

EXCELSIOR



Rhythm and Views

Peter Krasulski '09
rocks on as band
promotes Army excellence

p. 12



High school sweethearts and Excelsior graduates Arnecia C. and Lloyd W. Gallop, of Dumfries, Virginia, are all smiles on the Empire State Plaza after Commencement in Albany, New York. Lloyd earned a Bachelor of Science in liberal arts in 2003 while on active duty in the U.S. Army and participated in Commencement this year with his wife Arnecia, who earned a Bachelor of Science in liberal arts in May after earning an associate degree in 2003. "Both of us wanted to complete our bachelor's degrees, but life and its responsibilities got in the way," says Lloyd. "When we decided to finish our degrees, I finished first. Arnecia and I marched across the stage together when we finished high school, and I promised her that I would wait until she finished so that we could once again march together."

PHOTO: MIKE HEMBERGER

Editor's Note

Beginning with this issue, this publication is now called Excelsior College Magazine. Meaning *ever upward*, Excelsior represents not only the name of our institution but also our spirit. It is our motivation for providing adult learners with educational opportunities that help them achieve their academic goals; it is our hope for alumni as they move ahead in their lives and progress in their careers. Excelsior, by its very definition, connects all members of our College community — alumni, students, faculty, staff, leadership, governance, friends, and partners.

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As a member of The Volunteers, the U.S. Army's premier touring rock band, Sgt. 1st Class Peter Krasulski '09 serves up some serious rock while serving his country.

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Faith-based nursing brings a community-centered approach to caring for the mind, body, and spirit of others.

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With giving to higher education on the upswing, Excelsior donors designate annual gifts to what matters to them.

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ON THE COVER: Peter Krasulski, a 2009 graduate, plays bass for The Volunteers, the U.S. Army's premier touring rock band. PHOTO COURTESY OF U.S. ARMY FIELD BAND



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Dr. John F. Ebersole

Excelstor's commitment to serving the needs of our nation's military—active duty and veteran—spans more than four decades. Through it, we have developed a keen sense of their unique needs. Recently, by combining our strength in serving military and veteran students with our highly regarded School of Nursing, we were successful in securing a major grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to assist qualified veterans in earning a bachelor's degree in nursing. This is a natural fit for our School of Nursing, one of a select few designated by the National League for Nursing as a Center for Excellence in Nursing Education.

The three-year, \$1,019,181 award from HRSA is one of only 10 grants the agency funded this year that target veterans in nursing. This award will enable Excelsior to add a nurse mentor to our staff to help educate faculty and staff in how best to support veterans academically. Through the grant, we will build upon the work of our Office of Career Services and our Center for Military Education to help veterans transition into a civilian nursing career. These funds will also help us infuse material into our curriculum that will help all nursing students better understand the needs of military personnel, veterans, and their families.

The grant will support veterans beyond the 130 already enrolled in our nursing bachelor's program. It means better career opportunities for these students, and it will ultimately translate into better health care overall.

Nurses prepared at the bachelor's level report higher job satisfaction, less job stress, and remain twice as long in their positions. They are also paid more: the median annual wage for RNs in 2012 was \$65,470.

Studies have shown a direct link between increased levels of nursing education and improved patient outcomes and lower health care costs. Nationwide, 76 percent of hospitals and other health care settings express a strong preference for bachelor's preparation among their RN staff.

All of this comes at a time when the demand for well-trained nurses is increasing due to an aging RN workforce, a growing proportion of senior citizens nationwide, and increased health care coverage.

I'm proud to say that thanks to the hard work of our staff and faculty, Excelsior is well-positioned to take a lead in serving our nation's military while addressing a significant workforce need.

Ever upward,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

EXCELSIOR

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Excelsior Recognizes Six as Distinguished Faculty

Students credit the six 2014 distinguished faculty members with attributes such as being the heart of Excelsior, stimulating student interest and desire to learn more, offering well-resourced and enjoyable online classes, and exhibiting care and concern about student performance.

Beginning her Excelsior College career in 1995 as a clinical examiner for the School of Nursing's Clinical Performance in Nursing Exam (CPNE), **Amy Elinkas, MSN, RN**, became a full-time faculty program director in 2008. Honored for her outstanding student service, Elinkas works with students as they prepare for nursing theory examinations and the CPNE.

Eileen Hegel, EdS, a helpful, accessible, and involved faculty member in the School of Liberal Arts, has been affiliated with Excelsior College for the last nine years, teaching a range of communication courses. She is a professional speaker and writer, as well as former producer and host of the "Higher Ways" radio show designed to educate women on personal growth topics such as attitude, mentoring, and conflict resolution.

On the Excelsior faculty for more than five years, **Dianne Oakes, JD, MSW**, has developed and taught courses in the Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences' Gerontology Emphasis in the School of Health Sciences. In 2013, she received a Professional Development Grant for Applied Scholarship from the College to develop a presentation on "Teaching Case Studies in an Online Classroom to Maximize Learning." Recognized for her excellence in teaching and the dignity and grace with which she assists all of her students, she holds her students to standards of excellence.

Velislav Pavlov, MS, joined Excelsior in 2012 and has been instrumental in developing and teaching the College's cybersecurity courses. He goes above and beyond, spending quality time with students to ensure they understand the materials and providing timely resources to facilitate coursework. In addition to his instructional work, Pavlov serves as the faculty advisor for Excelsior's cybersecurity student group. The group placed in the top 25 at the 2013 Symantec Cyber Readiness Challenge and participated in the National Cyber League (NCL) competition (see article on page 10).

In the School of Business & Technology since 2009, **Rebecca Shaffer, CPA**, has taught online courses, developed and revised business courses, and served as an advisory faculty member on the School of Business & Technology's Business Faculty Committee. She is the tax director at Dick's Sporting Goods Inc., where she manages all aspects of taxation, including tax compliance, capital, tax planning, gains policies, annual and quarterly reporting, and audit declaration.

With Excelsior College since 2008, **Anthony Zumpetta, DEd**, teaches criminal justice courses in the School of Public Service. He has been a valued and well-respected member of the faculty and his students regularly provide positive feedback and accolades with regard to his work and dedication to his profession. He is a professor emeritus from West Chester University and has written 28 publications. ■

Above: Six faculty members were honored with Distinguished Faculty Member of the Year Awards on July 10. Recipients are (left to right) Amy Elinkas, Eileen Hegel, Dianne Oakes, Velislav Pavlov, Rebecca Shaffer, and Anthony Zumpetta.

NEW CENTER PROMOTES LEARNING THROUGH TRANSFORMATIONAL GAMES



EIKON PHOTOGRAPHY

Three years after hosting its first symposium on the use of games in education, Excelsior officially launched the Center for Game and Simulation-Based Learning. The center, under the leadership of founding director David Seelow, promotes incorporating games and simulations into curriculum to improve learner success.

The center is sponsoring the development of an online course designed as an alternate reality game, says Seelow. In addition, the courses ENG 102 Composition 2 and MAT 101 Math for Everyday Life will be enhanced with games in the near future.

Jesse Schell (shown above), the CEO of Schell Games and Distinguished Professor of Entertainment Technology at Carnegie Mellon University, was the keynote speaker at the center's inaugural event, held in May at Excelsior's office in Washington, DC. Schell discussed the power of transformational games and their use in education. He identified 11 things that technology is good at, including creating teachable moments and empowering students. "A game is a problem-solving activity that's approached playfully. In other words, with a spirit of curiosity," said Schell. "So when you think about it that way, it becomes obvious why people would want to bring games into the classroom. It's about problem solving and curiosity." ■

> For more on the center, go to www.gameandsimulationbasedlearning.org.

NATIONAL ACADEMIC ADVISING ASSOCIATION RECOGNIZES THREE FROM EXCELSIOR

The National Academic Advising Association named three staff members from Excelsior College as recipients of 2014 advising awards. NACADA named Sandy DerGurahian, director of advisement and evaluation for the School of Nursing, a recipient of the Outstanding Advising Administrator Award. Sara Duprey, a senior academic advisor in the School of Nursing, received a Certificate of Merit in the Outstanding Advisor Award-Primary Advising Role category, and Chris Johnson, a military academic advisor in the Center for Military Education, was awarded a Certificate of Merit in the Outstanding New Advisor Award-Primary Advising Role category.

NACADA, an association of professional advisors, counselors, faculty, administrators, and students, promotes and supports quality academic advising in higher education institutions to enhance the educational development of students.



The recipients of NACADA awards are (left to right) Chris Johnson, military academic advisor in the Center for Military Education; Sara Duprey, senior academic advisor in the School of Nursing; and Sandy DerGurahian, director of advisement and evaluation in the School of Nursing, shown with President John Ebersole.



NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY
INSTITUTE JOURNAL

VOLUME 1, PAGE 2



How can unwanted Web robots be identified and prevented to better protect computers, networks, and applications?

A paper in the premier issue of the National Cybersecurity Institute Journal presents an innovative method that includes a five-identifier evaluation process. The paper is one of six in the peer-reviewed journal published in May by Excelsior College, and the second issue was published in September. The National Cybersecurity Institute Journal presents relevant and noteworthy articles to enlighten those with a vested interest in the cybersecurity field, according to editor in chief Jane A. LeClair, the chief operating officer of the National Cybersecurity Institute at Excelsior College.

The NCI is an academic and research center dedicated to assisting government, industry, military, and academic sectors meet challenges in cybersecurity policy, technology, and education. Issues of the National Cybersecurity Institute Journal can be read online at www.nationalcybersecurityinstitute.org.

Partners in Lifelong Learning Raises an All-Time High for Scholarship Funds

Excelcior's commitment to providing financial support to students received a boost in April when the annual Partners in Lifelong Learning event raised a record-setting \$102,417. The money raised will benefit students who live in New York state—the home of Excelsior—and surrounding areas.

Excelsior recognized Deborah Onslow and the Times Union with Partners in Lifelong Learning Awards. Onslow, a leader in the nonprofit community, most recently was the chief executive officer at the CNSE Children's Museum of Science and Technology in Troy, New York. As the leading media organization in New York's Capital Region, the Times Union sponsors local events and supports businesses to strengthen the area and help make it a better place for all to work and live.

Initiated in 2008, Excelsior's Partners in Lifelong Learning Award allows the College to draw attention to the importance of lifelong learning while funding scholarships for students in need of financial support to complete their degrees. This year's event brought the total amount raised since the event's inception to more than \$532,000, benefiting more than 500 Excelsior students.

