

ALUMNI MAGAZINE

THE LAMP



1897-2022

JOIN US OVER THE NEXT YEAR AS WE CELEBRATE
OUR ANNIVERSARY AND RAISE \$1.25 MILLION
FOR STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS



St. Elizabeth
SCHOOL OF NURSING

Division of Franciscan Health

FEATURED STORY



St. Elizabeth School of Nursing
approaches landmark anniversary
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THE NEXT GENERATION NCLEX



What future nursing school
graduates can expect
Pg. 6



LETTER *from the* DIRECTOR

To Readers of *The Lamp*,

During one of the most challenging seasons in our modern times, St. Elizabeth School of Nursing continued educating the next generation of nurses. Students learned remotely with professors who creatively taught virtual, hands-on lessons. Our newest alumni began their careers on the COVID-19 battlefield, while seasoned graduates gowned up and provided care like never before in their careers. Today, we find ourselves remaining vigilant, optimistic and proud of how the global health care family continues to come together to heal patients and comfort one another. Whether we face the most difficult days or heartwarming success stories, we are nurses—we leap hurdles together.

Inside this issue of *The Lamp*, you will find pieces that speak to how we, as health care workers and educators, can help make a difference. “Running on Empty: Fighting compassion fatigue and empathy burnout” discusses genuine struggles nurses face during their careers. Giving the best of yourself to others means caring for your mind and soul first. An ask of RNs that is not easy—I know—yet critical to maintaining longevity to the calling we love.

Also of important note, the NCLEX is changing in format. “The Next Generation NCLEX: What future nursing school graduates can expect” provides a snapshot of how St. Elizabeth is preparing internally for this critical shift in the exam. This move is positive for patients, future employers and the students we are entrusted to empower and educate.

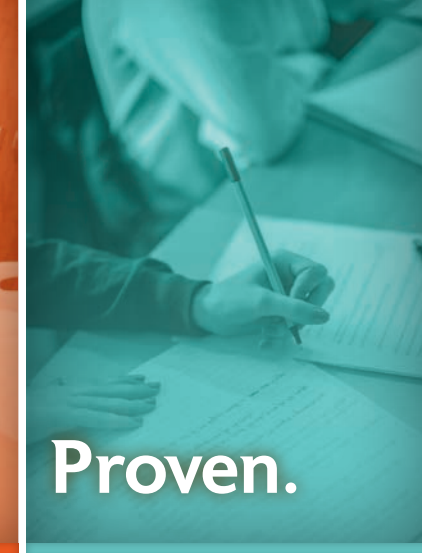
We have a big birthday approaching in 2022: 125 years as a leader in educating nurses is something to celebrate. Look for details inside and watch for more information soon. I look forward to celebrating this milestone with you as we trek full-steam ahead into the decades to come at St. Elizabeth School of Nursing.

Sincerely,

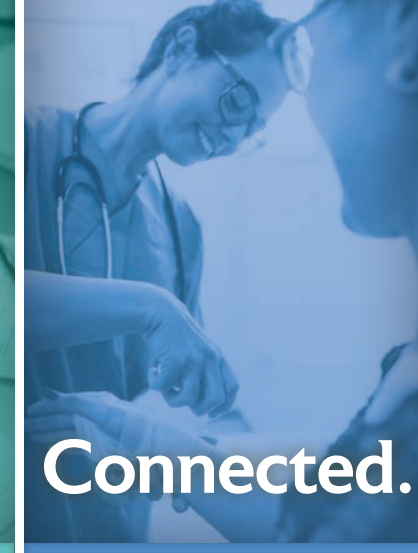
Michelle L. Gerrety, EdD, MSN, RN
St. Elizabeth School of Nursing Director



Focused.



Proven.



Connected.

