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New York nurse

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15 years later: Honoring first responders, p. 3

Acknowledging the heroic nurses and first responders who worked night and day following 9/11 — and whenever and wherever tragedy strikes.

Contract victories at 3 Upstate hospitals, pp. 6-7



By Judy Sheridan-Gonzalez, RN
NYSNA President

The struggle continues...



2016: Standing Rock, North Dakota



1963: Birmingham, Alabama

The great American horror show

I was as outraged as anyone to see pictures of attack dogs released by shock troops in North Dakota to “neutralize” Native American protesters fighting to save their water and their nation from the toxic and dangerous effects of a volatile pipeline snaking through their lands. It brought to mind the pictures of police dogs used to attack African-American civil rights protesters in the South that haunted my childhood over 50 years ago. In August, I traveled to North Dakota’s Standing Rock Reservation to show support and solidarity to the tribes gathered there (see page 11, bottom left).

“An attack against one is an attack against all”: Empty hyperbole or a moral imperative?

We say this often when we engage in struggles against the minority of powerful men and corporations that appear to be in control of everything in our society—from the air we breathe to the food we eat to the water we drink. Nurses said it when we united around our contract struggles over the past two years, culminating in info-pickets, strike votes, 10-day notices and strikes—all actions that were not nurses’ first choice. We wanted safe staffing, decent benefits, respect on the job and quality healthcare in our communities.

Never forget that it is the employer’s intransigence that pushes us to engage in such actions. But always remember that it is only through organizing and, unfortunately, most often through such “direct action” tactics that we ultimately gain small and large victories. The most recent example is the inspiring three-hospital (St. Elizabeth in Utica, Samaritan in Watertown and Nathan Littauer in Gloversville) strike notices and unified action plans that pushed those greedy employers to settle in the Central Region of the state.

Unfinished business: Westchester County, Long Island and beyond

The ongoing abuse of the Westchester Medical Center RNs, working without a signed agreement for five years, the county knowing full well that the Taylor Law prohibits a “legal” strike—is opportunism at its worst. The Catholic Health Services of Long Island (CHSLI) are functioning in direct contradiction of Pope Francis’ comments: “Not paying fairly, not giving a job because you are only looking at how to make a profit, that goes against God.” An attack against one IS an attack against all. All NYSNA members need to stand with these nurses who are only asking for the same things that every one else is asking for.

Caregivers all

Public sector, private sector, upstate, downstate, out of state, community hospital, academic teaching center, small local practice, large mega-system—we are all dedicated caregivers trying to practice our craft in an environment that is more and more hostile to us; one that pulls us away from our patients with every new task or mandate that they thrust upon our shoulders.

When we fight against DuPont and other irresponsible corporations who have poisoned our water in Hoosick Falls, so close to our state capital, or demand the permanent cessation of fracking—the process that releases toxins into aquifers, and methane into the atmosphere—or stop the “Bomb Trains” that carry super-volatile Bakken Dakota Oil, we are also caring for our patients. Without

“We need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family.”

Pope Francis, 2015



clean water, without a safe environment, what will happen to us?

Many individuals and organizations are proud to render support to the First Nations People who have joined together in North Dakota at the Sacred Stone Camp to prevent the desecration of sacred burial sites and the poisoning of clean river water, drinking water—from the same Crude Bakken Oil that inhabited the Bomb Trains against which 1,000 NYSNA members demonstrated in Saratoga last year.

Caregivers of individual patients—or of the planet we all dwell on—deserve the respect inherent in the title: We are Caregivers All. Listen to Us.

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Editorial offices located at:

131 W 33rd St., New York, NY 10001

Phone: 212-785-0157 x 159

Email: communications@nysna.org

Website: www.nysna.org

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NYSNA honors 9/11 heroes

NYSNA nurses and other frontline caregivers worked around the clock to care for victims of 9/11. On September 7, NYSNA issued a proclamation commemorating the 15-year anniversary of that terrible tragedy:

"Today...we remember the terrible loss and continue to honor first responders for their extraordinary bravery. We remember our roles in the frenzy of the many injured, providing care and comfort."

Anne Bové, RN, NYSNA Secretary and President of NYSNA's H + H/Mayorals Executive Council recalls the key role that public hospital nurses played in responding to the crisis.

"Everybody went to work that day, putting aside our own fears and grief to care for the victims. We all knew someone who had passed away and yet we did what we could to help the living. We had nurses who trekked for

three hours in from New Jersey to care for patients, as others were trying to flee the city."