Two recipients of scholarships, student Christopher Waters and recent graduate Katherine Selkirk,



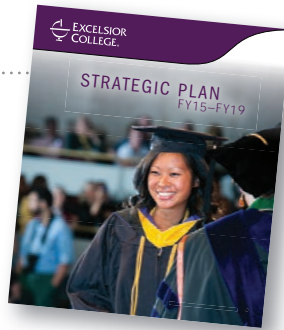
Katherine Selkirk '13 comments on the impact of Excelsior College. Above: Christopher Waters, a student pursuing a bachelor's degree in psychology, and his family visit with President Ebersole at the event. PHOTOS: KRIS QUA

who earned her degree through one of Excelsior's corporate partnerships, spoke at the event. "Finishing my degree online made a lot of sense to me, and I've never looked back," Selkirk told those attending. "Excelsior allowed me to finish my degree on my own terms." ■

TO VIEW HIGHLIGHTS OF THE STUDENTS' REMARKS, GO TO WWW.EXCELSIOR.EDU/GIVING.

Strategically Speaking

In July, the Excelsior College Board of Trustees approved a strategic plan to guide the College over the next five years. The strategic areas in the plan are: 1) enhance student success; 2) provide national leadership in the advancement and development of teaching, learning, and academic assessment; 3) build the Excelsior brand; 4) engage with constituents in more frequent and meaningful ways; 5) maintain and



enhance the College's reputation for innovation; and 6) sustain growth with quality.

The strategic plan demonstrates "our commitment to enhancing the core aspect of the College's work, while simultaneously renewing our founder's belief in the importance of innovation and experimentation. With the adoption of this plan, Excelsior moves into new areas of activity and works hard to increase our visibility nationally and internationally," says John F. Ebersole, president of Excelsior College. ■



Mary Lee Pollard

Dean, School of Nursing

A cohort of students pursuing an associate degree in nursing recently completed the eight online courses Excelsior offers in the traditionally exam-based curriculum. Feedback from the students has been positive, and for this innovation, the College was recognized with a Silver Award for Best Practices in Distance Learning Programming. The United States Distance Learning Association presented the award, as well as inducted Excelsior president John F. Ebersole into its Hall of Fame, in May.

Mary Lee Pollard, dean of the School of Nursing, discusses the courses and their impact.

Q. What led to the decision to offer online courses in the associate degree in nursing program?

A. Feedback from our students suggested they were looking for a more structured approach to learning the required nursing theory. In our exit surveys there were comments implying that some students who liked the ability to study at their own pace—meaning as a part-time student not tied to the mandatory seat time of a traditional classroom—desired more structure in their learning activities.

Q. What impact have online courses had on the student experience?

A. The course evaluations have been very favorable. We have one cohort of students who completed all eight courses over a 16-month period, finishing one course every eight weeks. Their feedback suggests it was a great deal of work, they learned a lot, and that the courses were engaging. None of this cohort has graduated yet.

Q. How are students combining courses with the traditional exam-based curriculum to fulfill degree requirements?

A. Students have the opportunity to register for exams to meet requirements for content areas in which they are confident with independent study, and they can enroll in courses to meet program requirements in content areas in which they desire a more structured approach. ■

KRIS QUA

EXCELSIOR: A PURPLE HEART UNIVERSITY BY THE MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART

Excel­sior College received designation as a Purple Heart University by the Military Order of the Purple Heart. The official proclamation was presented to the College by the Central Texas Chapter 1876 of the Military Order of the Purple Heart in June. Richard Hernandez '06, Excelsior's military representative at Fort Hood, accepted the proclamation. Excelsior College was recognized for its rich and proud military heritage and its active involvement in assisting veterans and their family members with completing their education. ■

ACCOLADE FOR THE OWL

Excel­sior College received its second consecutive Distance Education Innovation Award from the National University Technology Network, this time for the Online Writing Lab (OWL).

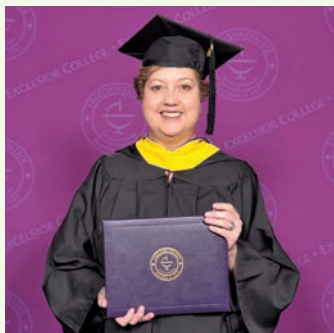
The OWL offers multimedia learning resources to support beginning college writers and those seeking to advance their skills beyond introductory writing or classes. The panel of reviewers cited the OWL as "one of a kind for its integration of multimedia and a video game to support writer's learning and to help meet modern students' needs for interaction and engagement." Introduced earlier this year, the OWL is free and open to the public and has been incorporated into college and high school curriculums. An independent study found students who used the OWL improved their writing skills and processes, and increased their final grades by an average of 5.5 points. ■

NOW AT EXCELSIOR LIFE

For more news, go to excelsior.edu/excelsiorlife

Excelsior Experts

Are Russian hackers preparing for a cyber war? How would the United States respond to an Ebola outbreak in an American city? Is real-life forensics anything like it's portrayed in the movies? Excelsior experts tackle current issues on Excelsior Commentary: excelsior.edu/commentary



**"After all these years,
I wanted to finally do
something for myself...
So at the age of 59,
I did it."**

—Laurie Herrera on finishing
her college degree, 19 years
after enrolling at Excelsior

Learn about Laurie and other Excelsior
graduates at excelsior.edu/alumnistories

Were you seen?



Check out the Commencement slideshow:
excelsior.edu/2014graduation

WATCH



Jo Ann Webb, senior director of federal relations and policy for the American Organization of Nurse Executives, discusses the impact of the Affordable Care Act on the nursing profession. In May, Webb was the keynote speaker at an educational conference, Health Care Reform – Impact on Nursing Practice and Education, sponsored by Excelsior's School of Nursing and Robert E. Kinsinger Institute for Nursing Excellence.

excelsior.edu/webb



EXCELSIOR.EDU/PODCAST



**Are Online
Courses
Superior to
Face-to-Face
Classes?**

Patrick Jones, vice provost and a leader in the field of assessment and higher education, thinks so. **"There are some very valid reasons why students want to spend time on campuses,"** says Patrick **"...I'm just not sure how valuable that is to the adult student population..."** Listen to his interview on Distance EDU on Demand and join the discussion: excelsior.edu/jonespodcast



PHOTOS: MIKE HEMBERGER AND KRIS QUA



Are You Ready for a Video Interview?

BY MARIBETH GUNNER PULLIAM



With video technology becoming more mainstream in the workplace, you may want to consider adding a webcam to your job search toolbox. Instead of a traditional in-person or phone job interview, many employers are turning to virtual video interviews when screening and recruiting potential candidates. Whether you are an experienced professional or a first-time job seeker, awareness of this growing trend is essential when preparing for your next job interview.

For many companies, video interviewing is increasing in popularity as a convenient and cost-effective method for interviewing applicants. Employers like this option as it allows them to screen multiple candidates more efficiently, and saves them time and money on transportation costs. With video interviews, hiring managers can review, replay, and compare the candidates' recorded responses more easily and efficiently.

As the applicant, you may be presented with one of two types of video interviews. One is an asynchronous version, also known as a one-way interview, for which you use your webcam to record your responses to pre-established questions and submit them for review by hiring managers. The second option is the live video interview, also known as a two-way interview. In this format, you speak directly to employers and interact in real time with the use of your webcam and video software. Two-way interviews are also generally recorded for later reference and employer review.

Although you may be wary of conducting video interviews, with the right practice and preparation, this format can be beneficial and have positive results. A video interview gives you the opportunity to showcase your talents and skill sets and promote your qualifications from a distance through both audio and visual modes. The two-dimensional aspect is especially helpful if your credentials are not an exact match for the job requirements, as you have the same advantage as in an in-person interview to convey your willingness and ability to learn. Other benefits of a video interview include saving time and money by eliminating travel and transportation costs, and reducing stress by interviewing from the comfort of your own familiar space.

Here are some tips for a successful video interview:

Be comfortable with the technology—familiarize yourself with the webcam and software you will use.

Test all settings and connections ahead of time. If using a laptop, make sure the battery is fully charged.

Have a Plan B. Be prepared with contact numbers if the technology fails and you need to reconnect by phone.

Clear your workspace. Your background must be professional and neat. Also, clear your computer desktop of any open applications to omit potential distractions.

Make sure you have quiet space to conduct the interview so you will not be disturbed.

Ensure proper lighting. Soft lighting strategically placed to accent your face is recommended.

Dress professionally—wear the same interview attire that you would wear to an in-person interview.

Gather reference resources ahead of time. Be ready with a copy of your resume, the job description, and pen and paper for notes.

Speak clearly and with purpose—be engaging and show interest and enthusiasm.

Use appropriate body language and make eye contact. Look directly at the camera, and make sure your posture, hand gestures, and other non-verbal cues project an open and confident demeanor.

Practice! Before the actual interview, record, and review your performance. (See box below for information about Excelsior's video tool for students and alumni).

Be early and stay late. Be ready at least 5–10 minutes prior to the interview. You do not want to appear tardy or rushed. Wait to shut down your computer until after the employer has said goodbye and signed off.

Although the video interview presents a different format, it's important to remember the basics of successful interviews. The process and guidelines are the same as in-person interviews: Do your research on the company, practice your interview skills, exude professionalism, and follow up with a thank-you note. ■

READY YOUR WEBCAM AND POLISH YOUR INTERVIEW SKILLS

The Career Center offers a free mock interview tool so students and alumni can practice and perfect interview skills, anytime. Users can choose from more than 100 practice interview questions and more than 50 prerecorded interviews aligned with various career fields, and record their mock interviews. The recorded interview videos can be saved with a secure URL and shared with others to gain helpful feedback. To learn more and access the mock interview tool, visit EC JobLinks at excelsior.edu/ecjoblinks.

Maribeth Gunner Pulliam, MS Ed, is the director of career services at Excelsior College. She can be reached at careerinfo@excelsior.edu.



Excelsior.edu/Career



Facebook.com/ECCareerCenter

CYBER*SERIOUS*

Students put technical skills to the test in national cybersecurity competitions

BY MARIA C. SPARKS

In the graduate-level course CYS 526 Cyber Attacks and Defenses, students consider security issues, vulnerabilities, and ways to identify, respond to, and prevent cybersecurity attacks. Through hands-on work, they learn how to be ethical hackers—experts who attack a system looking for vulnerabilities a not-so-ethical person would exploit—and to use tools that assess vulnerability.

But what's the next step for students who want to put their knowledge and skills to the test beyond classwork?



For Chris Welber '14, a student in the Cyber Attacks and Defenses course, the next step was to organize a cybersecurity student organization in 2013. Conceived as a way to help learners further their knowledge, pursue research projects, develop their professional network, and gain additional practical experience, the student group was created with the support of Lifang Shih, associate dean of the School of Business & Technology; Faculty Program Director Sherly Abraham; and Velislav Pavlov, who teaches the course. "I thought it would be a good idea to form a [College]-affiliated student group. It turns out that Dr. Shih, Dr. Abraham, and Professor Pavlov had the same idea," says Welber, who took CYS 526 while completing his Bachelor of Science in liberal arts. An IT professional with nearly 30 years of experience, he has since enrolled in the Master of Science in Cybersecurity program.

