

NURSING NOTES

Diabetes education on the web supports self care

London's St. Joseph's Health Care has a new Diabetes Education Centre (DEC) website. Its home page has six pastel-coloured squares. Click on the orange square for patient resources. Click on the dark purple square for tips on living with Type 2 diabetes. It's a modern, efficient way to ensure swift and simple access to information on the disease, says DEC NP Maureen Loft, noting it is meant to be helpful for patients, health providers and the public. "With proper education and follow-up support, diabetes can be self-managed very well, and the devastating complications of diabetes – such as blindness, kidney and nerve damage – can be avoided or minimized," she says. Plans have already been made to add interactive educational tools to the site, Loft adds, including videos and possibly a forum where people can share experiences. "We absolutely want to harness the power of the Internet...to help our patients help themselves."



The DEC team at St. Joseph's Health Care in London is proud of its new website (www.sjhc.london.on.ca/diabeteseducation). (L to R) Mary Biro, Lisa Jorgensen, Valerie Lammers and Maureen Loft.

Student loan forgiveness for nurses

Beginning next spring, nurses and NPs who work in communities of 50,000 people or less across the country may qualify to have part of their student loan waived. Simcoe-Grey MP Kellie Leitch, a physician who is also Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, said in August: this initiative "will not only alleviate the high cost of education and training for many Canadians in this field, but will also encourage more health-care professionals to work in the communities that need them most." Nurses and nurse practitioners who started working in selected communities on or after April 1, 2012 can receive up to \$4,000 per year (and a maximum of \$20,000 over five years) in Canada Student Loan forgiveness. To find out more, visit www.hrsdc.gc.ca.

Ottawa RN continues clean water crusade

Bea Osome continues her crusade to ensure more villages in western Kenya are provided with fresh, clean water. Thanks to her efforts to date, residents in her native country are able to access water from six hand-dug wells. The Ottawa-based long-term care nurse would like to complete four more. Osome arrived in Canada from Kenya in 1971. Since then, she has worked to provide the residents of her home village of Kiritu, and her husband's home village of Mumboha, with clean water. She says it typically costs her \$4,000 to build a well. Osome's last trip to Kenya was from January to March 2012. During that visit, she oversaw the construction of one well. She says she will be raising funds for the remaining four wells, and welcomes RNs to join her on any future trips. To contact Osome, or for information on how to donate, email beaosome@yahoo.com

Remembering Sonia Varaschin

Planning for a fundraiser in memory of Sonia Varaschin has begun, on the heels of the second anniversary of the Orangeville nurse's tragic death. Varaschin's body was found in Caledon in September 2010. Her killer has not been apprehended. The Registered Nurses' Foundation of Ontario (RNFOO) will host an event on Feb. 23 at St. Michael's College School in Toronto. The second annual fundraiser will feature Zumba fitness classes and dance shows. All proceeds will go to an RNFOO scholarship – in Varaschin's name – that supports nurses focusing on healthy work environments. The goal of the event, explains Varaschin's friend and former colleague, Marija Bojic, is to "keep the memory of Sonia alive, and support a culture of wellness, giving and remembrance among nurses."

In memoriam

RNAO EXTENDS ITS
DEEPEST CONDOLENCES TO
FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF:

Diana Dick,

a nursing leader who held many roles throughout her career. The former RNAO co-ordinator for professional issues (1983 to 1988), and champion of the *Canada Health Act*, passed away July 11.

Ogugua (Charles) Ikocha,

a Region 6 RNAO assembly representative and RN at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, tragically passed away in a drowning accident July 30.

Do you have nursing news to share? Email us at editor@RNAO.ca