Ms. Bové explained that because of its height and location, Bellevue had views of the towers. "In the ICU and other units we would draw the shades so the patients didn't have to see what was happening."

The aftermath of 9/11 showed the heroism of New Yorkers. Ms.

Bové said that more than 500 people came to Bellevue to donate blood in the days following the terrorist attack.

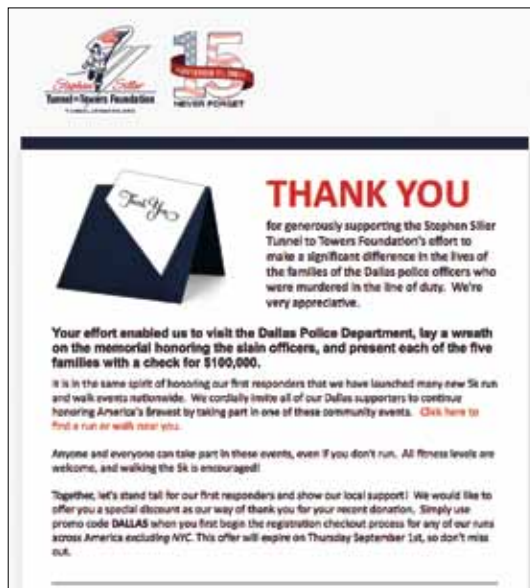
World Trade Center history

The World Trade Center was of particular importance to Ms. Bové as her father, after fighting in the 3rd infantry in World War II, became a sheet metal worker and helped to build the twin towers. "He put his name inside one of the railings before turning the metal over and said when this building becomes ruined in thousands of years, maybe they'll see my name."

Tunnel to Towers

In honor of the sacrifices made by 9/11 first responders, NYSNA has contributed to the Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation. NYSNA previously made a contribution to Tunnel to Towers to assist the families of the slain police officers in Dallas.

Thank you to all the nurses who saved lives on 9/11 and to all who have donated to the funds for first responders.



NYSNA received this thank you from the Tunnel to Towers Foundation.



Frank Bové, father of Anne Bové, RN, admiring his work on the World Trade Center.

Nurses stand strong against gun violence

NYSNA nurses descended on Washington DC on August 27 to call for an end to the public health crisis created by gun violence. Nurses also created a touching video with firsthand accounts of caring for gun violence victims.

Many nurses have been personally impacted by gun violence and have experienced the devastating impacts firsthand. Judith Cuthchin, RN at Woodhull Medical Center tragically lost her daughter to gun violence in July of 2013.

Too often and too close to home

"It's very heartbreaking to receive a call that your child has been murdered," said Ms. Cuthchin. Nurses should get involved in fighting against gun violence because there are so many tragedies that happen to young people.

Culean Duncan Britton, RN, Kings County Hospital Center



NYSNA nurses traveled to Washington, DC, for the August 27 march.

explained what it was like for Brooklyn nurses to care for trauma victims in their own community, "We have a red phone that rings when there's a trauma coming in. It's usually a gunshot wound. And all of our hearts drop thinking that

it could be our son, our brother, our nephews, any kind of family member coming through that door."

Visit NYSNA's Facebook page to watch the full video and share with your friends.

Bellevue nurses care for NYC bombing victims

Twenty-nine people were injured in the bombing in Manhattan's Chelsea neighborhood on September 17. Bellevue RNs and other caregivers on duty tended to the injured, just as they did on 9/11. The endless commitment of nurses and all first responders shows the unique resilience of New York City.



By Jill Furillo, RN,
NYSNA Executive
Director

Through this bill, our hospitals have a means to gain the necessary resources to care for our state's most vulnerable patients

The key to funding New York's hospitals

Earlier this year, NYSNA nurses organized, rallied, and lobbied for the passage of the Enhanced Safety Net Hospital bill. In June, near the very end of the legislative session, both the New York State Assembly and the New York State Senate held votes on the bill (A9476A) (S 6948A Enhanced Safety Net). It passed with unanimous votes in both the New York State Assembly

and unfair distribution of hospital funding. The redefinition of safety net facilities means that hospitals with higher percentages of well-off private payer insurance patients will no longer be able to siphon away funds intended for our most poorly funded hospitals. Rather, key funding will focus on the facilities that care for the most Medicaid and uninsured patients, ensuring that resources go where they are



and New York State Senate with votes of 100-0 and 62-0, a huge end of session victory for NYSNA nurses and our patients. The bill creates a fairer, more equal state funding formula for safety net hospitals that provide a significant level of care for low-income, uninsured, and vulnerable patients in urban and rural areas.