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*In memoriam of our alumni who walked in Christ's healing footsteps.
Well done, good and faithful servants.*

Debra Johnson
Passed May 2020
2007 Graduate

Genevieve Graham
Passed May 2020
1950 Graduate

Janet Wright
Passed May 2020
1954 Graduate

Mary Catherine Hurst
Passed May 2020
1950 Graduate

Mary Joan "JoAnn" Kolb-Farrell
Passed May 2020
1948 Graduate

Margaret Green
Passed June 2020
1995 Graduate

Geraldine Niemantsverdriet
Passed December 2020
1947 Graduate

Carolyn Morgan
Passed January 2021
1947 Graduate

Mary Catron
Passed June 2021
1946 Graduate

Karen Dickey
Passed July 2021
1972 Graduate

St. Elizabeth
SCHOOL OF NURSING
Division of Franciscan Health

Brought to you by:

St. Elizabeth School of Nursing is where ordinary people become extraordinary nurses. For 125 years, we have focused on just one thing—nursing. Our holistic curriculum offers hands-on learning experiences. Small classes foster personal connections. Graduates leave primed for their aspired career—the career that, perhaps, chose them.

Michelle Gerrety
St. Elizabeth School of Nursing Director

Lisa Decker
Vice President of Marketing and Communications,
Franciscan Health

Jennifer Eberly
Director of Development, Franciscan Health Foundation



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**Join the Alumni Advisory
Board of Directors today!**


Interested in serving on our Alumni Advisory Board of Directors?
Contact **Jennifer Eberly** at 765-423-6812 for more information.
The Advisory Board currently meets 3-4 times per year.


CONGRATULATIONS, GRADS!


DECEMBER 2020


- 


Elizabeth Betourne
- 


Ruby Kay
- 


Maria Biddle
- 


Madison Kihlstrand
- 


Raegan Bowling
- 


Danielle McGirt
- 


Kelsey Chapman
- 

Dani'el McKillip
- 

Courtney Cunningham
- 


Audrey Mills
- 


Taylor Davis-Cannon
- 


Carissa Nagel
- 


Ariel Gerrard


MAY 2021


- 


Dayana Brizuela
- 


Kennedy Richard
- 


Autumn Brothers
- 


Morgan Scott
- 

Kenzie Brown
- 

Breanna Wethington
- 

Chelsea Burnett
- 


Audrey Campbell
- 

Alexa Lindquist
- 


Channing Lough


JULY 2021

- 

Debbie Anderson
- 


Deidra Howe
- 

Laura Stanfield
- 

Ashley Beddow
- 


Rosalba Montes
- 


Bryce Williams
- 


Ashley Collins
- 


Carrie Moore
- 


Cole Worley
- 


Kelsey Gibson
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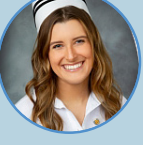
Shay Oakley
- 

Bridget Hartje
- 

Courtney Roberts
- 

Britney Hoebel
- 

Daniel Scott
- 

Makayla Howard
- 

Britney Shipman

THE NEXT GENERATION NCLEX

WHAT FUTURE NURSING SCHOOL GRADUATES CAN EXPECT

Change is good and—in the world of health care—you can count on it.

The National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) is rolling out the Next Generation NCLEX (NGN) exam. The new format will include question types framed to better measure novice nurses' clinical judgment. These changes for recent graduates to secure licensure allow them to prove their readiness to provide only the best in patient care.

Although this shift in licensure feels both thrilling and stressful to those impacted, the NGN will critically evaluate the problem-solving proficiency graduates gained. Today's frontline health care challenges require nurses to have a quiver filled with clinical knowledge and hands-on experience when entering the workforce. The confidence to assess and analyze

cases depends upon their familiarity and comfort levels to provide treatment. The new format ensures nurses are competently entering the field trained for success.

The reasoning behind the NCLEX changes stems from NCSBN research concerning new RNs. Their findings showed that clinical judgment is linked to forty-six percent of all entry-level nurse tasks. Yet, more recent studies reported that novice nurses lack crucial clinical decision-making abilities. Only one-fifth of employers claim satisfaction with new nurses' decision-making skills, and medical errors are the third leading cause of death in the United States. These findings and statistics created the need for an evolved assessment that systematically walks nursing school graduates through what genuine patient care resembles.

