Benefits of Volunteering for Nursing Students

By Iryna Surmachevska

With your busy schedule in nursing school, it can be hard to find time to volunteer but the benefits of volunteering in a hospital or nursing home for a few hours per week could be enormous for you as a future nurse. Volunteering can help you:

- Make important networking contacts
- Learn or develop skills
- Enhance your résumé
- Gain work experience
- Build self-esteem and self-confidence
- Meet new people
- Feel needed and valued
- Make a difference in someone’s life

Every hospital or nursing home has a volunteering department where you can file an application. It may take a few weeks before you can start since the process is the same as for the employees, which includes performing a medical clearance, background check, orientation test, and obtaining a uniform and ID badge. In addition, you can pick the time and the departments where you would like to volunteer.

The valuable experience that you will gain in communication with the nursing staff, patients, and family members will definitely make it easier for you to go through nursing school and help you in your future nursing career.
It’s Not All About Grades

By Nao Maeda

All nursing students are studying in hopes for securing a job as a nurse. Grade point average is very important, however, many focus so much on grades alone that they miss other opportunities. Here are a few things that may be helpful in putting you ahead.

♦ Apply for an externship. Externships are very time sensitive so it’s easy to miss these! Many hospitals and healthcare organizations offer externships specifically for nursing students, but there are deadlines so act fast! Most externships are done during the summer and prefer students that have finished their junior year of clinicals (which means you should apply before your junior year ends). These programs allow students to shadow nurses, learn basics of hospital procedures, and more. It gives you an opportunity to practice patient care and also learn what it truly is like to be a nurse. You might even get paid!

♦ Apply for a job related to nursing. Nurse recruiters look for new graduates that have experience with patient interaction. Working as a nursing assistant, a unit secretary, or even as a caregiver looks good on the résumé and tells your employers you are capable of more than just schoolwork.

♦ Volunteer! Job offers are hard to come by, but that shouldn’t stop you from gaining patient experience! Volunteering at a hospital, ambulance, nursing home, or even mission trips abroad can help you learn how to appropriately treat patients.

♦ Join a nursing organization. You can join William Paterson’s Student Nurses Association to not only expand your social network, but to also improve your student nursing experience. Several other state and national nursing organizations offer students to be an active part of implementing professional nursing practice. You are offered continuous education, development in your leadership skills, and opportunities to listen to renowned nurses. Although some may require fees, they are not too expensive and the benefits definitely outweigh the cost.

♦ Get connections. It’s not just about who you know, but how you present yourself to others. It’s good to know people that are nurses or are employees from hospitals, but it is greater if they recommend you to a nurse recruiter. Your friends may help you search and secure a job offer for you, so never take them for granted! Stay positive and look for every opportunity you can grab!
Applying for a Nurse Related Job During Your Undergraduate Education

By Umme Hazera

I cannot stress enough how important it is for nursing students to get their foot in the door as soon as possible. In a tough job market, it can be difficult to find an RN job when you graduate from nursing school. Most employers ask for previous nurse related experience. How can we get experience if you don’t give us the chance? This is what most of us are probably thinking when we begin applying for RN positions after graduating. A great way to gain some sort of nursing related experience is to apply for Patient Care Associate (PCA) or Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) positions in hospitals, nursing homes, sub-acute care facilities, assisted living facilities, or any other health care related institution.

Personally speaking, working as a CNA in a sub-acute care/long-term care facility has provided me with invaluable experience. Due to this opportunity, I feel more comfortable and confident interacting with patients and other health care professionals. I am now more familiar with the art of delegation and interaction between various healthcare employees including nursing administrators, nurses, CNAs, physicians, physical therapists and other personnel as well. I feel that this job has provided me a good knowledge base and work ethic upon which to enter the nursing workforce with. Also, an important point to mention is that most hospitals and healthcare facilities tend to hire within their departments first. So, if you work as a PCA in the hospital, and your unit is looking for an RN, they may take you into consideration before reviewing other outside applications. There are many other healthcare related job opportunities available besides PCA and CNAs. As long as you get yourself integrated into a healthcare institution, your odds of finding an RN job swiftly after you graduate is greater.