Smarter use of public funds

The historic bill designates public hospitals and hospitals in low-income and high-need communities as “enhanced safety net” facilities, making them eligible for higher Medicaid reimbursement rates, and filling startling gaps in funding that keep our hospitals from meeting the needs of vulnerable patients. Finally, after 40 years of the current Medicaid reimbursement system, the money will follow the patients and go where the resources are needed the most.

The bill provides an avenue for additional funding for safety net facilities and, importantly, it narrows the definition of a safety net hospital, helping to address the

needed the most. For many hospitals this will mean enhanced and fairer reimbursement rates.

True meaning of safety net

The new definition of enhanced safety net hospitals includes:

1. Any private hospital that meets all of the following criteria:
 - 50% or more of all patients treated (inpatient and outpatient) receive Medicaid or are medically uninsured; *and*
 - 40% or more of inpatient discharges are covered by Medicaid; *and*,
 - No more than 25% of inpatient discharges are covered by private insurance; *and*
 - At least 3% of patients receiving services are uninsured; *and*
 - Provides care to uninsured patient in all services, including emergency, hospital based and community clinics, dental and prenatal care.
2. Any public hospital operated by a county, municipality or public benefit corporation, regardless of its patient population characteristics.

3. Any hospital that is federally designated as a critical access or sole community provider facility.

Many of these critical hospitals that provide services at a loss to our most vulnerable communities are under severe financial stress that threatens their continued viability. This important legislation will sustain critical access for patients across the state – not just in New York City but also in rural areas where high-need patients depend on their local hospital for care.

Assembly Member and sponsor of the bill Richard Gottfried told *Politico*, “The bill is important for creating a mechanism to deliver needed aid to truly needy hospitals [such as] New York City Health + Hospitals, other public hospitals, hospitals with high volumes of Medicaid and uninsured patients, and many rural hospitals.”

The backbone of healthcare

Safety net hospitals are the backbone of New York's healthcare system. For too long, nurses and other caregivers at these facilities have struggled to provide quality care without sufficient resources to meet patient needs. Now, through this bill, our hospitals have a means to gain the necessary resources to care for our state's most vulnerable patients. As nurses, that means our facilities will be able to afford the equipment and staffing that our patients so desperately need.

Call to action

The bill is now awaiting Governor Cuomo's signature before it can become law. Governor Cuomo has supported nurses by signing the Safe Patient Handling Act. Now, we're asking him to support New York's most vulnerable patients.

The bill received letters of support to Governor Cuomo from patient advocates, labor organizations, and a broad spectrum of nearly 40 community organizations, from the African Services Committee to Youth Action Programs.

You can take action now by signing the petition asking Governor Cuomo to sign the bill. Type in this link in your web browser to add your name to the petition: bit.ly/NYsafetynet

Solidarity at Vassar

NYSNA nurses and 1199SEIU colleagues at Vassar Brothers Medical Center in Poughkeepsie were out in force at two actions on September 13, the day their hospital held a groundbreaking ceremony for a \$466 million expansion. Standing outside the main entrance, the workers were there to welcome hospital trustees, the press and the community with a simple and hard to miss message: safe staffing now!

Putting first things first

VBMC is investing hundreds of millions of dollars into capital improvements that will expand its capacity. The caregivers believe that providing state of the art facilities has the potential to be good for the community, but they are concerned that current staffing issues must be resolved first and there must be enough staff to meet the needs of a growing patient base. Without proper staffing, the expanded facility will put further strain on an already overtaxed workforce.

“Every day, we strive, but struggle, to provide excellent patient care,” said RN Ginny Malcuit, a 28-year veteran at the hospital. “VBMC has allowed staffing levels to be depleted to dangerous levels. We can’t continue like this. We need more help and the hospital must hire more people.”



VBMC RNs at the candlelight vigil (from left): Ayse Pere, Lana Cohen, Judy Prinzivalli (retired), Maria Nagy, and Tigisti Neghassi.

For months, NYSNA and 1199SEIU members have been working in concert through meetings, rallies and protests to raise the issue of short staffing and the consequences for quality patient care. Staffing for both nurses and other support staff has reached such a crisis that mandated overtime was reintroduced earlier this year and the hospital implemented a “dependability” policy that punishes workers who call in sick.

Ron Breau, an 1199SEIU member and Vascular Cath Lab Tech, warned, “If the administration carries over current staffing practices that aren’t working now, there is going to be a problem.” Tracey Ames, a VBMC RN, added, “It is our hope that, as the medical center continues to expand services, management understands and consistently acts upon the relationship between increasing census and adequate staffing.”

