing welcomes new faculty members.
Sadie Hutson has taken on a new leadership role in the College of Nursing. Hutson is now serving as executive associate dean for academic affairs, leading the college as its chief operating officer for academic matters. Hutson will use her leadership skills to ensure that students have a positive learning experience that results in their becoming competent professionals who can meet the health care needs of the state and nation.

Hutson has a BSN from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and both an MSN and a PhD in nursing from the University of Pennsylvania.

Since 2011, she has taught research methods across undergraduate and graduate programs and served as assistant dean of graduate programs and coordinator of the undergraduate Nursing Honors program. Her research expertise is in the area of chronic illness among rural and underserved populations. Hutson studies the end-of-life care and service needs of persons living with HIV/AIDS as well as the human consequences of living at high genetic risk of cancer. She has been funded by the National Institutes of Health, the American Cancer Society, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, among other agencies.

Hutson is a board-certified women’s health nurse practitioner. She serves as director of the hereditary cancer risk assessment program at Pikeville Medical Center in Pikeville, Kentucky, and as the project lead for Appalachian Angel of Hope Inc., a community nonprofit organization. She is also an expert consultant in the Clinical Genetics Branch of the National Cancer Institute, where she completed pre- and postdoctoral fellowships.

Hutson Takes on New College Leadership Role

Brown, Kojima Receive DAISY Award

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nursing Faculty was presented to two faculty members in 2020. Clinical Instructor Mary Lynn Brown and Clinical Assistant Professor Freddie Kojima were both honored with the award in virtual ceremonies—Brown’s in April and Kojima’s in August. Both recipients were among those nominated by students and fellow faculty members, with the final choices made through a blind review process by a selection committee.

Brown’s nominators said that every time she lectures, her passion and excitement for teaching are apparent. Her high spirits bring energy to the classroom, keeping students engaged and active. She goes out of her way and makes sacrifices to make sure she is always there for her students.

Kojima’s nominators said he exemplifies everything an educator should be, with enthusiasm and passion for teaching and his students. He makes every opportunity a learning opportunity, pushing students to develop skills and inspiring them to be more curious. Students said his impact is monumental and they will be forever grateful for the knowledge and wisdom he has imparted.

A collaborative program of the DAISY Foundation and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, the DAISY Faculty Award is a national recognition program that honors teachers for their commitment and inspirational influence on future generations of nurses.

Virtual RESEARCH DAY

"Amplifying Nurses’ Voices Worldwide to Mitigate Public Health Threats"

November 2, 2020
5-7:30 pm
Sue Hasmiller, presenter and panel moderator
The registration link will be sent in September through email and social media.
Accolades

Joel Anderson received the Outstanding PhD Faculty Award in the College of Nursing and was a nominee for the LGBTQ Advocate Award from the Chancellor’s Commission for LGBTQ People. He received funding as co-principal investigator of a Global Catalyst Award from UT’s Center for Global Engagement and Office of Research and Engagement to strengthen an ongoing international collaboration in Alzheimer’s disease care with colleagues at the Centre for Medicine and Aging in Stavanger, Norway. He received funding as a cosignatory on several investigator projects with the Tickle College of Engineering, Emory University, and the University of Exeter. He also received the college’s Allison and Patrick Harrison Nursing Innovation Award.

Carrie Bailey was certified as an adult sexual assault nurse examiner by the International Association of Forensic Nurses. There are only 38 nurses in the state who hold the certification.

Lora Beebe served as a faculty mentor for a student team that received the Award for Excellence in Evidence-Based Practice at UT’s Education of Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievement (EURCA). She also received the Education Award from the International Society of Psychiatric Nurses and the Don’s Pama Award, for alumni who have made outstanding contributions, from the University of Kentucky College of Nursing.

Tracy Brewer was selected to receive the Outstanding DNP Faculty Award.

Kimberly Brown was promoted to clinical assistant professor.

Noelle Cooper received the college’s Power T Award. The award goes to a staff member who is efficient and productive and exceeds expectations.

Lisa Davenport was promoted to clinical associate professor.

Terri Durbin was named interim dean of graduate programs.