The practical experience would come from participating in cybersecurity competitions. In July 2013, Welber and classmate Michael Oldright '14 put their academic knowledge to the test by participating in the Symantec Cyber Readiness Challenge, a competition in which students apply their knowledge in realistic simulation scenarios. The two did well, placing among the top 25 and top 100, respectively, and then participated in the National Cyber League competition in fall 2013 with classmate Anna Truss '14. The team ultimately placed 7th in the first conference stage, which had 945 registered participants, and 5th in the second stage of the conference, competing against more than 380 qualifying individuals on 58 teams and representing 50 colleges and universities.

"The greatest advantage is the hands-on experience that they can get," says Abraham, who is organizing a team, including Oldright, Truss, and Welber, as well as four other students suggested by faculty members, to participate in the 2014 National League Competition involving colleges and universities from across the United States. The challenges in the competition are designed to mimic real-world scenarios: how to identify a problem, how to react, how to prioritize it. "It speaks to their [academic] skills as well as to their teamwork

skills," says Abraham, who along with Pavlov advises the participants. "They would really be getting that experience of collaborating and working as a team to solve a problem and applying what they've learned in a real-time environment."

The group collaboration supplements the experience gained in cybersecurity courses. "Teamwork is one of the skills we want the students to acquire," says Shih. "That's a really crucial skill they need in the workplace. It [cybersecurity] cannot be done by a single person because there

are so many aspects related to the security field —process, people, technical, application. It can never be done working in silos."

Working with others is essential to achieving goals, says Welber, who qualified for and attended the U.S. Cyber Challenge Eastern Regional Cyber Security Boot Camp this past June. "One of the most important things I have learned about technology, and especially cybersecurity, is that it's an ongoing learning process," he says. "It's completely impossible to know everything. Community is so important."

And community is an important aspect of the student cybersecurity group, as it creates a place of belonging for students with common interests. A learning community contributes to the success of students, says Shih. "Adult learners are eager to have intellectual exchange with their peers and we wanted to have a platform for that," she adds.

The cybersecurity student group welcomes students in the Bachelor of Science in Information Technology and Bachelor of Science in Cyber Operations programs, the Master of Science in Cybersecurity program, and undergraduate certificate in cybersecurity and the graduate certificate in cybersecurity management programs, and the Master of Business Administration program.

"It's a great networking and community-building opportunity for the students," says Abraham, who adds that even after graduation, the participants can remain connected to each other as well to Excelsior, and represent the College in cybersecurity circles. "It builds a strong connection with Excelsior."

The student organization also strengthens connections between students. The online community of the cybersecurity student organization shows that collaboration has no boundaries. "You can build a hands-on experience in an online environment," says Pavlov, who points to the success Oldright and Welber have had in using virtual interaction to break through barriers. In fact, the two former classmates and teammates are now working together on a consulting initiative. ■

"Adult learners are eager to have intellectual exchange with their peers and we wanted to have a platform for that."

—LIFANG SHIH

Early members of the cybersecurity student group met with their supporters from the School of Business & Technology in July, when the three students traveled to Albany, New York, for Commencement. It was first time the students had met their CYS 526 Cyber Attacks and Defenses instructor, Velislav Pavlov, in person. Shown here are (left to right) Anna Truss, Associate Dean Lifang Shih, Michael Oldright, Faculty Program Director Sherly Abraham, Velislav Pavlov, and Chris Welber. PHOTO: DAVE BENNETT

**ARMED
AND READY TO**

ROLL

**GRAD SERVES UP
SOME SERIOUS ROCK**

BY DANA YANULAVICH

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE U.S. ARMY FIELD BAND



SGT. 1ST CLASS PETER KRASULSKI KNOWS A THING OR TWO ABOUT HEAVY METAL. THE 2009 EXCELSIOR GRAD HOLDS THE RHYTHM FOR THE VOLUNTEERS, THE U.S. ARMY'S PREMIER TOURING ROCK BAND. NOT ONLY DOES THIS TALENTED MUSICIAN LEND HIS SKILLS AS THE ELITE GROUP'S BASS PLAYER, BUT HE, ALONG WITH THE OTHER FIVE BAND MEMBERS, MOVES 45,000 LBS. OF CONCERT AND AUDIO GEAR TO MORE THAN 100 PERFORMANCES A YEAR.

"Our mission is to travel into the grassroots of America to tell the story of the American soldier," explains Krasulski. The Volunteers have performed for millions of listeners in all 50 states plus Puerto Rico, Canada, Mexico, Kuwait, and Iraq. The band's performances help to foster support across the country for the nation's military. It's a form of public affairs, he explains, adding, "We display the Army profession of excellence through music."

The musical talent of these soldiers supports the Army in a notable way. Founded in 1981, the group seeks to strengthen the ties between the Army and civilian populations both at home and abroad. To that end, The Volunteers spend a lot of time on the road, sometimes up to 170 days a year, performing rock, pop, country, R&B, and patriotic tunes. Venues run the gamut from high school gyms, county fairs, and VA hospitals, to locations in Iraq and Kuwait for deployed troops.

"We not only play for the public, but we perform for our troops as well," says Krasulski. "It's just a great job. We're all blessed and we're proud to do what we do."

Krasulski, of Washington, DC, had never heard of military musicians until he met with a recruiter. He enlisted in 1998 at the age of 27, after spending several years in college, first majoring in music and then business before he left school without completing his degree. As he looked through the skills manual in the recruiter's office, he was surprised to see electric bass player listed. He looked at the recruiter, and said, "Are you serious? Are there really electric bassists in the military?"

Krasulski's first assignment was with the 82nd Airborne Division Band, a traditional Army band.

When he wasn't flying high with his Fender Jazz 5-string deluxe or his Ernie Ball StingRay 4-string bass, he was diving out of airplanes as an Army paratrooper. "I was in the band, and yes, I was jumping out of airplanes," he explains and then deadpans, "I didn't have to jump with my instrument." Krasulski's quick to point out that as an Army paratrooper, he had all the same training and service responsibilities as other soldiers in addition to his band duties. Just as every soldier needs to stay in shape to competently perform a mission, the accomplished musicians in Army bands must also maintain a high level of fitness. "We keep ourselves in very good shape, because we have to. We move thousands of pounds of gear up and down a ramp every day, and if you're not in good shape, you can't do it," he says.



Peter Krasulski '09 (left), bassist, plays with The Volunteers, the Army's rock band that tours the country performing pop, country, and patriotic music. The group logs more than 100 appearances a year at county fairs, school auditoriums, and NASCAR events as they promote patriotism through musical excellence.

There are two different levels of active-duty military bands, Krasulski explains. The regular Army bands (MOS 42R) perform at Army ceremonies, parades, concerts, festivals, other events, whereas the special Army bands (MOS 42S) travel to prestigious events in the U.S. and overseas, including presidential inaugurations, foreign dignitary visits, and funeral services at Arlington National Cemetery, along with regularly scheduled public concerts and tours. The Volunteers is a special band under the umbrella of the prestigious Army Field Band. For more than 60 years, the Field Band has been serving as musical ambassadors of the Army. In addition to The Volunteers, it also includes the Jazz Ambassadors, The Soldiers' Chorus, and the renowned 65-member Concert Band.

While many musicians in the performing world "double" on more than one instrument in order to have the flexibility to cover different parts, Army

musician/soldiers double in the field. For example, Krasulski says that most often Army musicians double as guards. When deployed to Iraq in 2003, he traded his bass for an M16 and worked with the military police.

Caliber takes on new meaning with Army musicians. Rather than being centered on the bore of a weapon, it's a reflection of an Army bandsman's musicianship. An audition is required to earn a spot in one of the Army's bands. "It's very competitive," says Krasulski of the audition process. "When I auditioned for the bass slot in The Volunteers, I think 50 CDs were sent in." All the recordings are given a listen, and then five or six candidates are invited to a live audition. In addition to the musical requirements, successful candidates for a band position also need to possess strong interpersonal skills, which are critical for blending with and complementing the other musicians in the band.

"OUR MISSION IS TO TRAVEL INTO THE GRASSROOTS OF AMERICA TO TELL THE STORY OF THE AMERICAN SOLDIER."



The Volunteers, the Army's touring rock band, was founded in 1981 with the mission to bring the story of the American soldier to the grassroots of America. Among their many tour stops are schools and veterans homes, with additional performances for troops both home and abroad.

Training is important for any soldier, and it's no different for Army musicians. Krasulski reports that the band rehearses daily from 9 a.m. until noon or 2 p.m. While the group plays popular music, they work out the arrangements themselves. "In general, what we do is we try to fit the song. Instead of just regurgitating it musically, verbatim, we take it and we turn it into something of our own," he says. The band, he recalls, did its own version of a Demi Lovato tune, "Give Your Heart a Break," that received an enthusiastic response from the audience. He explains, "We inserted an extended solo in the middle of it, but more of a fusion jazz solo; we always get a strong reaction from it."

Whether the band is playing to an audience in a local park, to troops abroad, to students in a high school gymnasium, or for race fans at a NASCAR event, The Volunteers give it their all. "Our performances are always high energy," Krasulski says. "We always treat the next audience as you've never seen us before. We always perform with that same high energy."

Although Krasulski has a successful music career in the Army, he knew that he wanted to complete his degree with an eye toward the future, for his life after the

Army. While stationed at Fort Meade in 2005, he went to the education service officer to ask about his options and hooked up with Excelsior. "My study of psychology within the degree program helped me understand people's behaviors, which in turn helped me develop better communication," Krasulski says of his Excelsior experience that earned him a Bachelor of Science in liberal arts.

Balancing service commitments with his studies wasn't without sacrifice. While touring with the band in New York's Chinatown in 2009, the rest of the band enjoyed five days of seeing the sites in between performances. "I had my finals," Krasulski recalls. "I had to sit in the hotel room and type my final exams while everyone else was out at Times Square. We all have a laugh about that. I'm the only one who had to stick through school; everyone else was out having fun. But it was worth it."

Looking ahead, Krasulski knows that music will always be there for him in some shape or form, but he hopes further education will add up to a new career. "I want to possibly look at accounting," he says. "I want to pick up where I left off when I was a young man and invest some time in accounting and possibly look at another career after I retire." ■



Co





Coming Alongside

A MINISTRY OF PRESENCE

*Answering a call to care, faith community
nurses address holistic health concerns*

BY DANA YANULAVICH

PHOTOS BY MIKE HEMBERGER

“I think we might have a problem here,” aren’t necessarily the words you want to hear from your doctor at any time, and especially not right before Christmas. But that’s exactly what Maxie Nash heard in 2012. The diagnosis was frightening: It was breast cancer, and just two months since she lost her best girlfriend of over 30 years to the same disease.

Fortunately, Nash had a good outcome, and 14 months later she is now cancer-free and happy to talk about the role a faith community nurse played in her ability to handle the diagnosis and understand her treatment options. Coming alongside her throughout her cancer journey was registered nurse Ginny Amsden, the coordinator of the parish nurse program at Nash’s church, Saint Michael the Archangel in Troy, New York.