Getting the message out

Following the groundbreaking, a mobile billboard with the safe staffing message traveled around town and up and down side streets. That evening, NYSNA nurses, 1199SEIU

coworkers, community members and area clergy reconvened for a candlelight vigil to help shine further light on the issues. “We want to know there is a plan in place to ensure enough staff in every department, in every building, old and new, and that patients will no longer be waiting hours to get back their lab tests, get seen in the ER, and so on,” Mr. Breau told those gathered.

United front going forward

Ms. Malcuit implored hospital management to “listen to your nurses.” “We’re only asking that we be treated with the same dignity and respect we give our patients.”

“The whole effort of creating a new, beautiful building with state of the art equipment is worthless, unless you have the staff to provide the care and services. Without us, you just have a very expensive building. The administration needs to recognize how important safe staffing is and do something about it,” said Mr. Breau.

NYSNA and 1199SEIU are committed to work together until VBMC patients have the staff they need and deserve.

Fight for fairness on LI continues

NYSNA nurses are keeping the heat on Catholic Health Services of Long Island (CHS) to improve staffing at Smithtown’s St. Catherine of Siena Medical Center and St. Charles Hospital in Port Jefferson.

Television ads featuring NYSNA RNs Tammy Miller, of St. Catherine of Siena, and Tracy Kosciuk, of St. Charles, are running on local cable channels, a mobile billboard can be seen driving through the hospitals’ service areas, and the community is showing support with lawn signs and calls to the CEOs for fair contracts and safe staffing.

NYSNA nurses at CHS’s St. Joseph Hospital settled their contract in last June and are standing beside and behind their sister CHS nurses as they continue to fight to improve the quality of care at St. Catherine and St. Charles.



There was no mistaking the NYSNA and 1199SEIU message as VBMC trustees, the press and guests arrived for the hospital’s groundbreaking ceremony.

Nurse unity sweeps Upstate New York



Deborah LaMora, RN, Samaritan Medical Center



Jessica Culver, RN, St. Elizabeth Medical Center

Over just a few days during the last week of August NYSNA members at three hospitals in the Central and Capital Regions brought months of contract negotiations to a spectacular close, reaching tentative agreements at St. Elizabeth Medical Center in Utica, Samaritan Medical Center in Watertown, and Nathan Littauer Hospital in Gloversville.

Near unanimous ratifications quickly followed, with NYSNA members winning key improvements in staffing as well as wages and benefits.

Upstate New York had never seen anything like it!

The nurses say it was no coincidence that the three came to a resolution in the same week. They attribute their success to a combination of strong unity among nurses within their own hospitals, unprecedented regional solidarity, community engagement on safe staffing issues, and a legal strategy that held the hospitals accountable to complying with federal labor law.

While negotiating independently, members at the three hospitals met at joint Interregionals and steward trainings and coordinated their actions—most recently all three facilities issued September 1 strike notices.

According to Mike Pattison, an RN on the NYSNA Executive Committee at St. Elizabeth, “The coordination with Samaritan and Nathan Littauer was important on two fronts. It showed St. Elizabeth nurses that we aren’t alone in our fight for safe staffing—that it’s a problem all over the state. Plus, it showed management that NYSNA nurses are serious about patient care. Don’t mess with us!”

Staffing, staffing, staffing

All three contracts include wage gains and maintain health and pension benefits, however, “The biggest issue was always staffing,” according to Deborah LaMora, an RN and LBU Co-chair at Samaritan. Her colleague Jill Schloemer, an RN and Negotiating Committee member, agreed, “From the start, we knew we couldn’t back down on the issue of staffing—for both the safety of our patients and to keep nurses working at the hospital. We know that staffing, along with fair wages and health and pension benefits, is key to improving the hospital’s ability to recruit and retain nursing staff.”

Under the contract, Samaritan agreed to immediately begin recruiting 10 new full-time nurses, purchase and implement a patient classification system that determines



Nurses at Nathan Littauer Hospital cast ratification votes.

staffing based on acuity, and establish Nursing Staffing Committees in each of the hospital’s clinical practice areas. In addition, the hospital will create a Nursing Resource Team for immediate response to any nurse reports of unsafe staffing and establish a Specialty Float Pool.

Nathan Littauer’s LBU President Marion Enright, RN, is proud of the staffing gains achieved at her hospital: “The new contract enacts new rules and guidelines that make huge strides in putting more nurses at the bedside of the patients, including the establishment of a Nurse Resource Team.”