TEST DEVELOPMENT DETAILS

According to the Assessment Technologies Institute Educator Blog, the team working on the new iteration of the NCLEX is currently utilizing **eight evidence-based steps** to develop the systematic evaluation:

- 1 Develop the Clinical Judgment Measurement Model, which includes five areas of layered content that work together to simulate the process of clinical judgment and decision making.
- 2 Create a system of multi-response questions with differentiated ways to score answers, including a deduction of points for lack of proving clinical judgment.
- 3 A team of educators, nurses and students will review the test in its initial stages to offer feedback concerning usability and representation of patient scenarios nurses face.
- 4 Create the technology needed to support the new exam structure.
- 5 In the current NCLEX form, the NCSBN has added a "Special Research Section" for test-takers to voluntarily answer data-collection questions that will help inform the test construction team with no impact on students' scores.
- 6 The research measurement arm consists of the ongoing intake and analysis of data provided by NCLEX Special Research Section results by gaining knowledge from answers received.
- 7 Alpha/Beta tests to evaluate and compare test questions for accuracy.
- 8 The Next Generation NCLEX—NGN—launches.

THE FORMAT

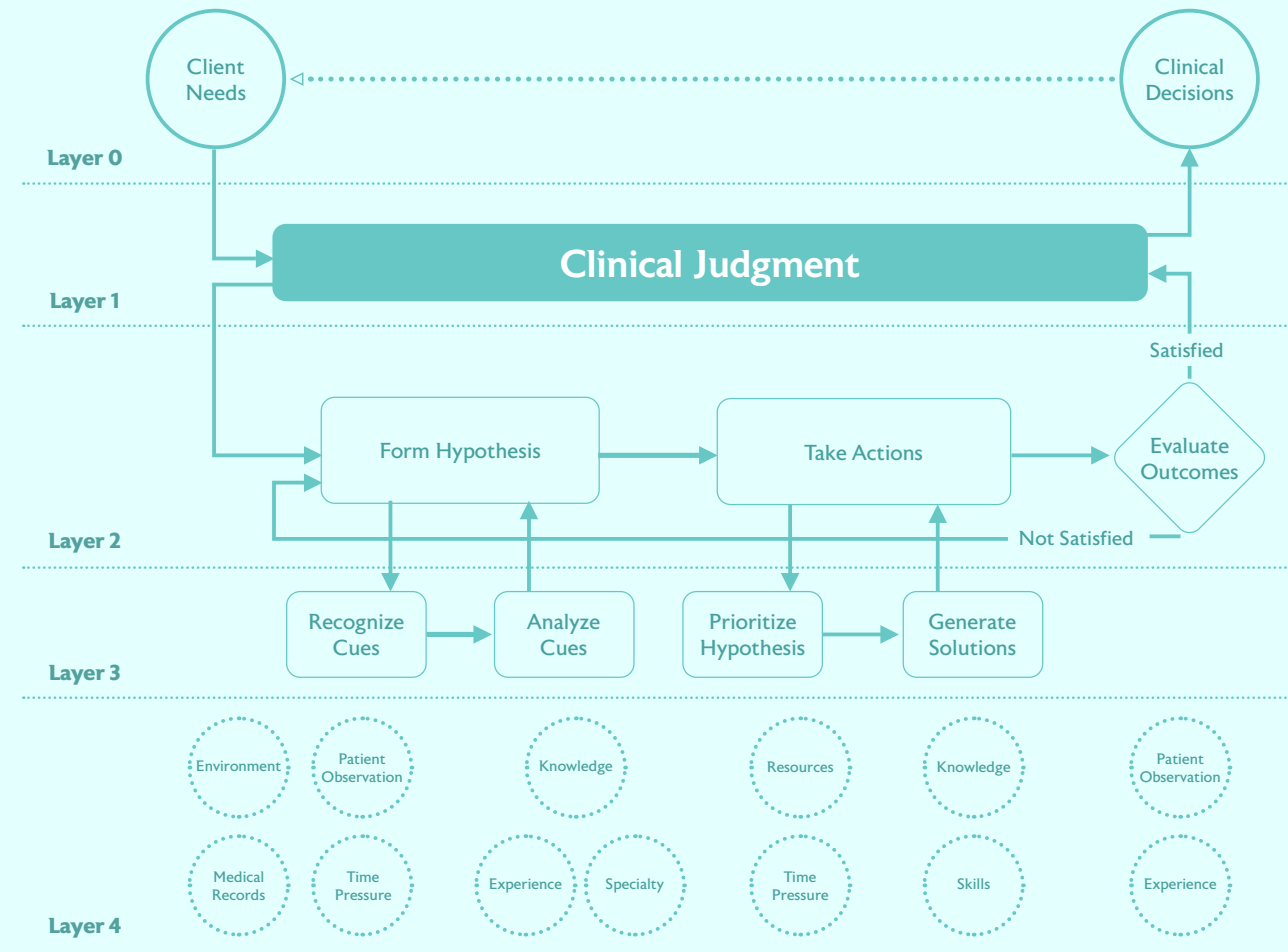
The NGN configuration will be the first of its kind in the exam's history. The question types will be structured to work together, presenting an entire picture of nursing fluency, triage and treatment. Candidates will demonstrate the ability to observe and assess patients, identify and prioritize concerns, then generate the best possible patient-care solutions.

