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“Save a life, and you’re a hero. Save a hundred lives, and you’re a nurse.” ANONYMOUS

Kathy Smith, RN, class of 1990.
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Letter from the director

Dear MCCSN alumni,

Every year at the nursing pinning ceremony, graduates thank their families and friends for supporting them — recognizing the village that it takes to make a new nurse. Today, there are nearly 1,400 Maurine Church Coburn School of Nursing (MCCSN) graduates scattered within villages all over the state and the country, improving health and mentoring new nurses who follow. Imagine the reach our graduates have after 30 years.

MCCSN is pleased to share the third issue of In Touch. In this newsletter you will find school updates as they reflect exciting developments in local and regional nursing education. You will be delighted to read stories about fellow alumni. In Touch will keep you posted about the status of the Maurine Church Coburn endowment which is essential to the future operation of the school. You will also read the touching legacy of long time MCCSN friend and benefactor, Rita Echenique.

As a proud alum of the Maurine Church Coburn School of Nursing, this newsletter will keep you connected to your nursing foundation, the place where you first found your passion and purpose to care for others.

Thank you for staying “in touch.”

Laura Loop, MSN, RN
The Power of Nursing

Nursing has been defined as a calling, a vocation, and a profession. Nurses dedicate themselves to the health and well-being of others, often under stressful conditions and at times of greatest vulnerability in their patients’ lives. So, why do nurses do what they do? Some of our alumni shared the career moments that defined their calling.

By Kathy Smith, RN, assistant director, emergency department, Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula, class of 1990

I am a long-time alumnus from MCCSN, as well as a 29-year employee of Community Hospital.

I had an incident about a year ago that answered the question I think most of us have at some point in time, during our career — “Have I really ever made a difference in the life of someone. Am I really ‘doing enough?’”

Approximately one year ago, while on duty, I received a telephone call. As charge nurse of the ER, I am forwarded many phone calls, so I readied myself to help someone.

I picked up the telephone, identified myself, and there was silence . . . and then I heard a women’s calm, quivering voice. “I’m sure you don’t remember who I am,” she said, “but one year ago today, my son was brought into the emergency room and died as a result of a drowning.”

She said she had been wanting to contact me for quite some time and wasn’t sure she had the strength to do so. But this day, the anniversary of his death, was the day she felt she could proceed.

She told me my name had become something that was spoken by her and her family members on an almost daily basis — that the caring and compassion that was shown to them by me was something that they look back on often, something they were comforted by, in more ways than I could have ever imagined.

She went on to express her thanks and gratitude, and mentioned how much of a positive impact I had on them and their grieving process. She thanked me for being there, comforting and guiding them, when they were at a total loss and needed someone to be their guide.

She said “My family could never have gotten through this without the kindness and caring that you showed us while we were there, and I just wanted to thank you.”

So . . . for me . . . this day . . . my question . . . “Have I ever really made a difference in the life of someone else?” was answered. I ended this call with tears in my eyes and joy in my heart for the grateful mother on the other end of the phone.

I consider myself fortunate enough to have gotten to experience this phone call and to know in my heart that no matter how thankless my job sometimes seems, I do make a difference.

I believe in the power of nursing.
State of the School

What a stimulating time to be a nurse at the Maurine Church Coburn School of Nursing, and an exciting time of transition for healthcare.

Expanded training under the Affordable Care Act

The Affordable Care Act has created new opportunities for nurses, as all health professionals are challenged to provide expanded access to care by working at the top of their practice. MCCSN is engaged in updating curriculum to reflect trends in community-based practice and primary care. New clinical opportunities allow students to learn about wellness, prevention, and chronic disease management because of the school’s partnership with Montage Health (formerly Community Hospital Foundation).

Montage Health has expanded healthcare services in our county to include integrated diabetes care and a mobile clinic for the homeless where students can assist in critical primary care screenings and services for our underserved.

Unique clinical opportunities

Natividad Medical Center continues to provide MCCSN students excellent clinical experiences in trauma, pediatric, and high-risk maternal-neonatal care. In support of the 2010 Institute of Medicine recommendations for nursing, Natividad has partnered with MCCSN since 2014 to provide six-month residencies for 25 new graduates.

Expanded employment options

Recent improvement in the economy coincides with improved employment rates for all new California graduates, including MCCSN grads. In fact, the class of 2015 had a 96-percent employment rate in nursing within 6–9 months after graduation.

Across the state, about 60 percent of new graduates are working in acute care, 10 percent in long-term care, and the remainder in community-based settings. At the same time, that access to care presents the challenge of the millennium — we are faced with a 10-percent vacancy rate for nursing faculty across the state and an average age of 60 for our current faculty. MCCSN is no exception.

This past year, two endearing faculty retired and more are expected to do the same in the next 2–5 years. The school has participated in several preceptorships for master students pursuing nursing education. We are determined to help “grow our own” and eagerly encourage our graduates to return to teach the next generation of nurses. In fact, we welcomed Erin Sullivan, RN, MS, FNP, Class of 2005, as a new faculty member in July. She will teach medical-surgical and pediatric curriculum.

Expanded nursing education

Nursing education continues to thrive in the region as we celebrate the recent Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) accreditation of the BSN program at CSU Monterey Bay. Students now have local access to baccalaureate education and may choose to co-enroll in BSN courses after one year in the associate degree program or to continue seamlessly to complete their baccalaureate degree within 3–4 semesters after graduation. MCCSN faculty has incorporated academic progression into the curriculum and has embraced best-teaching practices such as flipped classrooms, adaptive quizzing, and simulation. We cannot wait to embrace the next practices in the coming year.