Nan Gaylord received the Harold Lowe Outstanding Community Service Award. The award is sponsored by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and is named after late state representative Harold Lowe, who was instrumental in passing legislation to support community service recognition programs in 1991. Gaylord was one of five honorees selected by a statewide task force.

DeLyndia Green-Laughlin was selected for the college’s Smokey Award. The award recognizes a faculty member who demonstrates excellence in teaching, research, or service.

Robin Harris presented “Pharmacology Update 2019” to the Polk County, Florida, Advanced Practice Nurses Association and “Adaptation to Chronic Illness Response in Heart Failure Patients to a Home-Based Exercise Program by Age, Gender, and Functional Class” to the Florida Nurse Practitioner Network annual conference. She was accepted for and attended the American Association of Colleges of Nursing and the Don’s Pama Award, for alumni who have made outstanding contributions, from the University of Kentucky College of Nursing.

Maria Hurt was recently appointed to the Knox County Board of Health, where she will play an integral role in adopting rules and regulations to protect the general health and safety of Knox County residents. She also received the college’s Rock Award, which recognizes nurse faculty members who have demonstrated an innovative teaching, research-, or service-oriented method or approach in an academic course or clinical instruction.

Sadie Hutson was a keynote presenter at the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine for a workshop titled “Exploring the Current Landscape of Consumer Genomics.” She was also appointed an expert consultant to the Clinical Genetics Branch of the National Cancer Institute’s Division of Cancer Epidemiology and Genetics. Her work there will focus on providing expert guidance on psychosocial studies of individuals living with hereditary cancer syndromes.

Jason Kierman was selected for the Outstanding Undergraduate Classroom Faculty award by the 2020 BSN graduating class. He also received the college’s Volunteer Award, which recognizes a nurse educator who has demonstrated excellence in teaching, research, or service early in their career.

Freddie Kojima was promoted to clinical assistant professor.

Lisa Lindley was inducted as a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing and was selected for the Nightingale Encouraged Faculty Fellowship in Nursing.

Derrick MacGillivray finished his EdD in teacher leadership in digital transformation at Capella University in February. His doctoral study was “Leveraging Double Telepresence Robots to Conduct Clinical Nursing Site Visits.”

Lisa Merritt was a keynote presenter at the 25th International Mental Health Nursing Research Conference in London, “Building Trauma Responsiveness among Nursing Providers: An Interprofessional Collaborative Simulation between a Child Advocacy Center and College of Nursing.”

Mary Miles was promoted to dean’s executive assistant.

Missy Miller is the recipient of the Torch Award. The Torch recognizes a faculty or staff member who exhibits a strong character of selflessness, humility, and sacrifice for the greater good.

Phillip Moore was promoted to RN to BSN chair.

Erin Morgan was selected for the Outstanding Undergraduate Clinical Faculty Award by the 2020 BSN graduating class. She has received an award from UT’s Teaching and Learning Institute to redesign portions of her health assessment in the traditional BSN program.

Carole Myers was elected to the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Health Care Campaign and was re-appointed a Senior Fellow in the George Washington University School of Nursing’s Center for Health Policy and Media Engagement. She and WUOT’s Brandon Holliday received a second-place Tennessee Associated Press Award in the Radio Long Public Affairs category for the Hello Generation episode “Patching the Safety Net.” Hello Generation has also received the Robert Mayr Unbound Call Award. Myers was selected as a SheSource media expert and received the college’s Gaylord Rogers Pediatric Faculty Award.

Allison Matney Neal was promoted to the position of procurement specialist.

Kathy Newman was promoted and became a tenured associate professor.

Shelia Swift was promoted to clinical associate professor.

Sandra Thomas received the college’s Sara and Rose Cirley Professorship Award.

PhD student Kendall Todd and her chair, Sandra Thomas, received the first-place Student Research Poster Award at the International Society of Psychiatric Mental Health Nurses conference, which was held virtually in June.

Tracey Vitori was selected for the Butler Williams Scholars and accepted as a scientist in molecular biology at the New England Biologics, Smith College.