Solidarity was key

Jessica Culver, an RN at St. Elizabeth is happy to report that her new contract also takes steps toward improving patient safety. “This contract puts the issue front and center and establishes a process for holding the administration accountable to patients and their families as well as the nurses.”

The St. Elizabeth agreement includes hiring 5 new full-time Registered Nurses, establishes new committees in which nurses will have a true voice in staffing, and creates a mechanism for improved response to short staffing.

“Knowing that we were not alone and had friends that had



Members at St. Elizabeth Medical Center stand united—and happy—following their August 31 ratification vote.



es on September 1. Marion Enright, RN and LBU President, stands in front row, second from right.

our backs—and that we had theirs—made all of us stronger,” Ms. Enright said. This support was particularly critical following the nurses’ one-day strike and subsequent week-long lockout last January.

“On what I think was the coldest day of the winter this year we had CWA there, we had 1199 there, we had teachers there,” Ms. Enright recounted. “We won our unfair labor practice charges. We got paid for the time we were unfairly locked out. We won discrimination cases. We won intimidation cases. Our victory meant the world to us. It meant that we were not fighting alone.”

According to Mr. Pattison, “In Utica we had a strong, united group inside the hospital from the very beginning, who reached out and pulled patients and the community into the struggle. The Utica Common Council issued resolutions in support of safe staffing and the St. Elizabeth nurses, the Central New York Labor Council lent its support, and lawn signs popped up all over the area calling on the hospital to listen to the nurses.” His colleague Ms. Culver added, “St. Elizabeth, Samaritan and Nathan Littauer all draw from the same labor market. Our persistence and unity really made a

difference in the end. Management found that nurses stick together and aren’t afraid to do what’s needed to protect our patients.”

Samaritan nurses enjoyed broad support, as well. “We had a tremendous degree of community support. Assemblywoman Addie Russell (D-116) was with us all the way, from our March informational picket all the way through to our final bargaining session,” said Ms. Schloemer. After the *Watertown Daily Times* ran an editorial in support of the nurses, the community began to raise a lot of questions about the hospital’s staffing levels. Ms. LaMora said, “I had never seen an editorial from that paper that sided with a union. It shows that people see the conditions at the hospital. They know how long they wait when they call for a nurse and see how run ragged we are.”

Lessons learned

Transparency brought new members into the process: “I’ve been a union rep for 22 years and been involved in bargaining seven contracts. This was the first time that

nurses were so directly involved in negotiations. It was empowering to have the opportunity sit at the table and speak directly to management about the dangers of unsafe staffing,” said Ms. LaMora. Her colleague Ms. Schloemer agreed, “When negotiations began, we’d have maybe 3 or 4 nurses who weren’t on the committee coming to bargaining. By the time our last session on August 24 came around, we had over 200 nurses there—more than half of the chapter—and many of them stayed until the wee hours of the morning.”

Looking ahead

“Nathan Littauer is a small hospital. By working together with nurses from other hospitals we achieved more than we could have on our own. I’m so proud that we stuck together as a team and all achieved contracts that are good for everyone,” said Renee Blowers, an RN in Nathan Littauer Hospital’s Special Care Unit.

In their contract fights, nurses in the region spurred a new and united movement of communities and caregivers committed to improving health care. “Through this process, we grew stronger and built relationships that will last. Our contracts may be settled but we already have plans for more joint activities and meetings and want to keep up our work together to achieve better, safer care for our patients in the region,” said Ms. Blowers—a sentiment that was echoed by her fellow nurses at all three hospitals.



Jill Schloemer, RN, Samaritan Medical Center



Renee Blowers, RN, Nathan Littauer Hospital



Votes are tallied following the August 31 ratification at Samaritan.

NYSNA nurses unite at the NYS Fair

A record 1.1 million visitors came to the 2016 New York State Fair, held August 25 through September 5 at the State Fairgrounds outside Syracuse. Thirty NYSNA members volunteered at our union's booth throughout the fair.

The NYSNA booth was a popular stop in the fair's Science and Industry Building, where members talked to the public about the need for safe staffing and single payer legislation. Thousands stopped by to learn about the issues and sign our petitions, including many elected leaders.

Adam O'Brien, an RN at both Montefiore and Westchester Medical Center, was a first-time volunteer this year. "I came because safe staffing is an issue that affects everyone in our state, and it's important to educate the public on what's happening in our hospitals."

"It was wonderful to meet people from all over the state," Mr. O'Brien said about his four days staffing the exhibit. "The level of support was overwhelming."

Strong public support

The experience was equally positive for Karine Raymond, an RN at Montefiore and NYSNA Board Member, who also spent four days at the fair: "I met so many interesting people! I found that 99 percent of the people I spoke with signed our safe staffing bill petition. And I was really pleasantly surprised by the strong public support for the single payer bill."