With health care issues looming large in national politics, media discussions, and personal decisions, can people have *faith* in their treatment and insurance options? Yet *faith* may be the very thing that helps individuals navigate a myriad of health concerns, situations, and diagnoses, according to one group of nurses who bring a holistic approach to serving their communities.

Faith community nurses are licensed registered professional nurses who lead holistic health programs in their faith communities. And who better to minister to health and spiritual needs but nurses, the most trusted profession for 14 of the last 15 years according to a 2013 Gallup poll. Nurses can become prepared for this role by taking the basic preparation course in faith

community nursing offered by the International Parish Nurse Resource Center (IPNRC). Courses are offered around the country and online. Nurses can also achieve ANCC board certification via a portfolio review.

“Faith community nursing is really taking care of the mind, body, and spirit of the individual, and as simplistic as that sounds, there is really so much to it,” explains Amsden. After Nash’s cancer diagnosis, Amsden was a constant source of support, information, and guidance. But perhaps her biggest contribution to Nash’s situation was peace of mind: “Ginny was there for me,” Nash says. “She was like my personal nurse. She was always just calling, always checking in to see how I was doing.”

SMALL BEGINNINGS YIELD BIG RESULTS

Founded by Granger E. Westberg, a Lutheran clergyman, former parish pastor, hospital chaplain, and professor of theology, the faith community nursing concept was originally known as parish nursing. It began in 1984 in Park Ridge, Illinois, as a partnership between Lutheran General Hospital and six area congregations. Since then, this approach to leverage the community in treating the whole person has expanded worldwide and encompasses all faiths.

Alyson Breisch ’84, a registered nurse and expert in the field of faith community nursing, helps put the state of health care during this period into context. “In the early ’80s there was a phrase commonly used [that was] related to the newly introduced prospective payment process. Hospitals were discharging people ‘sicker and quicker.’” Breisch, a graduate of Excelsior with a bachelor’s in nursing, is the former director of the Health and Nursing Ministries Graduate Degree Program at Duke University. She serves as the director for practice and education at the Health Ministries Association National Board, and is also parish nurse at United Church of Chapel Hill. Breisch continues, “So the issue was that they often got home and still had care needs, families needed to be finishing out post-surgery wound/dressings, all kinds of things. And, so he (Westberg) felt that one of the ways to look at meeting that need, the needs of those without access to care, and also shift us toward preventive issues, was to start this team with a physician, a chaplain (or minister), and a nurse. He was thinking about them as wellness centers—the idea of promoting wellness.”

THE ROLE OF THE FAITH COMMUNITY NURSE

In supporting and promoting wellness, faith community nurses fill many roles, including that of integrator of faith and health, health educator, health counselor, referral

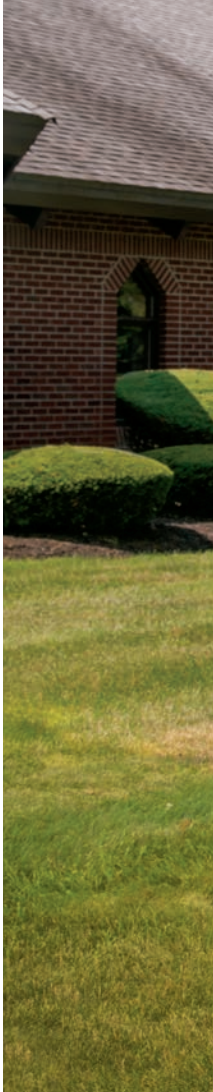
advisor, health advocate, developer of support groups, and volunteer coordinator. Hands-on clinical care, however, cannot be provided, because the nurses are not working under a doctor’s orders.

One of the first steps a faith community nurse often undertakes is a needs assessment. This helps identify the top spiritual and health issues of concern in their faith community, and guides in program planning. Among the concerns most frequently cited are weight loss, heart health, nutrition, and stress. But the needs can be as diverse as the people who make up the congregations, reflecting the average age and socio-economic status of the members.

“You show me one person who doesn’t have a health need,” challenges Fran Ludwig, faculty program director of Excelsior’s Bachelor of Science in Nursing program. “The needs may be different, but everybody has a need.” Founding director of Faith Community-Parish Nursing at Seton Health in Troy, New York, a position she held for 10 years, Ludwig is keenly aware of the many needs of the community. And that’s where the unique programs offered in different communities come into play. A congregation with a large elderly population may offer a program that teaches stroke warning signs and symptoms, whereas another parish with young families who are pulled in different directions might benefit from a program on managing stress.

Getting a program off the ground may take time. “It really is planting a seed, nurturing it, and watering it until it grows,” says Ludwig. One of the most common events that serve as an icebreaker for a new faith community nursing program is blood pressure screenings. “Everybody always starts with blood pressure screenings, because that’s a way to get to know your faith community. You build up that trust with them,” explains Amsden, who was named Seton Health’s Faith Community Nurse of the Year in 2013.

Examples of other program topics range from conventional subjects such as brown bag medication reviews and blood drives to more difficult areas such as end-of-life issues. Innovative marketing approaches are sometimes deployed to attract the target audience, for example, using the titles *How to Get the Better Buck* to promote a discussion of gun safety during the hunting season and *Cooking for One* to describe a class providing nutritional information and fellowship to newly divorced or widowed individuals. The programs aren’t just for the





As many faith community nurses report, they see their role as a ministry of presence: being there and listening to community members in their time of need without judging. Ginny Amsden (left) was there for Maxie Nash, helping support her during a cancer bout.

“Faith community nursing is really taking care of the mind, body, and spirit of the individual...” —GINNY AMSDEN

congregation or a particular faith; they’re open to all who are interested in participating.

A HOLISTIC APPROACH GROUNDED IN FAITH

Faith, however, is the underlying current that lights the way for these nurses. “One of the basic tenets of the Jewish religion is to do a mitzvah, which means doing something good that helps people. So faith community nursing to me is part of the Torah... it’s a basic rule and one of the goals in life: do all you can to help people,” explains Ellin Friedman, a retired registered nurse and the leader of faith community nursing at Congregation Agudat Achim in Schenectady, New York.

Looking at the whole person, listening to their individual needs, and helping each make important but necessary connections to achieve better physical and

mental health is one of the many attributes faith community nurses bring to their congregations. Because they are often members of the community they serve, faith community nurses can keep a finger on the pulse of an individual’s situation. It’s an extension of their professional nursing training and a reflection of their faith beliefs. For example, Amsden knows where parishioners usually sit during services, and if they’re not in their normal spot, she’ll check up on them.

Angela Sheehan, the current director of Faith Community Nursing at Seton Health, offers, “My hope, my vision, is that every faith community has to incorporate a health ministry because the Gospel teaches us to preach, teach, and heal.” Sheehan, also a parish nurse at Our Lady of Victory in Troy, New York, adds, “We do a great job of preaching and teaching, but we’ve let healing go by the wayside because of the way technology and modern medicine sort of just push that off; however, we need to reclaim our role in healing because it’s mind, body, spirit. It’s what we were called to do.”

The faith community nurses, however, must be sensitive to the doctrines and practices of their particular religion. They don’t preach or proselytize; rather, they attend to an individual’s unique needs, adapting their nursing skills to each situation. Innovative approaches can sometimes achieve surprising results. Breisch initiated a life review process with several senior groups. Through journaling, participants use narrative to reflect on events in their lives, something they may have experienced and drawn strength from. The stories can then be shared as part of a worship service, resulting in powerful transformative moments. As many faith community nurses report, they see their role as a ministry of presence: being there and listening to community members in their time of need without judging.

“You have to be empathetic, you have to be compassionate; there’s no judgment in this, we don’t judge people, we come alongside of them—they’re the captain of their ship and we understand that and we honor that,” says Sheehan.

“I’ve always been a spiritual person,” says Amsden. “I love people, I absolutely love talking to people, I love listening, and I think you can find out so much by being present to someone.” She notes that she gained a lot of perspective from her previous work as a visiting nurse. “It really taught me to be a more open person and just to be present to someone, to let them be [present] to me. I could help them as much as I could. Physically I was there for them; emotionally, I was there for them. I would spend time with them, but spiritually I was also there for them and reaching out to them if there was anything I could do to bring a family together that may have had problems, and it was always there in my mind the three pieces had to be there, no matter what job I had. I always felt like it was something that was part of me.”

In her faith community experience, Ludwig says she was always drawn to the presence piece. “There is more to illness than just sickness,” she explains. “It’s looking at health holistically. So [faith community nurses] look at emotional, physical, and spiritual—it’s not religion.”

ANSWERING A CALL TO CARE

What motivates men and women to take up the responsibilities of faith community nursing? After all, these roles are often unpaid positions that tap into nurses’ training and expertise without the promise of financial compensation. One of the most heartfelt and prevalent responses is that the nurse felt the calling to perform this service. Bringing passion and purpose to the roles is an important motivator.

“You have to feel the call,” professes Sheehan. “If you don’t hear or feel the calling, it’s not for you. It truly isn’t.”

Since its humble beginnings 30 years ago, faith community nursing continues to grow. According to the quarterly journal *Creative Nursing*, approximately 15,000 are serving in this capacity in the United States alone and




“You have to be empathetic, you have to be compassionate; there’s no judgment in this, we don’t judge people, we come alongside of them—they’re the captain of their ship and we understand that and we honor that.” —ANGELA SHEEHAN

65 percent are not paid. Some are employed elsewhere as a nurse, but many are retirees looking to continue their commitment to nursing and their community.

“I feel it fulfills a very important function and it helps me feel like I’m still useful,” offers Friedman. “I was ready to retire because of other family responsibilities, but I didn’t want to leave the field completely, and to me, I see faith community nursing as really fulfilling some of the basic tenets of what nursing is: helping people maintain their optimal level of health and well-being.”

Faith community nurses also report that this holistic approach brings them closer to what they express as the true meaning of nursing. Breisch, who chaired the task force that worked on the revision of the 2012 second edition of the American Nurses Association Faith Community Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice, says she feels it combines the art of nursing with the science of nursing. “I have been in many nursing roles,” she says, “but I really feel in this role that I am living the essence of nursing—the caring essence of nursing.”

Contributing to the need for faith community nursing above and beyond simple health and spiritual needs are a variety of political, practical, and medical matters. Many noted that hospitals discharge patients quickly, and that



As societal, political, and financial issues impact health care today, the support and guidance provided by the holistic approach of faith community nursing may provide one trusted way to maneuver complex and confusing situations during stressful times. Carmela Magnotta (left) is counseled by Angela Sheehan, director of Faith Community Nursing at Seton Health, Troy, New York.

faith community nurses can help with the transition from hospital to home. Amsden observes, “They need additional assistance once they get home. That’s what we’re trying to target: If they don’t understand the medication that they’re taking, we want to help them to either put things together, set it up for them, teach them how to set it up, teach a family member how to change a dressing if that’s a problem.” Friedman adds, “With my experience dealing with the health care system and working in it, we’re kind of a link between what health

care professionals used to have time to do and what they don’t have time to do.”

