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News Release

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NMCC Student Nurses Association “gives back”

Aroostook County – The members of Northern Maine Community College’s Student Nurses Association hold a number of fundraisers throughout the academic year to not only support the group’s needs, but also as a way to help those in need and to promote overall wellness.

Annually, the group donates money to various causes selected by the students collectively. According to SNA advisor Paula Flora, organizations are chosen based on either a personal connection, or what the students have seen or heard about from their clients in the clinical setting.

“They see people ill or injured in the hospital setting and hear their stories of how they got there. They see first-hand the effect of how these agencies help them,” said Flora. “Patients often touch students in pretty profound ways, and they grow to care about them. Supporting the organizations that make a difference in these patients lives matters to our students. It also creates a sense of pride knowing they helped make a difference”

Last year’s class of graduating nurses opted to donate their funds, more than \$1,000 in all, to four significant causes that benefit the region: House of Comfort Hospice, The Gathering Place, Angel Flight, and the local chapter of the American Red Cross.

The House of Comfort Hospice is an effort that is underway to establish a hospice house locally. This will allow for more family interaction with terminal patients than the hospital setting, while having medical personnel on-site to provide more patient care than patients can receive at home. Since the NMCC nursing students work with a number of cancer patients, this cause was one to quickly garner their support.

“A place like the House of Comfort Hospice would lessen the burdens on the family, and decrease the stress on the patient. It is a cause that my classmates and I felt was one that deserved our support. There is nothing like it in this area, and we hope that it will be an option for patients much sooner than later,” said Jodi Tash, a 2011 nursing graduate who served as co-president of SNA last year.

Hearing from patients about the help they received from Angel Flight to travel to Boston and other locations for cancer treatments or other medical needs was the driving force behind selecting that organization for a donation. Angel Flight provides free air travel for critically ill or injured patients or individuals with medical appointments who can’t afford to travel. Flights are in private aircraft by volunteer pilots.

The American Red Cross is another organization that is well known for helping people in crisis. Not only does the local chapter help victims of fires and natural disasters, but it also provides valuable training in areas such as disaster preparedness and CPR. “As a non-profit organization started by a nurse, Clara Barton, it is one close to the hearts of many nurses and nursing students. In addition, the local chapter of the Red Cross has helped individuals many of us knew when they, too, were facing disaster,” said Tash.

A key component of NMCC’s nursing program centers around wellness. First year students all spend time over a period of weeks each going to a “well elder’s” home to interview and assess them. During the course of their program, they also provide community education regarding wellness. With that in mind, an organization like The Gathering Place, which encourages wellness activities, was a natural fit. The Gathering Place, which operates under the auspices of the Aroostook Area Agency on Aging, is a place for senior citizens to get together and socialize.

“All-in-all, the Student Nurses Association taught many of us lessons about what it is to be a nurse. It is not about just going to work, getting a check and going home. It taught us that nursing is a way of life and prepared us for the real task at hand: reaching out and making a difference,” said Tash. “From day one of the nursing program, our instructors presented us with the idea that nurses don’t just treat the medical problem; we treat the whole person. Our goal in nursing is to use both medicinal and holistic means of healing to help people; these organizations do just that. They step in, give their time and resources, and leave people with a new sense of satisfaction and well-being. I am proud of my classmates for their suggestions in supporting these worthy causes, for they have touched many hearts with their causes.”

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