

**2010 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AWARD NOMINATION of N473: Community Leadership Practicum
Students, mentored by Dr. Marianne Hutti**

ABSTRACT (249 words)

Eleven students from the School of Nursing are nominated by their faculty mentor for the culminating experience that they completed in Spring, 2010. After a very detailed assessment of their “community of interest” – the racetrack clinic at Churchill Downs and the backside workers and their children – students found the following primary problems:

- *Lack of backpacks at Semple Elementary School (where the children of the permanent backside workers attend school) to implement the “Blessings in a Backpack” program (which provides food for low income children; backpacks are filled with food on Friday and returned on Monday, ensuring needy children have enough food for the weekend);*
- *Lack of socks or underwear for many needy students who attend Semple Elementary (students are sent home if attend without them);*
- *Presence of pain as the primary problem identified by backside workers as a result of their hard physical work.*

To meet these needs, students obtained 102 donated backpacks, more than enough to cover Semple Elementary School’s need; obtained donations of 100 pairs of new socks and 100 pairs of new underwear; created four laminated posters for the walls of the racetrack clinic waiting room, written for patients with low literacy, in both Spanish and English, regarding treatment of muscle strain/sprain, cuts and bruises, and headache; and obtained donations of over-the-counter pain medications, which were placed by nursing students into more than 300 labeled bottles of 30 pills each, to be dispensed to backside workers via the racetrack clinic nurse practitioners.

2. Service start date: January 11, 2010

Service end date: April 29, 2010

3. How did this project impact your personal development?

The following students participated in this project: Kristina Booker, Erin Howell, Jennifer Koranda-Niesse, Denise Neuin, Ladonna Piper, Tonya Smith, Lori Taft, Mari Travis, Heather Vittitow, Christin Warren, and Nina Yoder. All were in the second semester of their senior year when they participated in this culminating experience. Written reflections from these students, obtained on April 19, 2010 state the following:

Christin Warren: “This experience has been relevant, practical, and applicable to me and my career goals. It has made me more well-rounded and empathetic toward my community. ...after all is said and done, I do feel like I made a difference in the community and gained new knowledge about the community I will soon be serving...I have become more empathetic toward my community and enthusiastic in regards to care provision for this population.”

Nina Yoder: “It became clear to me that specific conclusions could not be made without the help and participation of others. One participant’s understanding of the problem in no way reflects the variety of problems which may be present. The input of the other group members was essential to accurately come to the proper conclusions...the consideration of the point of view of others was necessary for the successful completion of the project...This project has further expanded my understanding of the necessity of teamwork for successful involvement and survival. Moreover, it allowed me to contribute to the population as a caregiver.”

Tonya Smith: “It has made me aware of the cultural diversity within our city and the issues others face...I have learned to be more observant of non-traditional social problems within a community. I’ve also learned how to network more efficiently and create professional partnerships that are helpful in meeting the goals of a project...My participation in the culminating experience has enhanced my intervention skills. It has caused me to think “outside of the box” when creating and implementing interventions for my targeted clients. Usually, the standard community intervention is a health fair. However, this course has taught me to choose projects that are sustainable and meaningful to the population.”

Kristina Booker: “In the classroom we are constantly looking at the nursing process. I got to relate it to our culminating experience in the real world.”

Lori Taft: “I have seen a difference in how open I am to relating to people from different cultures.”

Jennifer Koranda-Niesse: “I learned more about community resources in the Louisville area... and the importance of making a change sustainable.”

Heather Vittitow: “This culminating experience was extremely valuable to me as a learner. It helped me to further develop my nursing process skills, my personal views, my knowledge base, and my nursing attitude towards people of all different backgrounds. I always find it helpful to study communities because I think that a lot of times people forget that nurses work in the community, not just in hospitals. Many times what we see in communities can correlate with what we see in hospitals. Overall, I think it was a very valuable learning experience.”

Denise Neuin: “I learned that when going to help the community, learning their culture is very important...the experience made me open my eyes to how simple helping others can be...how one small group can make a difference to others without having a lot of money....this experience made me see that learning about my patient’s culture and needs is necessary to have a healthy nurse-patient relationship...I had a truly fun experience and felt I bonded with my classmates better.”

Ladonna Piper: “This experience helped me learn about the needs of my community... it helped me make an impact on others’ lives.”

Mari Travis: “I will be using this experience, alternative points of view and the nursing process in my career as a nurse to help determine what is best for my patients.”

Erin Howell: “Participation in this experience has allowed me to become an advocate for the community...I was able to participate in making an impact on others’ daily lives... and more aware of my own community and the needs of my neighbors. Nursing requires advocacy, ingenuity, and implementation for the community at large as well as the patients we serve. We are the occupation that is trusted by our community. Therefore, it is our responsibility to navigate the processes required in utilizing community resources and enabling strong outcomes for our patients”.

4. How did this project impact the community?

Upon assessing the Churchill Downs backside workers and their families, students learned that both the workers and their children had significant needs. They learned that 95% of the 1300 backside workers who are continually employed at Churchill Downs are Hispanic, with a middle school literacy level. Some speak English; many do not. The age range of adult workers is 18-30 years. Single workers may live in housing at Churchill Downs. If married or cohabitating and with children, they must live in apartments near the track. Children of the backside workers primarily attend Semple Elementary School. There are about 525 children at Semple Elementary, ages 5-11 years. Of these, about 90 children qualify for free school lunch and the “Blessings in a Backpack” program, and many of these are the children of backside workers. The “Blessings in a Backpack” program provides food for needy children. Backpacks are filled with food donated by “Kentucky Harvest” on Friday, and children return the backpacks to be refilled for the following weekend on Monday. The Family Resource Coordinator (Mrs. Barb Kissell) stated that the greatest needs at the school were socks and underwear for the neediest of children, and backpacks for the “Blessings in a Backpack” program. Without proper socks and underwear, students cannot attend school and are sent home. Nursing students were able to obtain donations of 102 backpacks and about 100 pairs of donated new socks and 100 pairs of donated new underwear for Semple Elementary School students.