FILLING A NEED, FUNDED BY FAITH

Some in the field predict an increase in the need for faith community nursing as a result of recent insurance changes and the introduction of the Affordable Care Act. “I think the Affordable Care Act is going to propel us [faith community nurses] into the future. All of these things are aligning themselves and that will give us the proper environment that people will be looking to us for help and for what we have to offer,” observes Sheehan. She suggests that health care has become siloed and faith community nursing can play a vital role in treating the whole person, rather than just one part. “That’s why I believe in health ministry: If you can come alongside people in your congregation, most of what these people need is a human connection. We’re not meant to be isolated.”

The programs, too, can’t exist in isolation. Funding and support from the faith community is essential. “When I assumed the position of faith community nurse, I had no money, nothing to start with,” explains Amsden, referring to the early days at Saint Michael’s. “I went to the Women’s Guild, and I asked them if they could give me money to at least buy some supplies to start up, so they gave me \$250 to buy stethoscopes and blood pressure cuffs, and a little bit of extra to buy Band-Aids and things, so I stocked a little bit of the emergency cabinets.” Friedman, too, tapped into an existing women’s network, called Reyt, at her synagogue.

But it takes more than adhesive bandages to hold the programs together. According to Excelsior’s Ludwig, there are two prevalent models: one where the faith community sponsors the program individually, or a hospital-centric program whereby the institution pays for a faith community nurse or provides educational and support opportunities. Many of the nurses interviewed for this article belong to the Seton Health/St. Peter’s Health Partners faith community nursing program. Managed by Sheehan, it offers the nearly 45 members monthly meetings to exchange ideas and resources; presents health fairs, programs, and education forums; and offers the faith community nursing certification course.

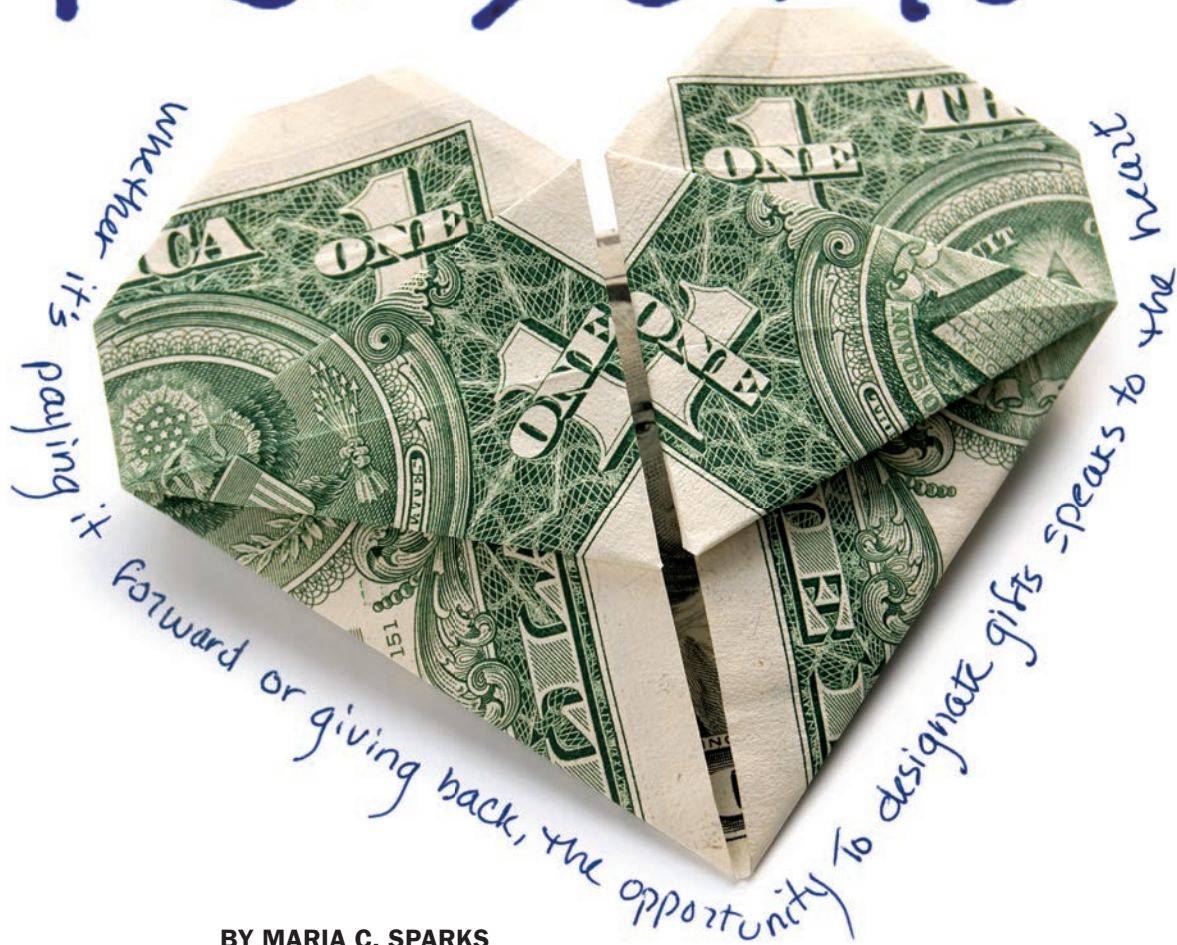
As societal, political, and financial issues impact health care today, the support and guidance provided by the holistic approach of faith community nursing may provide one trusted way to maneuver complex and confusing situations during stressful times. The educational programs and resources offered in a friendly, familiar community may also serve to guide congregants in adopting healthy lifestyles, learning the signs of illness, and making important health decisions.

“I think faith communities see health in a different way than medicine may at times,” observes Breisch. As president of Breisch Health Education PLLC, she provides consultation and education in health ministries. “They see it more as a wholeness. We emphasize that a person may experience healing even when there is no cure from an illness, because it’s a broader dimension of healing—that sense of wholeness, everything being right in my relationships with others, with myself, with a higher power, so it’s the broader sense of healing rather than just a cure. I think that resonates with a lot of nurses who have seen that, have experienced it with people.”

Sheehan, for example, recalls a woman with an eating disorder whom she helped. Unemployed, she was taking 120 laxative pills a day, bingeing and purging, taking antipsychotic drugs, and cutting herself. Even though she had a host of professionals working with her—a psychologist, a nurse practitioner, a dietician, a nutritionist—no one was treating the whole person. Sheehan took the time to be present with her and assess and accept the entire situation, and eventually the woman was able to get firmly back on her feet.

Coming alongside an individual and offering unconditional support is where faith community nurses are most effective. Ludwig says, “We don’t lead you, we don’t follow you—we walk with you. It’s whatever you need at the moment.” Sheehan concurs, her voice breaking with emotion, “You come alongside someone, and you make a difference in their life because you can minister to them. To me, that’s the most rewarding.” ■

This Time It's Personal



BY MARIA C. SPARKS

In her late 40s, as a single mother with two grown, 20-something daughters, M. Jane Merdian pursued her law degree at Pepperdine University School of Law. As a full-time law student, she worked 15 hours a week as a clerk, legal assistant, and research assistant. She graduated just shy of her 50th birthday. “I was that single mother with two children trying to make my dream come true and still be a ‘mother’—and I did,” says Merdian.

The availability of financial support had a role in that accomplishment.

“My choice, to pursue my dream, was made possible by scholarships,” explains Merdian, who earned a Juris Doctorate, cum laude, in 1990. A year later, she earned a Bachelor of Science in liberal arts from Regents College, because she wanted to earn that degree, too.

Countless others can say the same, so it’s welcome news that personal and corporate giving to higher education is once again on an upswing. Giving to higher education institutions rebounded in the 2013 fiscal year, with gifts to colleges and universities reaching \$33.8 billion, according to the Council for Aid to Education. Gifts from alumni experienced the largest growth, increasing by 17 percent over the previous year to \$1.3 billion. Mirroring the national trends, Excelsior has seen growth too. Annual gifts to the College have steadily increased the past seven years and, at the close of the fiscal year in June, had topped \$507,000—setting a new high for giving.

At Excelsior, there is excitement about the ability to award a growing number of scholarships to students who need the financial support to complete their degrees. “Every student we meet who has received a scholarship tells us they couldn’t have done it without the support,” says Marcy A. Stryker, director of development. The increase in gifts to both the annual campaign and endowed scholarships, as well as the securing of grants that provide financial aid, will enable the College to help more students meet their educational goals.

“In the past 10 years, our scholarship endowments have more than doubled in number and nearly tripled in value. In keeping with our mission of access, this makes a huge difference to the number of people we can help,” according to Cathy S. Kushner, vice president for Institutional Advancement.

The value of Excelsior’s endowment topped \$1 million for the first time last fall, thanks in no small part to the generosity of donors who initiated endowment funds. Donors have the opportunity to determine the purpose of their gift, and many view starting an endowment fund as a way to not only give back but also to pay it forward.



Betty Wei '83 and her husband, Lawrence, believe in giving back—to their church, their community, and their former colleges. A graduate of Excelsior's associate degree nursing program, she appreciates the need for good nurses and began a nursing scholarship fund to support students enrolled in this program.

Graduates Pay It Forward

Merdian knows from personal experience how much financial support means to a student and created an endowment fund to award scholarship money to single women enrolled at Excelsior who demonstrate financial need. “The option to specifically designate the type of scholarship recipient was a significant factor in my decision to establish the scholarship fund,” says Merdian. “Paying it forward, to me, is an act of gratitude,” she says.

The same can be said for Betty Wei, a 1983 graduate of Excelsior College with an associate degree in nursing. She has a longtime interest in the nursing program and has been a donor to the College for many years. In 2013, she and her husband, Lawrence Wei, established an endowment fund to support students enrolled in Excelsior’s associate degree in nursing program who are eligible, or within 10 credits of being eligible, to take the Clinical Performance in Nursing Examination and demonstrate financial need.

With the creation of their nursing scholarship fund, she found a giving channel that matched her interest in the nursing program and her commitment to paying it forward. “A long time ago I was helped by an endowment fund, and I’ve always remembered that and I benefited personally from that,” says Wei, who worked in a hospital while earning her nursing degree. She understands the challenges of working full-time and going to school and so has that in common with many Excelsior students. This shared experience coupled with Wei and her husband’s desire to help those who need financial assistance keeps Excelsior among the institutions they support. “Nurses are near and dear to my heart, of course” says Wei.

Personal connections like these helped to push giving to new highs, something Excelsior College administrators view with pride. Still, Kushner and others would like to do more to expand access to an Excelsior education. “We know that our students’ needs are great, and there are people who desperately want an education but can’t become students because of the financial barriers,” says Kushner. “We want to go beyond helping those who have enrolled to help those who can’t enroll at all because of the financial barriers.” ■



M. Jane Merdian '91 began scholarship funds at her alma maters to support single women pursuing their degrees. Through her work in prison ministry, she met a volunteer who is an Excelsior student taking online courses, an encounter that added to her motivation to help Excelsior students.