Ms. Raymond said the fair provided an opportunity for an Upstate-Downstate reunion of sorts. "I was able to reconnect with nurses I had met at lobby days and conventions but in a setting where we could get to know each other better and reaffirm that no matter where we work, we all face the same struggles and want the same things for our patients. As an added bonus, I had the chance to speak with nurses from St. Elizabeth, Nathan Littauer, and Samaritan right at the height of their contract negotiations and then settlements."

Mary Smith Douglas, an RN for Onondaga County, lives in the area but like Mr. O'Brien and Ms.



NYS Comptroller Tom DiNapoli (second from left) visited with NYSNA member volunteers and staff on August 30.

Raymond had not worked the fair in prior years. "The best part for me was meeting so many supportive people—including a surprising number of nurses! I met one nurse who had worked in California after it passed its staffing law and learned that it really works! And I got to hear from a member at St. Elizabeth about how happy she is with her new contract."

All three members spoke highly of the experience and plan to

return next year. Ms. Raymond recommends nurses bring their families along: "It's a wonderful experience. There is absolutely something for everyone: great food, rides for the kids, and lots of new products and inventions to explore." Ms. Smith Douglas added, "Just do it. Wear your red and use your voice. It's fun and you'll meet lots of people you wouldn't otherwise meet."



NYS Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara (D-11) (on right) poses with NYSNA members Adam O'Brien, RN, Montefiore and Westchester Medical Centers (left), and Larry Wills, RN, Sysosset Hospital, at the NYSNA booth.

Labor Day



NYSNA members joined tens of thousands of fellow union members and supporters for New York City's annual show of labor pride on September 10.



NYSNA's Anne Bové, RN, surrounded by graduates of the Margaret Whitehorne Student Nurse Service Program on August 17.

Filling the experience gap

Nursing school graduates frequently cite a lack of hands-on experience as the primary obstacle to landing their first hospital jobs. The Margaret Whitehorne Student Nurse Service Program at NYC's Health + Hospital's Bellevue Hospital coordinated by Anne Bové, NYSNA's Board Secretary and President of our union's NYC H + H/ Mayorals Executive Council, aims to fill this clinical training gap. For the past few summers, the program has paired more than 100 nursing students with a senior RN preceptor. The nursing students volunteer 100 hours and at the end of the program come away with real world nursing practice experience on their resumes.

At the August 17 recognition ceremony, Ms. Bové explained the program's history and purpose: "Margaret Whitehorne trained thousands of nurses, augmenting the clinical experience taught in nursing schools with hands-on practice. She passed away in 2014 but her principles of quality and development of practice live on through this program."

High praise

Following Ms. Bové's presentation, students were invited to share thoughts on their experiences in the program. Robert Morris was the first to the microphone and said, "I want to thank Anne Bové

because without her there would probably be no student nurse program. It's been a great experience, and I feel privileged to have been part of it." Many of his colleagues also had high praise for Ms. Bové and other Bellevue staff and administrators who dedicate so much time into the program.

George Good, who spent ten weeks volunteering in Bellevue's Emergency Department, said, "I pay tuition to go to nursing school but this program is free. I feel like I should have had to pay for the tremendous experience I gained. I learned more in 100 hours here than in a semester of school."

IDNYC is good for patient care!

NYSNA's New York City members are supporting the efforts of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs to encourage enrollment in IDNYC, a program in which the city provides a free government-issued identification card to city residents 14 years of age or older.

The IDNYC is much more than a regular ID card. NYC Health + Hospital patients can use the card to streamline patient registration and ease access to medical records. In addition, IDNYC serves as a membership card for ActionHealthNYC, the city's health-care access program for low-income immigrants who are not eligible for public health insurance because of their immigration status. With an IDNYC card, these patients can receive healthcare services at designated NYC Health + Hospitals locations.

IDNYC has additional benefits, including access to discounts on prescription drugs and fitness programs. It can be used at any NYC public library and gives free one-year memberships to 40 cultural institutions.

It's good for patients and good for families, so get your IDNYC today, and spread the word to your neighbors, friends and patients! A full list of IDNYC benefits and enrollment information is available at www.nyc.gov/benefits.

Celebrating Caribbean heritage

More than 75 NYSNA nurses from eight hospitals marched alongside the NYSNA float in New York City's West Indian Day Parade on September 5. Members brought their children, grandchildren and other family members to celebrate Caribbean heritage.

