

Members' Voices: April – September 30, 2010  
Windsor/Essex Chapter – Region 1

Submitted by: Jennifer Johnston – Chapter President

Policy/Political Activity

- Two local RNAO Executive members were invited to attend the annual UWindsor Nursing Program Advisory Committee meeting. This event provides a forum for an open dialogue between educational professionals and local community partners where nursing students hone their skills. The two RNAO Executives represented the interests of its membership and provided meaningful feedback on nursing student-related issues.
- A number of our members have drafted letters and email responses to action alerts put out by RNAO in order to voice our opinion and exercise our ability to engage in political action.
- Executive members scan the media to watch for pertinent healthcare-related matter and pass this information along to our members through word of mouth and chapter newsletters.

Media Communications

- For nursing week, our chapter organized a multi-page Windsor Star newspaper spread highlighting the importance of nurses and the nursing profession to our community. The colour pictures and skilfully written articles showcased the dedication local nurses display to their clients and the healthcare team.
- The Lois Fairley Award honours a nursing nominee who has shown dedication to the art of nursing. The award was presented at a well-attended ceremony at Hotel Dieu Grace Hospital, with local television and radio station coverage.

Member Services

- In the spring of 2010, we organized a chapter event entitled “Disaster relief in Haiti: Nursing experiences presentation”. This well-attended dinner event showcased the relief work that some of our chapter members were involved in overseas, and provided education and advice for other nurses thinking about joining disaster relief efforts.
- The inaugural edition of the Windsor/Essex Chapter newsletter was created and circulated to members. Positive feedback was received from readers.

Recruitment and Retention

- A student education event was organized at the University of Windsor, which included a complimentary pizza lunch, an interactive PowerPoint presentation on the benefits of RNAO student membership and chapter involvement, and a question & answer session. This event was very well attended and resulted in a number of new student members signing up.
- The executive are working closely with RNAO Head Office IT to develop a Chapter website. This important initiative will allow improved communication between RNAO chapter members as well as better engagement of the Executive committee with the general membership.

### Student Representation

-The Executive committee connected with the student representative at the University of Windsor to develop a partnership and strengthen the relationship between nursing leaders in our community and the nursing student population.

### Emerging Issues

-There have been a number of nursing jobs lost in our community, and many members are worried about the quality of nursing care being provided in institutions where these cuts have occurred. There are also concerns that these job losses will affect other healthcare areas on the community, impacting the quality and accessibility of healthcare. The trend seems to include lay-offs of middle management positions, elimination of charge nurse positions, amalgamation of units and general budget cuts. It has also been observed that many maternity leave and retirement positions are not being filled, as well as fulltime jobs being replaced with parttime positions that offer less benefits and job security.

-There has been much discussion as well regarding the government's initiative to terminate the Long Form Census. Members have written to local politicians and voiced their concerns on this important issue.