ARDENT ADVOCATE

I believe in my heart that there is no better place to study for higher education than Excelsior College.

FOR HER ACTIVE SUPPORT OF THE COLLEGE, PAMELA LEWIS RECEIVES FIRST-EVER ALUMNI SERVICE AWARD

BY DANA YANULAVICH

Pamela Sue Lewis has racked up some impressive numbers in her life, like the 37 years she's worked as a nurse in the mother/baby care unit at Presbyterian Health Care Services, the 23-year gap between her associate and bachelor's degrees, and the 2,000-mile trip from her home in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to Albany, New York, to accept the first-ever Alumni Service Award.

Lewis earned her first degree from Excelsior (then Regents) in 1988. She credits her Associate in Science in nursing with giving her the opportunity to provide a secure, safe environment for her sons as they overcame a domestic violence situation. When she was ready to work on a bachelor's degree, she felt the only logical place to turn was Excelsior College. In 2014, she earned a Bachelor of Science in health sciences and is now working on a Master of Science in health sciences.

"I believe in my heart that there is no better place to study for higher education than Excelsior College," she told the crowd at the College's annual awards convocation in July. While she may have her hands full between helping families at the hospital and pursuing her own college studies, Lewis is never too busy to sing the praises of her alma mater. "I take pride in recommending, and encouraging, and mentoring others who are getting their degrees through Excelsior College," she said after receiving the Alumni Service Award.

Lewis' belief in education and Excelsior in particular leads her to be an active supporter of other enrolled and future students on social media and in person. She has encouraged coworkers to consider the College's degree programs, and one has enrolled for the fall. On her flight to Albany, she even took the opportunity to discuss the College with the nurse in the next seat, and promised to follow up with an email.

The Alumni Service Award recognizes outstanding service to Excelsior College by a graduate whose efforts in advocacy, recruitment, or outreach may serve as a role model to others in helping the College achieve its overarching goals.

According to Lewis, it's easy to promote Excelsior. She thoroughly researched the College before enrolling in the 1980s, and offered her belief that the College is a pioneer in external learning programs.

"[Excelsior] makes it so workable for people who have families and children," she observes, noting that the flexibility to study at a time and place convenient to the individual is a big plus.

Being a cheerleader for the College is a way for Lewis to show her appreciation for her education. "I would like to express, in some way, my thanks and gratitude to Excelsior," she says. Had it not been for the presence of Excelsior, my sons' and my life would be very different. I think the College offers an amazing opportunity and my life is so much richer because of it." ■

There's no monkeying around for Excelsior graduate Pamela Sue Lewis. The inaugural recipient of the Alumni Service Award is quick to promote the College to others. Now working on her third Excelsior degree, Lewis enjoys the flexibility to study at a time and place convenient to her schedule, and wearing clothing conducive to studying, like her sock monkey slippers.

PHOTO: MIKE HEMBERGER



2014–2015 Alumni Association Advisory Board

Board (back row, left to right): Dwayn Hanford, Daniel L. Coberly, Marie Wrinn, President William Senn, Secretary Ronald Tosto; (front row, left to right) Shelia Scott, Kadidia Doumbia, Jennifer Gentry, Vice President LCDR Shannon McMillan, Wayne A. Oppel, and Sandra Butterfield.



WELCOME ABOARD!

New board members were elected by the alumni at large for three-year terms on the Alumni Advisory Board. For full biographies, visit www.excelsior.edu/alumniadvisoryboard.

Sandra Shephard Butterfield, BS in Nursing '86

SPRING VALLEY, CA | Sandy serves as a registered nurse at Scripps Mercy Hospital where she is patient care supervisor of an inpatient psychiatric unit. Recently, she completed a dual degree program, Master of Science in Nursing/Master of Science in Healthcare Administration, at St. Joseph's College of Maine.

Jennifer Gentry, AS in Nursing '04, BS in Nursing '11

PORTLAND, TX | A two-time graduate, Jennifer recently re-enrolled to earn her Master of Science in nursing. With a nursing background in medical and cardiovascular progressive care and intensive care, she serves as chief nursing officer of Christus Spohn Hospital Corpus Christi-Memorial.

Shelia Scott, BS '02

HICKORY, NC | A U.S. Navy veteran, Shelia is a service representative for the Social Security Administration. In 2004, she completed a Master of Science in human resources management at Troy State University. In 2002, she received Excelsior's Student Support Award.

WANTED: ALUMNI AMBASSADORS

Do you work for a company where other Excelsior graduates/students are also employed? Or do you know others who may be interested in an Excelsior degree?

If so, as an Alumni Ambassador, you could help support Excelsior students and graduates working for the same employer. This volunteer opportunity would require a small time commitment (five hours or less) for a one-time activity.

For example, here's how you could help host an **Alumni & Student Pizza Party** at your place of work:

- Contact the College and your employer about your plan.
- Arrange for a conference room or other suitable location at your place of work.
- Promote the event by encouraging other graduates, current students, or prospective students to join you for pizza. The College will pick up the tab for pizza and water/soda.
- Attend the event and cultivate a welcoming atmosphere.
- Take a group photo and send it to the College for publication.

The College will identify and invite other alumni and students at your place of employment and provide you with t-shirts and other cool stuff to hand out at the party.



For more information, or to volunteer as an Alumni Ambassador, email alumni@excelsior.edu or call (518) 608-8464.

2014–2015

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UPCOMING EVENTS

For information about upcoming regional and online events, visit us online:

Website: www.excelsior.edu/alumnievents

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ECalumni

Twitter: @ExcelsiorColl

LinkedIn: Excelsior College Alumni Association Community

THE NAME GAME

"My diploma says The University of the State of New York, but the College now calls itself Excelsior. So what do I put on my resume?"

There are thousands of you who earned your degrees between 1971 and 2000, before the name change to Excelsior College. Here are simple, accurate examples of how to refer to your alma mater on a resume, LinkedIn profile, or job application:

If your degree was conferred from

1971 through March 1998:

Excelsior College (The University of the State of New York)

If your degree was conferred from

April 1998 through December 2000:

Excelsior College (formerly Regents College)

Whether you graduated from Excelsior College, or from the College under any of its previous names, you are a member of the Alumni Association and we're proud to count you among our alumni!

Three Important Things to Do Today

1. Access MyExcelsior

- Go to www.excelsior.edu.
- Click on MyExcelsior Login.
- New to MyExcelsior? Click on Create a MyExcelsior User Account and follow the instructions.
- Can't remember your username or password? Click on Login Help and follow the instructions.

2. Update Your Email Address

- Log in to MyExcelsior.
- Go to My Profile to update your email address.
- While you're there, update your address and phone number, too!

3. Subscribe to Excelsior College News Broadcasts Via Email

- Log in to MyExcelsior.
- Go to My Profile.
- Subscribe to "Excelsior College news broadcasts via email" so you'll receive the monthly alumni e-newsletter, invitations to regional and online events, and information about career services and benefits for alumni.

ALUMNI EVENT RECAP

WHAT: Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill Alumni Reception

WHEN: June 1, 2014 **WHERE:** Embassy Suites Brier

Creek WHO: More than 30 alumni and students from the Research Triangle gathered for an afternoon reception hosted by Trustee Emeritus John Wetsch, BS '84, and Alumni Advisory Board members Dan Coberly, AS '77, BS '84, and Wayne Oppel, BS '91. Graduates shared inspiring stories about how they discovered Excelsior. Among the attendees were Alumni Advisory Board members Dwayn Hanford, BS '05, and Shelia Scott, BS '02; former Alumni Advisory Board member Danny Scott, AS '01, BS '02; and Alumni Ambassadors David Bliss, BNX '12, and Gregory Cole, BS '13.



RALEIGH, NC





2014 ALUMNI AWARD RECIPIENTS

A second chance...
a promise...
an unexpected outcome...

Here is a snapshot of the inspiring stories of the 2014 Alumni Award recipients, in their own words.

Mark Arvid Bowman, BS '00 (above)

2014 ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT

"For me, Excelsior College represented a second, or rather a third, chance to finally complete my undergraduate degree. My graduation filled an academic void that had been a blight on my resume for many years. Inspired and motivated by that accomplishment, I immediately went on to complete a master's degree and was subsequently able to obtain a coveted civil service position at NASA... I can say unequivocally that obtaining the Excelsior (then Regents) degree was the turning point that forever changed my trajectory in the direction of achieving my dream, my goal, and my potential."

Linda Dayer-Berenson, PhD, FAANP, BS in nursing '89

2014 CARRIE B. LENBURG AWARD RECIPIENT



"As an RN diploma graduate, my nursing courses were not eligible for college credits. Dr. Carrie Lenburg happened to be the keynote speaker at my RN diploma graduation ceremony... I made a promise to her that night that I would not only earn my BSN but that I would continue my nursing education... Excelsior allowed me to validate my nursing knowledge by 'testing out,' and earning my BSN opened the door to the profession of nursing to me. As soon as I graduated from Excelsior, I immediately enrolled in an MSN program. What began as an opportunity 25 years ago has resulted in my ability to not only contribute to the education of hundreds of nurses but also to make significant scholarly contributions to my profession."

Tanya R. Whitney, AA '86 and BA '91

2014 C. WAYNE WILLIAMS AWARD RECIPIENT



"What started as a form of therapy to combat PTSD has become an endeavor I love. The ability to see teenagers reach their potential and their amazement when they achieve a goal they didn't believe was achievable; educating people on the roles of women in the military; and the support received from fellow veterans makes what I do not work, but a sense of fulfillment that is not attained through any other measure... Recently I was asked why after putting nearly 28 years in the military and retiring would I continue to 'work' so hard. The answer is simple... I owe it to others in my situation with PTSD to show them and the public that we can be and are viable members of society."

Pamela S. Lewis, AS '88, BS '14

INAUGURAL ALUMNI SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENT



"I first became familiar with Excelsior College in 1987. It was a dark time for my sons and me. I needed to advance my knowledge and degree status to enable me to secure our safety and well-being. Excelsior College was the key to my success at that time, and remains so to this day." (see profile, p. 24)

Read more at www.excelsior.edu/web/alumni/award-and-achievements.



5 Questions

with **Dwayn Hanford, BS '05,**
Chair of the Awards Committee

Who better to chair the Awards Committee than a former alumni award winner? Dwayn Hanford, BS '05, was the 2010 recipient of the C. Wayne Williams Award and this is his second year leading the committee in its challenging task. Below, he answers some of your questions about Excelsior's Alumni Awards.

Chairing the Awards Committee is a tough job—how do you do it?