Andrew Ward received the Alan Solomon, MFL, Faculty Oncology Award.

Tami Wyatt received the Torchbearer Professorship Award.
This year is officially the Year of the Nurse and Midwife. The World Health Organization made the designation to mark 200 years since Florence Nightingale’s birth, not knowing what loomed ahead in 2020.

COVID-19 has emphasized the pivotal role nurses play in saving lives and comforting patients in a time when information about the disease is constantly changing and the ill are isolated away from loved ones.

Across the country, Vols are on the front lines ready to give their best care, despite the challenges the virus brings, thanks to their time in Knoxville.

**LEARNING ON THE FLY**

Erin Anderson (’18) is a pediatric ICU nurse in New York City, once ground zero for the coronavirus here in the US. Her little patients were sent to a different location and she was suddenly tasked with caring for adults suffering from COVID-19. Anderson credits her hands-on hospital experience in her clinicals and senior year practicum for allowing her to learn on the fly.

“The clinical experience we have as students is exceptional and has been a true advantage during this pandemic. It gave me confidence in my care and is something a lot of my co-workers didn’t have in school,” said Anderson.

Amanda Noblett (’18) is a team captain for a COVID-19 assessment site in Nashville. Noblett never imagined she would be doing her work in a garage, but she was ready for the task.

“I volunteered, per UT tradition, for this role, and I have been wearing my UT nursing socks to represent my alma mater,” she said. “I try to provide hope to my patients and put a smile on their face during this stressful time. We will overcome this and thrive!”

Erin Morgan (’05), an assistant clinical professor at UT, is also working at a test site. This one isn’t in a garage but at a Kroger grocery store in Knoxville.

“This was one small way I felt I could help in this difficult time,” she explained.

“"The clinical experience we have as students is exceptional and has been a true advantage during this pandemic. It gave me confidence in my care and is something a lot of my co-workers didn’t have in school."”

—ERIN ANDERSON
LEARNING FROM A DISTANCE
While nurses on the front lines are learning how to meet the challenges that COVID-19 brings, so are UT faculty—balancing the importance of hands-on learning with the safety of their students. Simulation and experiential training moved online immediately after spring break. Senior bachelor’s students had the option of staying in their clinicals or participating virtually in a simulated learning environment for the remainder of their time. Advanced practice graduate students remained in clinical placements if the facility allowed it.

“Our faculty and staff rose to these challenges with commitment, determination, and grace as they were determined to make this a positive experience for students,” said Dean Victoria Niederhauser.

Rachael Hodges (’15), simulation coordinator for the college, is one of those staff members. She brought the simulations online and ensured that students were competent with essential skills. In addition to connecting weekly via Zoom, she and her team created and shipped skills kits to students to ensure their competency with the basics.

“In a time such as this, instilling confidence and preparing the next wave of nurses to enter the workforce is critical to the well-being of our healthcare system,” said Hodges.

WALKING THE LINE BETWEEN COMFORT AND SAFETY
Perhaps one of the most difficult challenges during this time for nurses is the emotional strain. Nurses have always played a key role in providing comfort for patients, but that role is even more important now as patients aren’t allowed to see loved ones. Yet nurses need to protect themselves from the disease.

“We had no idea that our sweet patients would be stuck in their hospital rooms alone, not allowed visitors. We did not consider the possibility of running out of supplies to protect ourselves,” said Gillian Harris (’18), an oncology staff nurse at UT Medical Center.

Kimberly Harvey (’15), an ICU nurse in Nashville, says that suddenly nurses became their patients’ ‘everything’—their support system, reassurer, champion, cheerleader, therapist, and caretaker.

“My teammates and I have virtually talked their loved ones off the ledge. We have held the hands of our community’s husbands, wives, and children when all they could do was whisper ‘I love you’ through the phone. We have sung ‘Happy Birthday’ through glass doors one day, and the next we’ve held the hands of others who peacefully slipped away as they lost their battle with COVID-19.”

Harvey says that until now she’s known how to leave her shift at the door to preserve her own mental health, but “COVID-19 has annihilated that coping skill.”