NGN question-types will include:

- **Extended drag and drop** - Candidates pair items that pertain to patient scenarios and next steps

- **Cloze (dropdown)** - A narrative case study is presented, then candidates are asked to choose up to six responses that represent proper care
- **Enhanced hot spot** - A patient scenario and data are presented with specific sections highlighted to answer questions
- **Matrix** - Judgments concerning a scenario and patient data are selected by checking appropriate boxes that align with proper treatment

CLINICAL JUDGMENT MEASUREMENT MODEL



THE PREPARATION

St. Elizabeth School of Nursing has proudly led the higher education pack in holistic, hands-on classroom learning. This precedent has enabled generations of graduates to enter hospital hallways, physician offices and research settings ready to serve. To prepare for the NGN changes ahead, the Franciscan Health Foundation Circle of 1875 donated new technology—Body Interact—that teaches, trains and assesses student work via virtual patients to enhance clinical reasoning. This enhances experiential learning by featuring patients from infant to senior with varied case difficulty levels while providing instant feedback within a wide range of medical specialties.

Internally, St. Elizabeth School of Nursing educators are familiarizing themselves with the new exam format and asking themselves how to best implement forecasted changes throughout their curriculum. Three assistant professors have been tasked with ensuring the school's program meets the new testing format: Department Chair of Adult Practice Andrea Blissitt, PhD, RN, CNE; Kathleen Murtaugh, MSN, RN, CNA and Lyndsey Brooks, MSN, RN-BC.



“THIS SOFTWARE ENHANCES THE MEDICAL MANIKIN INTERACTIVE SCENARIOS BY ADDING A LAYER OF REALISM THAT IS EASILY ADAPTABLE INTO OUR CURRICULUM—IT COMPLEMENTS WHAT WE ALREADY DO SO WELL.”

“Organizing and prioritizing patient data can be overwhelming for new nurses,” Blissitt shares. “Today’s patients can have comorbidity combinations which lead to chronic illnesses and complex health issues. New nurses need to prioritize care for sick patients safely by sorting through critical information quickly, identifying the problem, then providing care.” Blissitt views the Body Interact virtual assessments pairing well with the school’s state-of-the-art SIM Lab. “This software enhances the medical manikin interactive scenarios by adding a layer of realism that is easily adaptable into our curriculum—it complements what we already do so well.”

St. Elizabeth School of Nursing students are not passive learners. It’s one of the many traits that has drawn prospective enrollees for decades and kept alumni singing the school’s praises. “St. Elizabeth does an amazing job of encompassing every aspect of solving real-life patient scenarios,” Murtaugh observes. For staff integrating NGN-based learning modules into their courses, she is a support resource for

integrating and updating course subjects. “Our staff is attending workshops to learn how to incorporate Next Gen NCLEX-style questions into exams at all levels of coursework to introduce students to the format early on,” she notes. There’s a broader reason Murtaugh finds value in the update and accountability for nursing schools: “There are a variety of programs out there educating nurses, and not all students are as prepared as St. Elizabeth’s. This NCLEX update changes that across the board.”

From vital signs to lab work, properly sorting through patient medical information dictates treatment decisions. Running through client data in a determined, thoughtful manner is nothing new in St. Elizabeth’s classrooms and clinicals. “Our instructors—our program—is holistic-based,” Brooks says. “We provide our students with a large number of clinical hours and varied experiences. The NGN will allow our graduates to showcase what they know so well because it’s fashioned in the manner students have learned to become nurses at St. Elizabeth.” ■

VIRTUAL ALUMNI EVENT

NOVEMBER 11 2021

SOCIAL TIME MEETING BEGINS
3:30 PM | 4:00 PM
Eastern Standard Time

Join us online!