Nancy Hagans, an RN at Maimonides Medical Center and newly-elected NYSNA Director at Large who was born in Haiti, is among a small group of Brooklyn nurses who first got NYSNA involved in the festivities four years ago. "At that time, we had no idea what to expect. We had only two weeks to put together a float and try to assemble a group of marchers. But we did it, and we quickly learned that our message of 'caring for all New Yorkers' is one that everyone appreciates. People love nurses!"

"Now we have nurses from all over the islands and beyond who share in the fun of this parade. Our float carries a flag from every single Caribbean nation, and this year, we had nurses of Filipino, Italian, and even Russian heritage dancing down Eastern Parkway," said Ms. Hagans.

Member participation in the celebration has grown each year, and Ms. Hagans reports that marchers now look forward to gathering each August for a pre-parade decorating party to bedazzle and personalize their costumes.

"NYSNA's float represents the rich diversity of nursing and the extraordinary diversity of our patients in New York City," said Ms. Hagans, adding, "And it attracts political dignitaries from throughout New York and the Islands. Nurses have a lot of credibility, and the crowd shows us love and respect."



The flags of Trinidad & Tobago, Antigua & Barbuda and Jamaica were just a few of the many carried by NYSNA marchers and our union's float at the West Indian Day Parade.

The grant was written to emphasize the partnership between the city's public education and public health systems.

Training tomorrow's healthcare workforce

NYSNA's Training and Upgrading Fund turned two years old in July and is already expanding to provide even more training opportunities for members.

NYSNA members won the unique nurse-managed and employer-paid fund in our most recent contract with NYC Health + Hospitals. The employer contributes a percentage of gross payroll for members to access tuition reimbursement as well as CEU, RN to BSN, certification, and preceptor programs.

CarolLynn Esposito, Ed.D., JD, MS, RN, and NYSNA's Director of Nursing Education and Practice explained how the fund managed to expand so quickly: "With the Department of Health's emphasis on community-based healthcare, we saw a chance to secure a work-

force retraining grant. We partnered with the well-established 1199SEIU Training and Upgrading Fund and applied for funding to train Nurse Practitioners."

Public agency partnership

The grant is in the final stages of review and approval and once issued will pay for 12 RNs to attend CUNY's Hunter College to become NPs in two high-need areas: geriatrics and psychiatry/behavioral health. "It was written to emphasize the partnership between the city's public education and public health systems—working together to train public healthcare professionals that will serve the public good," said Dr. Esposito. Applicants underwent a special vetting process and had to win acceptance to Hunter on their own merits.

While awaiting final word on the grant, some nurses have pushed ahead and started the training. Michelle Pean, an RN enrolled in the psychiatric/behavioral health NP program, said, "this is what I was looking for to further my career. I am so happy and grateful for this opportunity."

Kadean Brooks, one of the RNs enrolled in Hunter's adult gerontological NP program, said, "I am blessed and happy that I can further my education. I hope this can be afforded more nurses in the future."

Dr. Esposito said the Fund will keep looking for additional grant opportunities to bring training to members in more facilities. In the meantime, any NYC H + H nurse can apply to the Training Fund for up to \$3,000 a year in tuition reimbursement expenses.

Zika: Getting the word out

NYSNA nurses are joining public health officials in educating the public on the growing threat posed by the Zika virus.

Top New York City health officials have spent recent weeks conducting outreach in the city's Puerto Rican and Dominican neighborhoods.

The city has more cases of Zika infection than any other part of the continental U.S., and in recent weeks, more than 1,200 pregnant women have met the criteria for a Zika test (i.e. they had either traveled to an infected country or had unprotected sex with someone who had). The number of pregnant women requesting a test is one of the few reliable data points the city can use to see whether its message is reaching its intended audience.

Safeguarding public health

At an August 17 press conference, NYC Public Advocate Letitia James unveiled new recommendations to combat the virus, with particular emphasis on stopping its spread through sexual transmission.

Anne Bové, RN, our union's Secretary and President of NYSNA's H + H/Mayorals Executive Council, said, "The Public Advocate's rec-

ommendations are concrete steps to help safeguard the health of all New Yorkers. They add to efforts already underway by city and state authorities to limit the spread of mosquito-borne disease and educate the public."

As part of the 6-Step New York State Zika Action Plan, 20,000 Zika protection kits are available to women who are either pregnant or trying to get pregnant in 10 regions throughout the state. The kits include educational materials, insect repellent, condoms and mosquito dunks to treat water and prevent mosquitoes from breeding.