THE STRENGTH OF COMMUNITY
These nurses are learning one another and on their UT community to stay strong during this difficult time.

“Even though we don’t work in the same hospitals, we’re still there for one another,” said Anderson. “My friends from school are a great support system, and it is really what has been keeping me together during this time.”

When the rate of change brought on by COVID-19 has finally slowed, two constants will remain. Yoh help Yoh, for life. And every year is truly the Year of the Nurse.

The World Health Organization has declared 2020 the Year of the Nurse and Midwife. The nursing profession has grown from the stereotypical white apron and hat to become one of the most diverse health care professions in the industry. These frontline workers promote health, prevent illness, care for the sick, disabled, and dying; foster a safe environment; conduct health care research; educate their fellow nurses and other professionals; and help shape health care policy.

Florence Nightingale—“the lady with the lamp”—was a trailblazer for the nursing profession. Known as the first nurse theorist and statistician, she devoted her career to making hospitals a cleaner and safer place to treat patients. Marking her 200th birthday, 2020 is dedicated to recognizing not only her resilience and devotion to the community’s health and well-being, but also the expression of those qualities in all nurses.

In honor of WHO’s designation, the College of Nursing developed the “I Am a Nurse” campaign to spotlight a nurse scholar each month over the course of the year. These talented and dedicated nurse researchers and scholars exhibit expertise, passion, and drive toward influencing policy, enhancing science, and improving patient outcomes. The campaign hopes to demonstrate the wide range of expertise our nurse scholars encompass and to encourage others to learn more about their scholarship and the communities they impact.

To see the campaign’s spotlights, visit nursing.utk.edu/i-am-a-nurse.
Imagine what it could look like if Tennessee weren’t ranked among the states with some of the worst health outcomes in the nation. One state’s future could transform to one that is brighter and healthier with one small change: allowing nurses to practice to the full extent of their education and effectiveness.

Carole Myers

Professor of Nursing Carole Myers is on a mission to spend the longstanding law that requires physician oversight of advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), a category that includes nurse practitioners, certified registered nurse anesthetists, certified nurse midwives, and clinical nurse specialists. Tennessee ranks 46th in the US for health outcomes—meaning only six states have worse care. It also ranks among the 12 most restrictive states in the country in regard to APRNs. These two statistics are not unrelated.

RED TAPE BLOCKING ACCESS TO CARE

Currently, some aspects of APRNs’ practice require physician supervision—an arrangement preferred by physicians—through site visits and chart reviews. The reviews are done long after the fact, and APRNs must pay their supervising physician. This practice is time-consuming and costly, and it limits access to care—particularly in rural and other underserved areas where physicians are in short supply. States that have removed these outdated and unnecessary supervision requirements have seen improved access at lower costs and better outcomes than states with restricted APRN practice, explained Myers.

“Access to care and poor health outcomes are acute issues in many areas of Tennessee. Supervision requirements are a barrier to care. It makes no sense to unnecessarily restrict APRNs when they are the only primary care, women’s health, obstetric, and anesthesiology providers in many areas. But they are unable to see patients because of supervision requirements,” said Myers, who has dedicated her life’s work to improving health outcomes, access, and the utilization of available resources.

A Glimpse Into the Future

Tennessee saw a glimpse into what the future would look like if APRNs had full practice authority when the governor, by executive order, waived physician oversight to make way for increased health care access during the COVID-19 pandemic. Myers, along with colleagues at Vanderbilt University and the UT Health Science Center, saw an opportunity to investigate how APRNs with fewer restrictions could affect patient care in Tennessee and beyond.

“One of our research teams saw an important opportunity to describe and quantify the impact of the current natural experiment created by the pandemic and executive orders issued by Tennessee Governor Bill Lee and other governors to temporarily remove barriers APRNs face in delivering care for which they are highly qualified,” explained Myers. “We hope our findings will inform better utilization of APRNs. This is so critical in Tennessee, where we have an insufficient number of primary care and mental health professionals to practice in underserved rural areas.”