Due to COVID-19, we have decided to hold our annual alumni event virtually. We proudly welcome graduates to join us for an event to remember, including recognition of our newest Outstanding Alumni winner as well as veteran alumni and the graduating classes of 1961, 1971, 1996, 2011 and 2016.

Registration is required. Once you are registered, you will receive a link to log into the meeting.

Register here: StESoN.org/Alumni2021

For more information, call Jennifer Eberly at 765-423-6812 or email jennifer.eberly@franciscanalliance.org.

And the award goes to...

The Outstanding Alumni Award is now open for nomination submissions. This award is presented annually to an individual who exemplifies the motto engraved on the school pin, "VITA ALIIS VOTA—Life Devoted to Others" in their personal and professional lives. A nominee must:

- Be a graduate of the St. Elizabeth School of Nursing
- Adhere to the ministry of Christ
- Demonstrate holistic caring in their approach with patients
- Be active in their community

To nominate someone, please visit our website at StESoN.org/Nominate-Outstanding-Alumni.

Capping Ceremony

The tradition continues

The annual capping ceremony is held each fall. Female students are presented with caps and male students, pins. This long-held tradition celebrates the progress students have made in their studies.

Although RNs rarely wear nursing caps in today's practice, it remains one of the most recognized nursing symbols through the decades. The cap's original purpose was to keep a nurse's hair neatly in place while presenting a modest appearance while caring for patients.

"The ceremony is a wonderful tradition our students look forward to every year," says Dr. Michelle Gerrety, Director of St. Elizabeth School of Nursing. "Each step of

the process toward becoming a nurse is important. Being capped or pinned is an honor and tradition we proudly continue as part of our St. Elizabeth nursing program."

Due to restrictions during COVID-19, the tradition continued, but ceremonies were held intimately, with each student receiving their award individually.



Looking for a job?

Franciscan Health is hiring!

Join us and experience a **faith-based, stable environment** with **excellent benefits** and **opportunities for growth**.

Please visit
Jobs.FranciscanHealth.org
to explore available opportunities





ST. ELIZABETH SCHOOL OF NURSING APPROACHES LANDMARK ANNIVERSARY

In 2022, St. Elizabeth School of Nursing will hit a milestone to remember—marking 125 years of health care impact by educating nurses who for generations have lent their healing touch to others. A quasiquicentennial celebration is made possible by students, alumni, a faithfully supportive community and the six Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration who arrived with a mission to heal the sick.

1897–2022 JOIN US OVER THE NEXT YEAR AS WE CELEBRATE
OUR ANNIVERSARY AND RAISE \$1.25 MILLION
FOR STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS



1897 1900 1910 1920 1930 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000 2010 2020 2022

INSPIRED BEGINNINGS

In 1897, the sisters from St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration began their nursing education ministry in Lafayette. In 1922, the building that initially housed St. Elizabeth School of Nursing opened its doors on Tippecanoe Street. Until 1949, it was a busy abode, additionally housing the University of St. Francis and St. Francis Catholic High School for Girls. St. Elizabeth's main focus was exclusively educating the Sisters of St. Francis until the demand for well-educated nurses led to the admission of laypersons in 1937. This shift in protocol opened the doors to those outside the ministry who heard the calling to become a nurse.

Until the late 1980s, students lived on the third and fourth floors, fostering close-knit relationships that transcended classrooms and clinicals. Mary Vandervolgen-Goldman, a 1963 alumnae, fondly remembers what the immersive experience was like. "When one of us was in trouble, we were all in trouble. When one of us was happy, we were all happy. We cared for each other."