Well, each year there is a great committee. We take our time reviewing the nominations and we keep deliberating until we agree on who should receive each award. Then, we make a recommendation to the full Alumni Advisory Board and answer any questions they might have. It's not something we take lightly. Every one of the nominees deserves accolades because Excelsior grads often have extenuating circumstances that got them here. That's a big reason why many of them are naturally motivated to give back to their communities.

It's a self-nomination process. What about grads who aren't comfortable nominating themselves?

I remember what it was like trying to figure out what I could say to demonstrate I was worthy of the C. Wayne Williams Award. You just need to consider how you would have used your education and talents, or how you have provided benefit to future students or your community.

Are recent graduates eligible for alumni awards?

Award recipients cannot be a member of the current graduating class. In fact, we prefer that nominees earned their degrees at least three years prior. Although our grads are nontraditional and have often accomplished a lot before they come to Excelsior, we focus on their achievements since earning their degrees. We want to acknowledge the ways in which the Excelsior degree has helped them achieve more.

Do all award recipients attend the Commencement festivities in Albany, New York?

Yes—it's a stipulation of accepting the award. Nominees must acknowledge that they are able to attend Commencement when they submit the award application. If chosen to receive an award, the recipient's attendance at Commencement will be verified when they are notified of the board's selection.

In 2010, when you were a nominee, what is the one thing you wish you knew?

Now, having been through Commencement, I wish I had known how incredible it is. I didn't attend my own Commencement in 2005, so attending to receive my award in 2010 was my first experience and it was amazing!

The Excelsior College Alumni Association presents awards to accomplished alumni each year to recognize outstanding graduates whose achievements are considered by the Alumni Advisory Board to be inspiring to other alumni and students. Nominations for awards can be submitted at any time, though the deadline for the current award year is January 15. Award winners are required to attend the College's annual Commencement festivities held in July in Albany, New York, where they will be presented with their awards at the Awards Convocation. Visit www.excelsior.edu/alumniawards for more information.

ALUMNI NOTES

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY

Christine Danella Lynch, BS '90, of San Pedro, California, published "Tender Points: A Fibromyalgia Memoir" that documents her experiences with the illness in the hopes of helping others battling the same disease. Since the book appeared in 2007, she has written articles that have appeared in the National Chronic Pain and Fibromyalgia Association (NfmcPA) magazine as well as in her local paper, the Torrance Daily Breeze. She's working on a magazine article about the Bumi Sehat Foundation on the island of Bali.



Robert Louis Brown, BS '92, of Atlanta, Georgia, earned a PhD in computer information systems from Nova Southeastern

University in 2014. Brown is a senior lecturer in information systems at Southern Polytechnic State University. He also earned an MS from Southern Polytechnic State University in 1995.



William (Bill) Hoffman, BS in CIS '93, of Franklin, Tennessee, is senior director, consulting for Microsoft

Corporation and is responsible for consulting delivery quality in the states of Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee. He has worked in a variety of IT-related positions since graduating and credits his degrees with making a significant difference in his career possibilities and options. He and his wife of 36 years, Ruth, live outside of Nashville and have two adult children and two granddaughters.



Brady McNulty, BNX '11, of Roseburg, Oregon, earned a Doctor of Pharmacy from Texas A&M University's

Rangel College of Pharmacy, and is completing a PGY-1 pharmacy practice residency with the Veterans Health Administration in Oregon. Looking forward to being a positive contributor to patients' health, McNulty will treat and care for patients with diabetes, cholesterol disorders, and hypertension while also gaining exposure to other key areas of health care.



Mildred Leal Chiang, BSB '12, of Guayaquil, Ecuador, is currently employed by Movimiento PAIS, which she reports

is the strongest and most popular political party in Ecuador.

SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS



Richard Stachurski, BS '77, of Bellevue, Washington, published "Below Tranquility Base: An Apollo 11 Memoir," which

describes his journey as a 28-year-old Air Force captain from a Minuteman launch bunker in South Dakota to a mission control room in Houston for a front-row seat to humanity's first steps on the moon. He credits his work with NASA as the major motivator for pursuing his Excelsior (then Regents) College degree in mathematics.

Michael Laferney, BSL '79, of Lakeville, Massachusetts, was promoted to adjunct professor of psychology at Quincy College and is a psychiatric clinical nurse specialist for Arbour SeniorCare.



Patrick Nohrden, AS '80, of Reno, Nevada, has published a historical novel, "The Crystal Monkey," which depicts the life

of a small Chinese girl born in the

countryside during the Cultural Revolution. Nohrden earned a BA in English in 1984 at San Jose State University and a JD in 1992 at the University of Akron.

Candice H. Brown Elliott, BS '82, of Santa Rose, California, was awarded the Otto Schade Prize from the Society for Information Display in June. The CEO of Nouvoyance, a high-tech Silicon Valley company that develops technology for color flat panel displays, like those found in smartphones, she received the award for the development of PenTile display technology, a key enabler of power-efficient, high-resolution, mobile OLED and LC display based on subpixel rendering of color pixel arrangements. She also reached a personal milestone of being granted over 85 U.S. patents. Brown Elliott writes, "My Regents External Degree really paid off!!!"



John R. Wetsch, BSL '84, of Raleigh, North Carolina, was ordained as a deacon in June and has been assigned to his

home parish of St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church. Wetsch, a trustee emeritus of Excelsior College, was the first president of the College's Alumni Association. He is an IT director for the North Carolina Department of Revenue.

Danny R. Redmond, BS '85, of Monrovia, California, see School of Nursing.

Gilbert O. Sanders, BAL '85, of Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma, was honored with the American Psychological Foundation's 2014 Gold Medal Award for Life Achievement in the Practice of Psychology. The award recognizes a distinguished career and enduring contribution to advancing the professional practice of psychology through a demonstrable effect on patterns of service delivery in the profession. Sanders is a behavioral health consultant for the 72nd medical group at Tinker Air Force Base where he provides integrated psychological service to all

eligible uniformed service members, their families, and to uniformed service retirees and their dependents. Sanders earned a doctorate in educational and counseling psychology from the University of Tulsa.



Erik P. Feldmanis, BSL '86, of Lake Worth, Florida, has released his previously published novels "The Jungle," "Freedom of

Choice," and "The Lost but Not Forgotten" as ebooks. An author profile and more info on Feldmanis' books can be found at www.smashwords.com/profile/view/FalconPilot.



Tanya R. Whitney, AA '86 and BAL '91, of Sorrento, Louisiana, retired from the U.S. Army in 2010 after nearly 28 years of

service, including several deployments in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. The recipient of the Legion of Merit and many other awards for her service, Whitney continues to serve as a member of various veterans service organizations. In 2013, she was named the chairman of the Ascension Parish Veterans Memorial Park in Gonzales, Louisiana. In addition, she received an appreciation award from St. Amant High School for her work as a volunteer assistant coach of cross country and pole vaulting. Whitney was named head coach of the cross country team this past season. She earned a Master of Aeronautical Science from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in 2000 and was the 2014 recipient of Excelsior's C. Wayne Williams Award.

Richard G. Rosner, BS '93, of Studio City, California, is a television writer who has worked for the major networks in addition to MTV, VH1, and Comedy Central. His work has been nominated for an Emmy and six Writers Guild Awards. Rosner was interviewed by Errol Morris for the series First Person.

Army Public Affairs Alumni Association Names Coberly to Hall of Fame



Daniel L. Coberly, AS '77 and BSL '84, of Hazel Green, Alabama, was named to the Army Public Affairs Hall of Fame Class of 2014 in June for his lasting and significant contributions to the profession, history, and traditions of Army Public Affairs. The Hall of Fame was established in 2000 to recognize and honor soldier and civilian public affairs professionals. Since its inception, 50 individuals have been inducted, and Coberly was one of two honored in 2014.

A member of the Excelsior Alumni Association Board, Coberly is a retired Army sergeant major and a retired Army Reserve captain. He also earned a master's degree from Norwich University in 1988.

Currently a senior national communications advisor for the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Research and Development, Coberly has written more than 100 news and feature articles on controversial subjects such as child abuse, violence in military families, and women in the military.

During his 30 years of active duty, he received more than 40 awards for journalism, public relations, and leadership excellence, including the Legion of Merit for Leadership from the U.S. Army, Public Affairs in 1999. During his tenures as newspaper program manager for FORSCOM and at U.S. Forces Korea, he helped modernize over 200 publications. Coberly has also conducted many newspaper workshops, and mentored hundreds of Army public affairs soldiers and provided media training for more than 2,000 National Guard soldiers.

As the Army representative to the Boys Scouts of America, he established Jamboree Today, published under field conditions at the National Scout Jamboree. Every four years, Jamboree Today continues to be published for 10 days and is among the largest daily publications in Virginia. In 1998 he was named a Baden Powell Fellow by King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden, patron of world scouting, and he represented Army public affairs during an audience with Queen Elizabeth II.

His vast experience includes producing program exhibits, videos, and publications; conducting outreach projects; and directing a historical program. Over the course of his Army career, he served as a journalist for the U.S. Women's Army Corps Center and School, promoting women in the military; as senior correspondent for the Pacifica Stars & Stripes daily newspaper; and as the joint press officer and senior advisor to the Centennial Olympic Games Joint Task Force.



Steve Mergelsberg, BS '97, of Dayton, Ohio, led the University of Manchester men's basketball team to the

2012-2013 British University & College Men's Basketball Northern 2A Conference Championship with a 22-2 record. Mergelsberg coached the British team to the top after their previous dismal season where they lost 10 of their first 12 games.

Sheryl J. Remick, BSL '98, of Killeen, Texas, graduated from the Harvard Kennedy School's Executive Fellows program in March.

Samuel T. Watkins Jr., BSL '99, of Virginia Beach, Virginia, was nominated for the Army's Military Intelligence Corps Hall of Fame for 2014. He was the recipient of Excelsior's C. Wayne Williams Award in 2009. Watkins also earned a Master of Science in criminal justice management in 2007 from Columbus University.

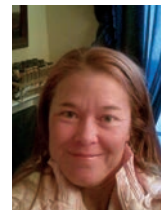
Kim Clett Long, BSL '00, of Marshall, Texas, was appointed executive director, Centers for Excellence, Strategic Initiatives and Innovation, at Wiley College in 2014. This new position is in addition to Long's duties as director, Center for Excellence in Distance Learning/ Assistant Professor of Organizational Management. In this position, Long will lead priority efforts on behalf of the president and the provost related to all aspects of Wiley College's academic mission, including strategic planning and academic program development. She will work closely with the provost and vice president for Academic Affairs on a range of initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality of academic programs and the academic reputation of Wiley College. Long also earned an MS in Interdisciplinary Studies in 2004 from Mountain State University and an EdD in Organizational Leadership in 2008 from Northcentral University.