The study, which concludes this fall, is surveying thousands of APRNs nationwide and interviewing Tennessee APRNs to get a clear picture of changes in care and access. Preliminary results show a vital improvement in the delivery of health care services related to the pandemic as well as mental health services and treatments for substance abuse disorders—both prominent needs in rural areas. The findings have the potential to build on an existing body of research that shows health outcomes only stand to improve with full practice authority.

Better Health Equals A Stronger Economy

The study dovetails with an economic viability study Myers conducted last year with a health care economist and physician researcher from the UT Health Science Center and the University of Memphis. The results showed improved economic viability if the barriers to APRN practice were removed. The indication was that better health outcomes are good not only for people’s bodies and minds but also for their wallets—and local economies.

“From a 2017 baseline, the cumulative impact of granting Tennessee APRNs full practice authority is a projected net gain of 25,536 jobs and $3.2 billion in economic impact over ten years,” said Myers.

Myers has written numerous opinion pieces statewide on APRN full practice authority and previously co-chaired a state task force to investigate changing the current law. Unfortunately, the group failed to come to an agreement. But Myers will not give up, because she sees the almost-immediate positive impact this change can make.

Not Backing Down

“Tennessee’s APRNs are essential to the state’s economic vitality if the barriers to APRN practice were removed. The indication was that better health outcomes are good not only for people’s bodies and minds but also for their wallets—and local economies.”

But Myers will not give up, because she sees the almost-immediate positive impact this change can make.

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“From a 2017 baseline, the cumulative impact of granting Tennessee APRNs full practice authority is a projected net gain of 25,536 jobs and $3.2 billion in economic impact over ten years.”

—Carole Myers

THE POSSIBILITY OF A BRIGHTER FUTURE

By Whitney Heins

The Possibility of a Brighter Future

Visit Tennova.com or email Kristie at kristie.owenby@tennova.com.
IT’S LIKE A PLOT FOR A BLOCKBUSTER FILM: a fatal disease is headed your way. It’s incredibly contagious. And you don’t have enough space in your local hospitals to care for the sick. What do you do?

You call UT College of Nursing alumna Laura Beth Brown (’89). That’s what the governor of Tennessee did.

Brown, vice president of Vanderbilt Health Services, was part of a three-person team, along with Jameson Norton, CEO of Vanderbilt’s psychiatric hospital, and physician Matthew Bacchetta, charged with ensuring care for those affected by COVID-19 in Middle Tennessee.

CREATING A HOSPITAL OUT OF THIN AIR

The situation was fluid, numbers were constantly changing, and the team had just 24 days to prepare a site to care for an overflow of 3,600 sick people.

“It was a daunting task,” said Brown, noting that she had put her day-to-day leadership duties aside to focus on the COVID-19 response. “We were working day and night to set up the facility... We were the first in the state to look at an alternative care site—ACS—model.”

They decided on Nashville General Hospital, an active hospital with 200 beds but usually at only a quarter of its capacity. They brought in 60 extra beds to care for COVID-19 patients.

In March, as the pandemic was unfolding, Brown and her team pinpointed Nashville’s convention center, Music City Center, as the ACS. She and her colleagues got to work on the 3,600-square-foot facility, figuring out how to convert it into a working hospital—including design, setup, and staffing.

PIVOT AND SWITCH

But as their plans moved forward, social distancing, masks, and lockdown measures were put in place, thankfully decreasing the number of predicted cases.

Seeing the new data trend, Brown and her colleagues did a pivot, surveying locations where a hospital could be stood up when needed and shut down when not.

“We beat the trail looking at old department stores and hospitals—assessing for asbestos, costs to build out, and tapping into our imagination as to how to lay out a facility,” explained Brown.

They decided on Nashville General Hospital, an active hospital of a three-person team, along with Jameson Norton, CEO of Vanderbilt’s psychiatric hospital, and physician Matthew Bacchetta, charged with ensuring care for those affected by COVID-19 in Middle Tennessee.

THE PANDEMIC’S LONG-TERM IMPACT

Resuming her role overseeing Vanderbilt’s 21 subsidiary entities, Brown has observed firsthand the emotional toll the pandemic is having on nurses.