*When one of us was in trouble,
we were all in trouble. When
one of us was happy, we were all
happy. We cared for each other.*



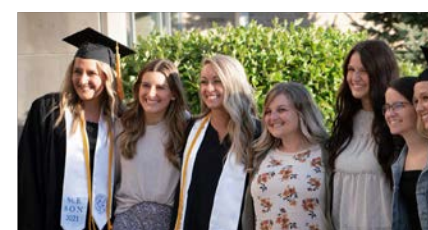
Although it was demolished in 2019, the red stone building that once housed students remains a heartfelt, historical moment in time for many. The tales of the institution's meaning to decades of faculty, countless students and the patients who received care from St. Elizabeth-educated RNs continues.



TODAY

Since 2017, St. Elizabeth School of Nursing has sat within the Franciscan Health Education Center on Franciscan Health Lafayette's central campus. The grounds offer students and faculty an abundance of opportunities through intentionally designed spaces and enhanced technology while staying on mission to keep Christ's healing ministry at the center of everything they do.

Intimate class sizes foster personal connections. Critical thinking and active learning scenarios are honed within the state-of-the-art SIM Lab that provides authentic learning experiences in



a supportive environment. From mock patient rooms and nurses' stations to high-fidelity medical manikins and clinical experiences, future graduates prepare to deliver patient care on day one of their careers. This is all part of the curriculum that we hear time and again benefits graduates. A 2020 alumnae, Madyson Davenport, credits St. Elizabeth for her medical know-how and on-the-job assurance as a new nurse. "St. Elizabeth made students feel prepared and confident in our nursing skills. When I entered the hospital on my first day, I felt less nervous and more self-assured than I would have been without my education."

FUTURE-FOCUSED

Focused, quality health care is essential now more than ever. Educating the next generation of nurses to provide excellent patient care leaves an indelible mark beyond St. Elizabeth's doors. Graduates touch the lives of people across the nation, meaning a continual investment in new technology and contemporary ways to learn while living up to their mission helps St. Elizabeth meet the needs of tomorrow's patients. Rather than rest on their laurels and reputation, the school stays ahead of what's around the corner. Generous alumni, friends of the school and the Greater Lafayette community have continued to make that happen. Whether reflecting on the past, operating in the present or focusing on the future, St. Elizabeth School of Nursing continues to provide immersive education to all who enter their doors. ■

WANT MORE HISTORY?

Check out our feature story
"If These Walls Could Talk"
in Issue 1 of *The Lamp*.



SCAN QR CODE TO VIEW ISSUE

125

1897-2022

YEARS OF IMPACT

Educating nurses is all we do, and we could not do it without you.

The commitment and generosity of our donors allows us to continue training the next generation of nurses by awarding student scholarships, and we want you to be part of it!

Let's champion St. Elizabeth School of Nursing's next 125 years together by raising \$1.25 million for student scholarships.



I was very honored to be the first recipient of this scholarship. I was thankful knowing that there was no longer a financial burden on me.

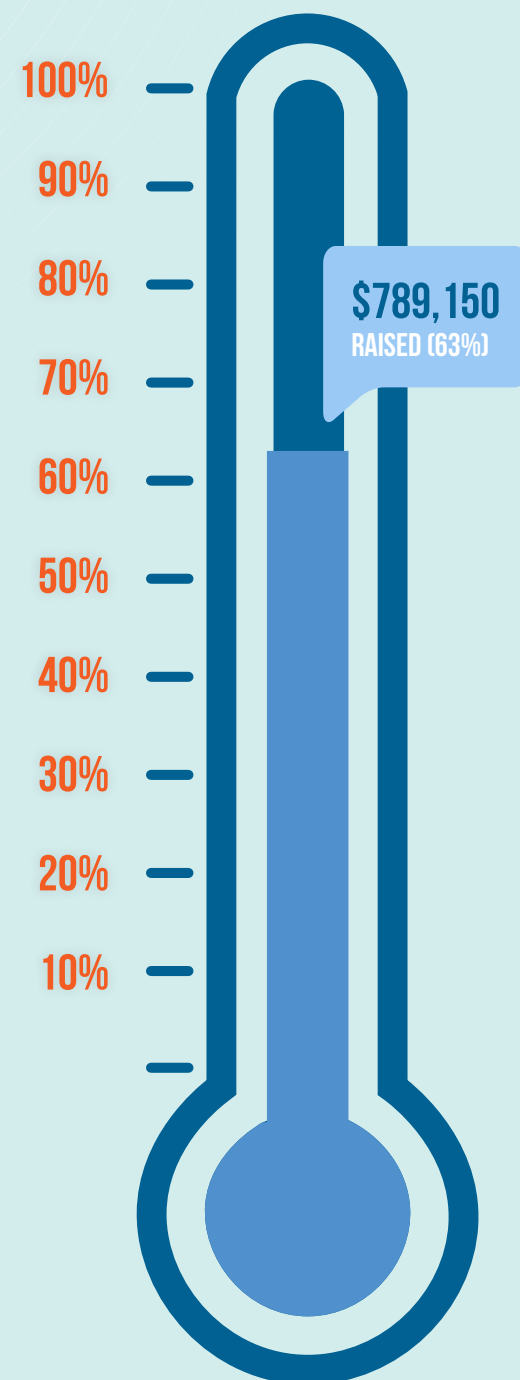
Kenzie Brown | May 2021 Graduate
First recipient of the Loeb Scholarship