MCCSN continues to adapt to the health-care environment and the needs of past, present, and current students. We are also proud to remain a National Student Nurses’ Association Stellar School. And we are looking forward to our Board of Registered Nurses (BRN) approval visit in spring 2017.

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The Maurine Church Coburn School of Nursing Endowment Needs Your Support

In 1984, Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula (CHOMP) and Monterey Peninsula College (MPC) created a partnership to meet the growing shortage of nurses on the Monterey Peninsula. Together, they would “grow their own.”

From the beginning, an endowment gift from the estate of Maurine Church Coburn enabled the nursing school (now named after its benefactor) to offer the highest level of education. Now, 35 years later, proceeds from the endowment and tuition are not keeping pace with the current operating expenses.

Thanks to the initial support from Maurine Church Coburn, MCCSN is one of the best nursing schools in the region. As alumni and professionals in the field, we need your help to sustain the quality of and access to the education you received.

Whether you stayed in the area or have had a career in nursing elsewhere, your contributions to healthcare are the result of hard work, your compassion, and the opportunity given to you at MCCSN. Your gift today will ensure the future of quality healthcare on the Monterey Peninsula and beyond.

Donate now at donate.chomp.org
Grateful Patient’s Legacy Supports Nurses

While studying medical record administration in Boston, Rita Echenique met a young doctor, whose father, also a physician, owned a 22-bed hospital in King City, which later became a 42-bed hospital — George L. Mee Memorial Hospital. Rita was invited to establish the medical record department, where she met and married a young rancher named Luis. For 22 years, she worked at Mee Memorial. She then became a medical record consultant for skilled nursing facilities, which brought her to the Monterey Peninsula.

With Monterey as her second home, she met friends at Community Hospital. One day, one friend, a member of the hospital Auxiliary, told her, “We probably have a red coat that would fit you." So began a long tenure for Rita, the Auxiliary, and Community Hospital.

As she and Luis aged, they had more exposure to Community Hospital from the patient’s point of view. With this in mind, Rita thought it would be appropriate to support the hospital in honor of Luis, who had passed the year before. In 2007, Rita Echenique gave $1 million dollars to Community Hospital Foundation (now called Montage Health) and the Auxiliary. In fact, in 2017, the Auxiliary will allocate $90,000 of the Echenique funds toward the purchase of a much needed new adult mannequin for the simulation lab at MCCSN.

"I don’t know whether Community Hospital nurses are taught this," she said, “or if they come by it naturally, but they know how to relate to the patient. They’re not just doing a job; they’re so kind and thoughtful and compassionate. And they work so hard. This was the right thing to do.”

In addition to the gift made during Rita’s lifetime, she included Community Hospital in her estate plan. Rita’s donations provide nursing scholarships and educational opportunities. Rita has since passed, but to this day her gifts continue to benefit nurses.

For so many, support like Rita’s made years ago, was instrumental in advancing their education and subsequently, their careers. Were you one of them?

An outright or planned gift can have a profound impact on the lives of others. Have you considered such a gift to MCCSN?

Rita’s donations provide scholarships and educational opportunities for nursing students.

Students are shown here training in the simulation lab at Maurine Church Coburn School of Nursing.
Jonathan Hofmans, RN, class of 2013

Jonathon Hofmans’ dad wanted him one day to take over his plumbing business. But life took a different turn. With the birth of Hofmans’ son, Blake, he cut back on his plumbing work so his wife could pursue her career. At the age of 1½, Blake was admitted to Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula for five days with pneumonia. Jonathan’s world changed. He saw the incredible role nurses played in the care of his son.

Hofmans and his wife assessed his temperament for nursing. He had incredible patience and he was very empathetic. They agreed he should enroll in the MCCSN program. After all, his mom and her sisters were all nurses.

“That first semester when we visited the oncology patients,” Hofmans said, “I knew I was doing the right thing.”

Today, Hofmans is a nurse on Garden Pavilion at Community Hospital, where he spends a lot of one-on-one time with his patients. A grateful patient wrote a letter to Dr. Jill Shannahan praising the extensive time Hofmans spent with him and how comfortable he felt talking about his substance abuse.

It’s in those moments that Hofmans finds great rewards in the work he does as a nurse.

Your commitment to your career has more impact on people’s lives than you will ever realize. You go to work each day treating people, usually at their greatest time of need. They may be too sick, in too much pain, or too distraught to communicate their true appreciation for you each and every time. But there are those, whether you hear from them or not, as in Kathy’s story, whose lives you have touched. And some of those touch you back in ways that substantiate your mission to help others. Tell us about a defining moment for you.

A letter from a patient that touched you, an opportunity to make a difference in the way care is delivered, the moment you took extra time to care for a patient and were able to save or turn a life around.

We want to hear your stories. Your stories inspire fellow alumni to continue to make a difference each and every day.

Visit mpc.edu/mccsnalumni or send an email to Laura Loop at: laura.loop@chomp.org.
Giving back

Maurine Church Coburn School of Nursing and its graduates have been successful, thanks to the generous donations of community members and students. To maintain our nationally accredited, award-winning program and scholarships, we invite our graduates and those who believe in advancing healthcare education to join us in investing in the future of quality healthcare on the Monterey Peninsula.

To donate to the Maurine Church Coburn School of Nursing, contact:

Montage Health Development
(831) 658-3630
donate.chomp.org
Email: robin.venuti@mhfdn.org