“People can work through anything while the adrenaline is flowing,” she explained. “But when it stops, that’s when the emotional toll hits. And we haven’t had a chance to stop yet and reflect on the intensity of this pandemic.”

If there is a benefit to COVID-19, she notes, it’s that nurses today are encountering challenges never seen before in this lifetime, bolstering skills for better patient care—including how to stand up a hospital almost out of thin air.
It is a tragic fact that tens of thousands of children in the US die with a terminal illness each year. And we lack certainty on how best to care for these children in the last months of their lives.

Until the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) was enacted 10 years ago, there were two care choices for children given six months or less to live: continue treatment or cease treatment and enter hospice.

The ACA added a third choice by mandating that concurrent care—continued treatment along with hospice care—be offered to patients in Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). There was no data, however, to support the effectiveness of this approach.

That’s where Lisa Lindley, associate professor of nursing, comes in. For the past two years, Lindley has been deep in patient data trying to uncover who received concurrent care and what the outcomes were. Funded by a $1.5 million grant from the National Institute of Nursing Research—part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH)—her work had two surprising revelations: the children who received concurrent care were really sick, and they often lived in rural areas.

“We were surprised because there can be a lot of care coordination for very ill children, and we didn’t think families would want to add yet another provider such as hospice,” explained Lindley. “We also were surprised that many of these children lived in rural areas where there is limited access to this kind of pediatric care.”

The NIH wanted to know more about these findings and awarded Lindley and her team three more grants totaling close to a million dollars, growing her research funding to over $2 million and her team to 17 researchers—a group that includes students, postdoctoral fellows, and co-investigators.

“These grants help us move the science forward,” said Lindley. “And it showcases the college as a nationally recognized scientific learning resource on this important topic.”

Lindley’s task now is to take a deeper dive into her data of approximately 20,000 patients to determine where they live geographically in Appalachia and what types of care they are receiving during concurrent care.

“This is important because it helps us understand their health care needs and how those needs are being met,” explained Lindley. “Due to the limited access to pediatric hospice care in rural areas like Southern Appalachia, it is possible adult hospice personnel not specialized in pediatric care are treating these children.”

The ultimate goal of her research is to improve access and quality of care for these sick children and help families decide what is the best course for them to take at a time that is already incredibly difficult.
Study Shows New Nursing Skills Emerging amid the Pandemic

By Whitney Heins

The COVID-19 pandemic is dramatically changing the way health care is administered in our country. In this challenging time, new nurse leadership skills are emerging to create and implement innovative solutions that uphold one key principle: being the voice of the patient.

Dean Victoria Niederhauser, along with colleagues at Yale University; the University of California, Los Angeles; and major hospitals, interviewed nurses nationwide to capture their exemplary and novel leadership skills during the pandemic. The results were published in the Patient Experience Journal.

The study uncovered four key areas, summarized here, where nurse leadership skills have emerged to improve care during the COVID-19 crisis. Read the full study at tiny.utk.edu/pxjournal.

MAKING DECISIONS
The study found that nurses excel at making rapid decisions in life-and-death situations while keeping patient and family care at the forefront. For example, in many hospitals families aren’t allowed to see their deceased family members. Feeling a family’s pain, one nurse was able to organize a visit in the morgue which helped the grieving family have closure.

ADAPTING BOLDLY
Nurses’ ability to be nimble, shift priorities, and provide innovative actions promotes positive patient experiences during this difficult time. For example, nurse leaders have organized internal and external communication, including virtual visits and Zoom calls, between patients and their families.

ENHANCING EMPLOYEE WELLNESS
Hospital executives acknowledge that frontline nurses directly and positively influence the patient experience more than any other staff. For nurses to continue this quality of care, they take care of one another in addition to the sick and their families. Nurse leaders set up mental health hotlines, musical therapy sessions, and town hall meetings to promote mental and physical wellness.

ENGAGING STAFF & PATIENTS
Working as a team during a pandemic is paramount for reliable care—and nurses cultivate this team sensibility across the hospital. For example, the granddaughter of a patient and her fiancé, both first responders, were forced to postpone their wedding due to the virus. To make sure the sick grandfather could attend the wedding, nurses employed proper safety measures and helped arrange for the ceremony to be held in his hospital room. Celebrations held in hospitals nationwide inject joy into a grim time and maintain patients’ and staffs’ emotional wellness.