The racetrack clinic at Churchill Downs is open 3 days per week and is staffed by nurse practitioner faculty members from the University of Louisville. The clinic had more than 2000 visits by backside workers in 2009. Students completed a random chart audit at the racetrack clinic, and found that the majority of backside workers presented with a chief complaint of pain...headache, muscle sprain and strain, or from cuts and bruises from the hard physical work they do. In addition, the backside workers also did not know first aid for these conditions. Students learned that the foundation that pays for prescriptions for the workers does not cover the cost of over-the-counter (OTC) medications such as Advil, Tylenol, or Motrin.

Students obtained donations of OTC pain medications from a local pharmacy in Louisville, KY. This pharmacy provides medications to numerous nursing home residents in unit-dose packaging of a month’s supply of medication. When the resident leaves the nursing home facility, the medications cannot be reused because of the way they are packaged, so they are returned to the pharmacy to be destroyed. The pharmacy provided the students with 2 huge bags of unit-dose packaged OTC medications for the project. The students then punched each unused pill into a pill bottle containing a month’s supply of medication, which was then properly labeled for dispensing by the nurse practitioners at the racetrack clinic. Over 300 pill bottles of 30 pills each containing OTC pain medications such as

Tylenol, Aspirin, and Motrin were then delivered to the clinic by the students. In addition, the nursing students created four laminated posters for the walls of the racetrack clinic waiting room, written for patients with low literacy, in both Spanish and English, regarding the first aid treatment of muscle strain and sprain, cuts and bruises, and headache.

5. Describe unique and/or exemplary attributes of the project.

Nursing students begin their upper division nursing courses in N361: Community Health Nursing. They learn community health nursing concepts, and work in a specific “community of interest” located primarily in the Signature Partnership area. Then students begin their hospital-based clinical courses in medical-surgical, pediatric, psychiatric, and maternity nursing. They end their nursing curriculum in a final acute care, hospital-based capstone course (N471) while also completing N473: Community Leadership Practicum, their culminating experience course. In N473, students are placed again with their same clinical instructors from their original community health nursing course, N361.

In N473: Community Leadership Practicum, faculty members asked the nursing students to use the nursing process (assess, plan, implement, evaluate) to identify issues in their same “community of interest”, and to use the nursing knowledge and skills they had gained in the nursing curriculum to “give back” in some way to their community. A total of 60 students participated, and were divided among their 6 original nursing instructors. At the end of the semester, students completed traditional online evaluations as well as this additional, in class, survey:

N473: Community Leadership Practicum Evaluation RESULTS

***SURVEY WAS GIVEN ON LAST DAY OF CLASS IN N473, APRIL 19, 2010, WITH 56 RESPONDENTS
(ALL STUDENTS PRESENT RESPONDED)***

On a scale of 1 (*LOW*) to 4 (*HIGH*), to what degree do you feel the culminating experience in which you participated:

	LOW			HIGH
1. Allowed you to use your knowledge and skills to “give back” to the Louisville community?	1	2	3	4
RESULTS = 3.55				
2. Encouraged you to use community health nursing concepts?	1	2	3	4
RESULTS = 3.66/4.0				
3. Helped you to better identify the nursing needs of your “community of interest”?	1	2	3	4
RESULTS = 3.41/4.0				
4. Developed within you and even greater empathy for underserved clients?	1	2	3	4
RESULTS = 3.58/4.0				
5. Developed within you a greater desire to serve your community/volunteer in some way in the future?	1	2	3	4
RESULTS = 3.41/4.0				

6. Developed within you a greater appreciation of cultural diversity within the Greater Louisville area? 1 2 3 4
RESULTS = 3.55/4.0

This was the first time N473: Community Leadership Practicum was offered at the School of Nursing. Each group of students was required to keep the documentation of their assessments of primary community problems, plans, intervention and evaluation in group Blackboard folders. Each group used this information to create a poster regarding their project which was presented at the "Community Engagement Showcase" at the Redbarn on Belknap Campus on April 12, 2010. At the request of "I2A" staff, the six posters created by the sixty N473 students will also be on display at the "i2a Institute" in May, 2010, as exemplars of a type of outcome that may be used as a culminating experience.

I am nominating my group of students from N473 for the "**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AWARD**" because of their outstanding effort, the project they created, and the difference I believe they have made in the lives of many people.

6. How many community members were impacted?

It is difficult to determine how many people in the community will be impacted by the work of these students, as they have just completed their culminating experience project. We know at least 90 students at Semple Elementary School will now be able to participate in the "Blessings in a Backpack" program. In addition, nursing students have supplied socks and underwear for at least 100-200 children at Semple Elementary School.

At least 300 backside workers will benefit from obtaining OTC pain medication from the racetrack clinic, which they otherwise could not have afforded to obtain. Further, an undetermined number of workers will benefit from health teaching associated with the pain-related posters that are now on the walls of the clinic waiting room.