

MEMBERS' VOICES: October 2010 - January, 2011
Speaking out for Health: Speaking out for Nursing

SUBMITTED BY: Jennifer Johnston – President, Windsor/Essex Chapter – Region 1

Policy/Political Activity

-On January 17th, 2011 our Chapter is hosting a Community Action Event focusing on the experience of Homelessness. Cathy Crowe is our guest speaker, who will be engaging in a presentation on *Street Health* and leading a walkabout through a Windsor community to help raise awareness about homelessness and the need for more community services.

-Windsor/Essex Chapter helped host the *Preventing and Managing Violence in the Workplace Symposium* on December 6, 2010. The event was well attended with over 50 participants and included a candlelight vigil in honour of Lori Dupont and other victims of violence, as well as presentations by:

David McNeil, RNAO President,

Karen Bertrand, ONA VP,

Karen Ellis-Scharfenberg, RNAO Centre for Professional Nursing Excellence

Denise Koster, Koster Consulting & Associates

-Carolyn Davies, our recent chapter past president, ran for municipal elections in October 2010 and won a council seat. She intends to use her new political position to make a difference in her community as a leader and role model.

-For Remembrance Day, wreaths were placed by members at two local ceremonies on behalf of the Windsor/Essex Chapter of the RNAO.

-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 the December 6th event, our media release attracted a number of reporters that ran stories and sound clips throughout the day. CBC radio, CBC television, AM800 radio and Radio Canada interviewed representatives from RNAO and local Nursing Organizations.

Member Services

-The 2nd edition of the Windsor/Essex Chapter newsletter was drafted and circulated to members. Positive feedback was received from readers.

-The Chapter Website was launched www.windsorsexrnao.org and advertised to members. This site provides members' access to past Meeting Minutes, Newsletter Issues, and Pictures & PowerPoint Presentations from Past Events. It also provides members with a Calendar of upcoming events and their details. There has been overwhelming positive response to this initiative.

Recruitment and Retention

-On November 10th, we held our Annual General Membership meeting at a local Italian restaurant. We heavily advertised throughout the Windsor/Essex area, using posters and word-of-mouth. We had over 65 attendees, which included students, new grads, mid-career nurses and seasoned nurses from across the region.

-The executive are working closely with RNAO Head Office IT department to maintain and develop our online presence. This important initiative allows improved communication between RNAO chapter members as well as better engagement of the executive committee with the general membership.

Student Representation

-Jennifer Johnston (Chapter President) & Kelly Mertens (Chapter Membership Executive) were invited to lead a 1st year nursing class at the University of Windsor. They provided a powerpoint presentation on RNAO and the benefits of student membership, led a discussion about some of the issues that RNAO is concerned with, and signed-up 15 new student members using the Welcome Packages.

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

-Jennifer Johnston & Kelly Mertens co-organized a Luncheon with the Nursing Student Society of St. Clair College that engaged nursing students in the benefits of RNAO membership. Over 80 students attended the luncheon that was held in their skills lab onsite at the College.

Emerging Issues

-The number of patients awaiting Alternative Level of Care placements in the region is escalating.

Local hospitals are experiencing longer ER wait times, increased code 7's (redirecting ambulances) and more ER Holds. There is a great need to address the lack of ALC accommodations in our communities.