Throughout this pandemic crisis, nurse leaders are learning more than ever about how to grapple with quick and often uncertain decision-making while always putting the care of their patients first. And as they do, they’re developing skills that hold the potential to further bolster the next generation of nurses.
The 2020 NightingGala is going virtual! Our annual event celebrating nurses and the profession will look different this year, but the goal of providing support for future Volunteer nurses remains unchanged.

This creative virtual NightingGala will feature both silent and live auctions using the Handbid mobile bidding platform—just in time for holiday shopping! A live stream event will recognize the outstanding contributions of two individuals with the Volunteer Nursing Champion Award and the Dr. Sylvia E. Hart Distinguished Alumni Award.

The silent auction will open at 8 a.m. on Friday, November 13. The livestream event will begin at 7 p.m. on Friday, November 20.

For more information, visit alumni.utk.edu/2020nightingala

Thank you to our sponsors!
Lauren Akins, a 2012 nursing graduate, and her husband, country singer Rhett Akins, surprised 65 nursing students during Professor Maria Hurt’s online pharmacology class in March. The surprise was a part of a student-focused campaign called VFL Class Crash, a series of online class drop-ins featuring well-known Tennessee alumni and friends of the university.

With about 10 minutes left in the class, Hurt told the students she had a surprise. She then introduced the couple, who had been listening in on the lesson from the den of their Nashville home. Akins told the students how proud they should be for persevering during this time.

“I know this is so hard, and I’m sure there are a lot of unknowns, new information, hurdles, and just a lot happening,” she said. “I just want to encourage you all. I’m so proud you chose this profession.”

Her husband then told the group, “She’s a Vol, so I’m a Vol. Thank you for all you’re doing now and everything you’re going to do in the future.”

Colleges across the country transitioned to online learning environments in response to COVID-19. Leaders at UT quickly created new ways to support students’ success and celebrate their achievements.

At the end of the call, Hurt told the class it was the singer’s 30th birthday. Everyone unmuted and sang “Happy Birthday” as the couple laughed and said they hoped to thank the students in person one day.

“Thank y’all so much. This made our day, and we really appreciate you,” the singer told the students before signing off.

Hurt said of the surprise, “It was a very meaningful moment in a difficult time.”

Lauren Akins and Thomas Rhett Akins
Surprise Nursing Students

By Tyra Haag

Visit UTMedicalCenter.org/jobs to learn more about joining our team.

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND: Chief financial officer for Partners Development, a full-service global real estate development firm focusing on commercial, industrial, residential, and education markets.

BOOK RECOMMENDATION: I am currently reading You’re Not Listening: What You’re Missing and Why It Matters by Kate Murphy. With current technology and the challenges of a global pandemic, we have more capability and options than ever before in history to talk to one another. However, how well we listen is the foundation for success in how we love, learn, and connect with one another. The book is both funny and very enlightening.

WHY I BECAME A COLLEGE OF NURSING ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER: I became a member when asked by Dean Niederhauser after sharing involvement in the Leadership Knoxville program with her—LK2014, best class ever! We shared a bus ride as seatmates to one of our first LK adventures, and our friendship grew from that point. I never imagined how much I had to learn about the College of Nursing, but I am very thankful for the awareness and passion that were awakened in me to support its growth and success.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING I THINK THE COLLEGE DOES FOR THE COMMUNITY: As a foundational mission, the College of Nursing exists to educate students, to prepare them for deployment in the workforce, and to provide the highest level of nurse-led health care to our community and beyond. With outstanding and unparalleled leadership, faculty, and administration, the College of Nursing is pushing boundaries in simulation, community and industry partnerships, and groundbreaking research. The variety of programs and specializations continues to evolve to meet the challenges of our health care systems and student needs.

GREATEST WISH FOR THE COLLEGE: My greatest wish is to see the College of Nursing facilities expanded and renovated to provide the physical facilities to support the leadership’s vision for growth and innovative learning. With the demand for nurses continuing to increase, now is the time to provide the College of Nursing with the tools necessary to continue its outstanding work.