Educating the community

On September 9, several NYSNA nurses from NY Presbyterian Hospital handed out educational flyers outside the 168th Street and Broadway subway station in the predominantly Dominican area. State Senate candidate Marisol Alcantara, a NYSNA staff member who along with the Mayor and Public Advocate is calling on Congress to fund a \$1.9 billion Zika virus emergency bill, joined the nurses.

As Ms. James said at her August press conference, "Unfortunately, diseases...they don't stop because of vacations.... They don't defer



Minerva Concepción, an RN at NY Presbyterian, took part in the September 9 Zika outreach.

to elected officials who take vacations. This is a healthcare crisis and obviously Congress really needs to get back into session and provide additional funding to protect the lives of Americans."

There are still many unknowns about Zika transmission and the long-term effects of Zika-induced birth defects. Until more information becomes available, healthcare workers are cautioned to take all possible measures to avoid occupational risks of infection through needle sticks and other blood exposing procedures.



Brooklyn Interregional

Brooklyn members gathered on September 7 for a combined Interregional/Candidate Forum, where nurses from Wyckoff, Brooklyn Hospital, Interfaith, Kingsbrook Jewish, Kings County, Maimonides, NY Methodist and Fresenius celebrated this year's victories and planned for the challenges ahead. Maimonides member and NYSNA Board Member Nancy Hagans, RN, emceed the candidates forum, where more than a dozen political candidates spoke and then answered member questions on safe staffing, corporate healthcare mergers impacting Brooklyn hospitals and other issues.



A celebration of union solidarity in NYC

NYSNA's very own Marisol Alcantara, the Democratic candidate for the 31st State Senate District, joined our union's First Vice President Marva Wade, RN, and other members and their families for New York City's September 18 African American Day Parade. NYSNA marched with Transit Workers Union Local 100 as the parade worked its way through the city's Harlem neighborhood.



NYSNA President Judy Sheridan-Gonzalez, RN, traveled to North Dakota's Standing Rock Reservation in late August to support Native American tribes in their struggle to protect ancestral lands (and our planet!) from gas pipeline development. She's pictured here (on right) with Phrank White Bull, a council member of the Standing Rock Sioux Nation, and NYSNA Rep and Seneca Nation member Eliza Carboni. On September 9, the US Department of Justice issued a temporary injunction halting construction on portions of the pipeline.

Solidarity with LIU-Brooklyn faculty

NYSNA's H+H Executive Council unanimously passed a resolution on September 7 in support of 300 faculty members at the Brooklyn campus of Long Island University who had been locked out and had their health benefits terminated at the beginning of the fall academic term—before they had even had a chance to review and vote on the administration's contract proposal. NYSNA members in Brooklyn hospitals held solidarity actions in support of the professors throughout the 12-day lockout.

The LIU Faculty Federation filed unfair labor practice charges against the university's administration and declared victory on September 14 when its members rejected LIU's concessionary contract proposal and won agreement to work under an extension of the old contract through next May. LIU now holds the ignoble distinction of being the first university to lock out its faculty—which is seen by some as a harbinger of the corporatization of higher education.



8 for 8!

Every NYSNA-endorsed priority candidate won their NYS primary on September 13. Our union's member-to-member #NYNursesVote initiative made a difference for Pamela Harris, Latrice Walker, Tremaine Wright, Ellen Jaffee, Monica Wallace, Jamaal T. Bailey, Amber Small and Marisol Alcantara. These and other primary wins by NYSNA-endorsed candidates around the state will strengthen the voice of nurses and caregivers as advocates for our patients and the health of our communities. To ensure their victories in the November 8 general election, make sure you register to vote, and to find out how you can volunteer on a particular campaign, contact your NYSNA Rep.

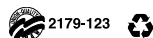
2016 Secor Scholarship Winners

Congratulations to the 2016 Secor Scholarship winners! This year's recipients are Josephine Azaru, a member and RN at Harlem Hospital, who is training to become a Family Nurse Practitioner, and Kerry Jones, the daughter of NYSNA RN Maureen Flanagan Jones, a clinical nurse specialist at Elmhurst Hospital.

The scholarship was established in 2007 through a bequest from long-time NYSNA member Jane Secor, PhD, RN. Every year, the fund awards two \$5,000 scholarships to further nursing education: one to a NYSNA member and the other to a family member of a NYSNA member. More information and application forms are available at www.nysna.org.

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2016 NYSNA Biennial

October 17 & 18

NYSNA nurses are committed to equal access to quality care for all New Yorkers. Join us for a day and a half of solidarity, education, advocacy, and fun — the NYSNA 2016 Biennial

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