Applying for a Nursing Job After Your Graduation

By Ho Wan Ching, RN

Nursing jobs are projected to increase in the coming years. There are many avenues to look into – hospitals, surgery facilities, day care, school, long term care or skilled nursing facilities, hospice, veteran affairs, even army or naval nurse. Within a hospital, there are many areas to venture into, for example Medical-Surgical, PACU, ICU, Labor/Delivery, Ambulatory, Oncology, Dialysis, etc. Before applying for a nursing job, graduates should ensure their field of choice. There are many websites for nursing careers - nurse.com, indeed.com, monster.com and the healthcare facilities’ own websites. Recent graduates could apply to be an intern for a start. Many employers will offer training with a preceptor to new graduates. It also helps to network with friends or contacts on social media websites like LinkedIn, Twitter or Facebook. Volunteering at a healthcare facility is another avenue to land that nursing job. When one gets a prospective call for an interview, the most important job is the preparation process. One could start with a research about the company or institution with its recent news. Next is to identify one’s strength and weakness. Also, identify what one could offer that will benefit the company and how one will differ from another applicant vying for the same job. It helps to research the salary range as the employer will ask the prospective employee what one’s desired salary range is. I hope these tips could help all of you land the job of your dream.
Nursing Student Helpful Tips
By Catherine Fonseca

Forming Beneficial Habits
◆ Track all assignments, quizzes and exams in an electronic or pocket calendar.
◆ Read. Read the assigned information BEFORE lecture.
◆ During lecture, take notes on new information or information that you want to explore further.
◆ Ask questions. It is important to ask questions before, during, or after lecture when information is unclear or you need clarification.
◆ Participate. Enroll in tutoring services or group study sessions to assist in learning.

Study Strategies
◆ Develop a study plan that focuses on what to study. This means you should schedule or list the chapters, questions, case studies, etc. that you want to complete.
◆ Start with an area that is interesting to increase your motivation and then move on to the more difficult tasks.
◆ Give yourself breaks. Studying for 5 hours nonstop is not an effective method. Studying in short and manageable chunks of time, 45 to 60 minutes, allows for more effective learning. Take 10 to 15 minute breaks in between these sessions.
◆ Change the scenery. If you are used to studying at home then go to the library or coffee shop. It is also helpful to have the area be neat and clean to help with concentration.
◆ Be productive. If studying is getting boring or tiring, then stop. If studying is no longer being productive then begin a different task and return to studying at a later time.
◆ Active learning. Be an active reader by putting the information into your own words, do the activities, and do the practice questions or interactive reviews. It is also helpful to integrate what you learn in class with what is practiced in clinical.
◆ Practice makes perfect. Repetition will help you remember important information – such as lab values.
◆ Get adequate sleep. This will help you retain the learned information. There have been studies that show getting a good night’s sleep results in better test grades than from pulling all-nighters before an exam. Get plenty of sleep, wake up earlier than usual and do last minute reviewing.
Nursing Student Helpful Tips
By Catherine Fonseca

Stress & Time Management

♦ Avoid cramming. Lack of preparation may increase anxiety and feelings of being overwhelmed.
♦ Don’t look ahead. If you are feeling overwhelmed from all the material you need to know before an exam, refocus your energy. Focus on preparing a to-do list, break the material down and review the material over several days.
♦ De-stress. Find something that is not school or work related to help you de-stress during times of high anxiety or stress levels. Examples are exercise or watching a movie.
♦ Stress reduction technique. Develop a stress-reduction technique that works best for you. For example, guided imagery or closing the eyes and taking slow, deep breaths for five minutes.
♦ Balance. Balance your personal and professional life. This means to set aside family/friends/significant other time as well as study time.

STUDENT NURSE MENTOR PROGRAM

Thank you to Student Nurse Coordinators Sara Corby and Jessica Tiglao and congratulations on your graduation!

Stay tuned for upcoming events in Spring 2016!

Rachel Greenfield, Umme Hazera, and Iryna Surmachevska

Congratulations on Your Graduation!