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Gillian Harris

Gillian Harris is a registered nurse on an oncology unit and a second-year graduate student pursuing a Doctor of Nursing Practice with a family nurse practitioner concentration. She aspires to continue serving oncology patients as an advanced practice nurse and to have an even greater role in their care as a provider.

“With the uncertainty surrounding this year, it is a tremendous blessing to receive these scholarships, which grant me the confidence to know my education may continue thanks to the support of such gracious donors. Caring for cancer patients is my calling, and I am grateful for the opportunity to further my education to be a better provider for this population. Thank you for investing in my future!”

Makayla Bilodeau

Makayla Bilodeau is an undergraduate nursing student, studying full time and working part time on campus. Her goal after graduation is to continue her education and become a nurse midwife.

“I am deeply appreciative of this scholarship because it will allow me to fulfill my dreams of becoming a nurse and using my abilities to make a positive impact on the lives of others. As a result of receiving this scholarship, I will be able to afford all of the necessary books, fees, and supplies that are associated with nursing school. I am tremendously grateful for this opportunity.”

Matthew Cartwright

Matthew Cartwright started his nursing career two years ago to advance his health care career. He has worked in emergency medical services for 15 years and spent the past seven years in the air as a flight paramedic and nurse. He is currently a student in the RN-BSN program.

“For me learning has become a passion. So it was a no-brainer to continue my education once I completed my associate’s degree program. I am entering into my last year of this program and I can’t say thank you enough, nor can I put it into words how great it feels to receive this opportunity. It means so much knowing I have financial support via a scholarship. This scholarship that I have been awarded prevents me from taking out more loans, which allows me to focus more on school and less on debt. Again, thank you for helping me along my journey of turning dreams into reality.”
STUDENT SPOTLIGHT | PAIGE CLARK

Not Your Typical Student

By Whitney Heins

While most students do their studying in the library or at home, Paige Clark does hers in a dressing room.

“Everyone knows if it’s during the school year my laptop is going to be open and there are going to be books everywhere,” said Clark.

A senior in nursing, she works two jobs as a clogger in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, sometimes putting in more than 60 hours a week performing.

“ _I know it’s discouraging, but it’s how it has to be to pay the bills._ ”

An atypical college life
Nothing about Clark’s life as a student is typical. She is working not only to pay for her education but also to support her family. In Clark’s first year at UT, her grandmother was close to losing her house. Clark was the only one in the family able to get a loan to help her grandmother and purchase the home. So she started working—two jobs, six nights a week—in addition to her schoolwork and clinicals.

“This is what I’m used to.”

Life on stage
If all that weren’t enough, Clark is also a student ambassador, merchandise chair for the Student Nursing Association, and—who would have thought it?—Miss Knoxville USA.

“People today are either for or against essential oils. I wanted to do something that’s relevant and that intersects my two interests—integrative health and pediatrics.”

Clark wants to work in pediatrics when she graduates. As an honors student, she plans to conduct research into how aromatherapy may help nausea in pediatric patients undergoing chemotherapy.

Paige Clark (’21)

Big work ethic, big heart
This year, Clark had a little extra help as the recipient of the College of Nursing’s NightinGala scholarship, affording her the opportunity to buy books, gas, and a much-needed laptop.

Life on stage
If all that weren’t enough, Clark is also a student ambassador, merchandise chair for the Student Nursing Association, and—who would have thought it?—Miss Knoxville USA.

“I figured I’m already not scared of being on stage, so why not try?”

The Miss Tennessee USA pageant is slated to happen over spring break 2021. So instead of heading to the beach like most other college students, Clark will be headed to the stage.

It’s just another example of how Clark’s atypical college career is helping her shine.

HELP RAISE $40,000 FOR NURSES

A gift to the College of Nursing during Big Orange Give helps fuel interprofessional collaboration and research, improve health in our communities, and provide scholarship support that gives opportunity to tomorrow’s nurses.

NOVEMBER 18, 2020

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