Ian Jordan, AS '01 and BS '07, of New York, New York, is a conservation operations supervisor 3 with the New York State Department

of Environmental Conservation's Region 2 headquarters in New York City. A career New York State civil servant, he has more than 20 years of experience in the public sector, including NIMS ICS all hazards command staff and as a section chief. He is also a management consultant in public sector corporate governance. He earned a Doctor of Management from Colorado Technical University in 2013, and a Master of Public Administration from Keller Graduate School of Management in 2009. Jordan credits his commitment to lifelong learning to his Excelsior experience, writing, "I truly believe the success of the individual depends on the motivation they develop through lifelong learning."

Beth Cato, BS '03, of Buckeye, Arizona, published her debut work, "The Clockwork Dagger," a steampunk fantasy novel, in September 2014. A sequel is planned for a 2015 release. Cato has published over a hundred short stories and poems, including over a dozen nonfiction tales in the Chicken Soup for the Soul series. Her website is BethCato.com.



Shannon M. Brown, BSL '06, of Costa Mesa, California, earned a master's degree in educational counseling with a pupil

personnel services credential from National University in June and hopes to secure a position as counselor in the California K-14 schools.

Megan Orlowski-Russell, BSL '07, of Amsterdam, New York, has written her first novel, "The Tethering," published under the pen name, Megan O'Russell, was released in September. The second book in the series is scheduled for publication in 2015. When not busy writing, Orlowski-Russell is a professional musical theatre performer who travels the country. She writes, "Without the support I received and the degree I gained through Excelsior, I would not have had the confidence or courage to get to where I am today."

Kevin M. Derby, MAL '09, of Tallahassee, Florida, is senior political reporter for the daily Sunshine State News, covering the gubernatorial, congressional, and legislative races across Florida, and the upcoming 2016 president race.

His political analysis can also be heard weekday mornings on the Ed Dean Show, a syndicated radio program in Florida. He also appears on Tuesday mornings on the Drew Steele Show, which can be heard on 92.5 FM in Southwest Florida.



Donald F. Flusche, BSL '10, of Morehead City, North Carolina, completed a tour of duty as the commanding

officer of a Coast Guard cutter and reported to CG Headquarters in Washington, DC, for a staff assignment this summer. Since 2011, he has commanded three separate Island-class patrol boats. Flusche first assumed command of CGC BARANOF forward deployed to the Arabian Gulf with CG Patrol Forces Southwest Asia in Bahrain for a yearlong assignment, followed by two years stationed at Atlantic Beach, North Carolina, where he commanded the Block Island and Kodiak Island stations. While overseas, he and his crew conducted maritime security operations, infrastructure protection, and theater security engagements throughout the gulf region of the Middle East. Once stateside, he responded to and saved mariners in distress off the infamous North Carolina capes while enforcing fishery and resource management regulations and protecting vital ports and waterways along the Mid-Atlantic region. Flusche enlisted in the Coast Guard in 1992, earned his commission from Officer Candidate School in 2004, and specializes in cutter operations conducting search-and-rescue, maritime law enforcement, homeland security, and national defense readiness missions. He has served on cutters patrolling the Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean Sea, North Atlantic Ocean, Bering Sea, North Pacific Ocean, and Arabian Gulf throughout his 22-year career in the Coast Guard.

SCHOOL OF NURSING

Danny R. Redmond, AS in nursing '83 and BS '85, of Monrovia, California, earned professional certification in the field of correctional health care in April. To become a Certified Correctional Health Professional (CCHP), Redmond demonstrated mastery of national standards and the knowledge expected of leaders working the field.



Julie Matthews, AS in Nursing '01, of Gatesville, Texas, is a registered nurse at the Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center.

Matthews began her nursing career as a licensed vocational nurse in 1996, receiving her certification from Texas State Technical College. Working on her educational goals, she earned two associate degrees—one in general studies 1998 from Central Texas College and another from Excelsior College in nursing in 2001. She secured employment at a local clinic where she was named Nurse of the Year and held the position of relief and interim charge nurse. In 2011 she accepted a position at the local Army base and earned a bachelor's degree, summa cum laude, at Grand Canyon University in 2012. In her current position she demonstrates a strong sense of teamwork and commitment to mission success by fulfilling the roles of clinic process improvement coordinator, primary clinic coordinator for competency assessments, nurse preceptor, and the clinic project coordinator for Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center's Nursing Skills Fair. Matthews' efforts contributed toward a marked improvement in clinic nursing services and patient satisfaction due to the quality of care rendered during clinical visits, which resulted in her nomination for the Special Act Service Award. She also received the coveted Wolf Pack Award for her involvement in the Nursing Skills Fair. She serves as a chamber of commerce ambassador as well as art superintendent with the Coryell County Youth Fair. She is married and has two children.

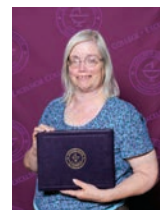
Carissa Arens, AS in nursing '03 and BS in Nursing '10, of Sartell, Minnesota, is the primary author of "Attitudinal Factors Protective Against Youth Smoking: An Integrative Review," an article published in the May issue of the Journal of Nursing Scholarship. Excelsior's 2011 Ruth V. Matheney Memorial Award recipient, Arens writes, "I have greatly appreciated the education I received at Excelsior College. I have since gone on to graduate from the University of Cincinnati's Family Nurse Practitioner master's degree program and am employed as a nurse practitioner at a rehabilitative pain clinic. The career path I have taken is largely due to opportunities afforded me as an

Excelsior College graduate. I am a single mother of four vigorous children, able to accomplish what I need to do to care for them, and also manifest concern for the world at large through my ongoing academic interests, in great part owing to the education I received at Excelsior College."

Jennifer Reno, AS in nursing '06, of Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin, designed and patented the Redi Medi Disposal unit. A hospice nurse, Reno saw a need for proper disposal of unwanted medications, and the Redi Medi Disposal provides a cost-effective and environmentally friendly alternative.

Sherrie J. Bazin, BS and MS in Nursing '11, Friendsville, Pennsylvania, created a practical nursing program for the Susquehanna County Career & Technology Center in Dimock, Pennsylvania. In 2014, the first graduating class of 26 students earned their nursing diplomas. Bazin is continuing her studies, working toward

a PhD in nursing at Northcentral University, and tutors students for the NCLEX exam. In the future, she hopes to teach nursing online. She writes, "Thank you, Excelsior, for the education to be the educator I am today."



Mary Clare McNamee, BS in Nursing '13, of Baltimore, Maryland, published an article, "Long-Term Nurse Finds

Ways to Reach Challenging Patients," on Nurse.com in February 2013. The article was named as one of three that was instrumental in helping Nurse.com win an APEX Award for Publication Excellence in the Regular Departments & Columns category.

Christy St. Andre, AS in nursing '13, of Duson, Louisiana, enrolled in Excelsior's Bachelor of Science in Nursing program after successfully passing her state board exam.



Be a Part of the Alumni Directory

Work has begun on the 2015 edition of Excelsior College Alumni Today. Last published in 2010, the directory is a complete reference of the College's more than 155,000 alumni worldwide. Working in partnership with Harris Connect, the leading alumni directory publisher, you'll have the opportunity to update your info, and submit essays and photos. The 2015 edition of Excelsior College Alumni Today will be available for purchase in hardcover or CD, but you need not purchase the directory to be included in it. Alumni can call 800-258-4167 to update their information.

Share news of your accomplishments and activities

Go to www.excelsior.edu/AlumniNotes to send your submission electronically.

BY THE

#s

395

miles

The approximate distance traveled by one of this year's graduates to attend Commencement in Albany, New York. The graduate serves in the U.S. Air Force and is stationed in Germany.

The initial amount of a \$1 million grant Excelsior College received from the Health Resources and Services Administration, an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, for a project dubbed Mission Transition. Excelsior aims to help servicemembers separating from the military enter well-paying careers in nursing while also developing nursing workforce capacity to meet U.S. health care needs.

\$349,316

For the fourth consecutive year, Excelsior College was named a "Best for Vets" college by Military Times magazine. Excelsior also came in at number 15 in Military Times' "Best for Vets: Business School" ranking.

3

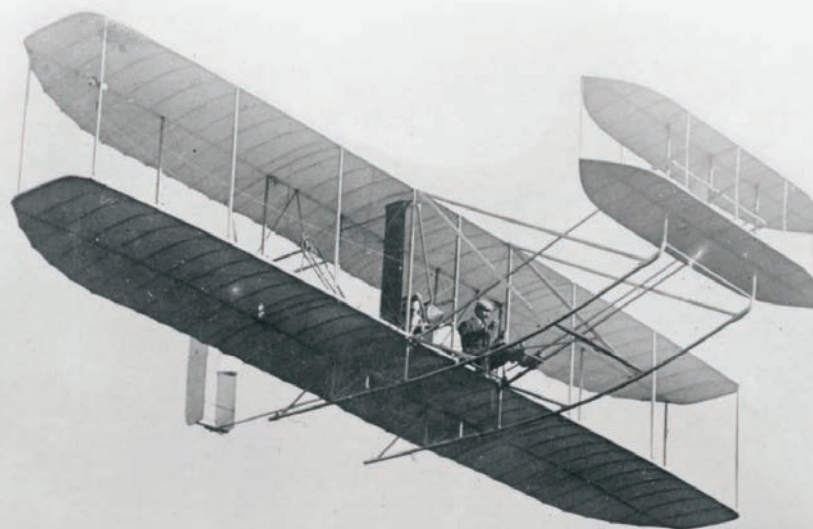
The number of issues of N21—Nursing in the 21st Century published by Hudson Whitman/Excelsior College Press. The mobile journal presents peer-reviewed articles on contemporary topics in health care. The most recent issue, "Loosening the Grip of Abusive Behaviors," explores how bad behavior between professionals and between patients and professionals impacts patient outcomes. The fourth issue, due out in January, focuses on end-of-life care.



4693

The number of people who earned degrees from Excelsior College from July 1, 2013, through June 30, 2014. The graduates included 59 students who earned more than one degree during the academic year, the first student to receive a master's in criminal justice, and students from each of the 50 U.S. states, as well as District of Columbia, Guam, and Puerto Rico, and 19 other countries. The total number of alumni now tops 155,000.





Your support can
help a student

Soar

The Wright brothers didn't just fly. They achieved a dream held in their hearts. It took persistence, ambition, and a will to succeed—qualities our students possess, too, as they work toward their dream to earn a college degree.

With your contribution to the Excelsior College Annual Campaign, you help the dream of a student to take flight. Your gift propels another, offering encouragement to persevere.

100 percent of your contribution goes to scholarship funding that alleviates students' financial burdens. Your gift makes it possible for them to fly!

www.excelsior.edu/giving
888-647-2388 ext. 145



Planning for your legacy is an important step

You can ensure that your long-term involvement with Excelsior College will continue to benefit future generations.

Make a simple yet transformational gift through your will or estate that costs you nothing during your lifetime.



Let me show you how. To find out more, request our informative brochure, or to make your intentions known, please call me at 518-608-8287 or send an email to mstryker@excelsior.edu. We welcome your membership in Excelsior's Legacy Society.