These scholarships allow people to focus on what they need to focus on and allow them to not worry about paying the bills.

Nick Ahlbrand | Second-level student
Recipient of Terry Wilson and Betty Jean Lowry scholarship



HELP US RAISE \$1.25 MILLION



HOW YOU CAN GIVE

CALL US

For a complete list of giving opportunities, establishing a scholarship or making a planned gift, contact us today.

765-423-6812

GIVE ONLINE

To donate online in support of our general scholarship fund, visit StESoN.org/Donate, or scan this QR code.



SEND BY MAIL

To make a gift via check, cash or credit card, please address to the following location:

St. Elizabeth School of Nursing
ATTN: Development Office / Jennifer Eberly
1501 Hartford Street, Lafayette, IN 47904

All gifts made to St. Elizabeth School of Nursing allow us to help prepare nurses to continue Christ's healing ministry and make a lasting impact in the education and lives of our students. Your generosity will help turn ordinary people into extraordinary nurses for generations to come. To learn more, visit StESoN.org/Donate.





..... SCHOLARSHIP/ AWARD OPPORTUNITIES

To help us reach our goal, you can support St. Elizabeth School of Nursing by contributing directly to our general scholarship fund, one of our many endowed scholarships or start your own.

- Alexandra Laine Wickes Nursing Scholarship
- Betty Jean Lowery Endowed Nursing Scholarship
- Betty J. McCay Schober Memorial Scholarship
- Brenda E. Murray Memorial Scholarship Fund
- The Candy Genda Nursing Scholarship
- Franciscan Health Auxiliary Lafayette Scholarship
- Gertrude Loeb Rosen Nursing Scholarship
- Holderly Nursing Scholarship
- Hunter Ryan Memorial Scholarship
- The Jacqueline Bahler BSN, RN Endowed Scholarship
- James and JoAnn Vorst Nursing Scholarship
- The Janet Thompson Memorial Scholarship
- Juanita Burnett Marchand Endowed Memorial Scholarship
- Mabel M. Knight Nursing Scholarship
- The Marcia Lynn Wykoff Nursing Scholarship
- Nola J. Gentry Nursing Scholarship
- Captain Sally Watlington, USN (Ret.) Nursing Scholarship
- Simek Nursing Scholarship
- St. Clare Medical Center Auxiliary Nursing Scholarship
- Stuart Nursing Scholarship
- Susan Oesterling Whitaker Nursing Scholarship
- William and Martha Fancher Nursing Scholarship
- Wilson Family Nursing Scholarship

FEATURED SCHOLARSHIP

Juanita Burnett Marchand Endowed Memorial Scholarship

Juanita Burnett Marchand was born in 1927 in Indianapolis, Indiana, and from a very young age, she knew that taking care of others would be at the root of her career. In December of 1941, while sitting in a freshman study hall, Juanita very much remembered the loud speaker at her school crackling with the message: “This is your President.” The President of the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, was announcing that the United States was at war. In the stunned stillness of the room, a black and white picture came into Juanita’s head of a young dark-haired woman dressed in white, weaving her way through men on a battlefield. She knew at that moment her desire was to become a nurse. In the late summer of 1945, she began a three-year nursing program. She held various nursing positions in her lifetime: on medical and surgical floors, in doctor’s offices, in nurseries and in nursing homes.

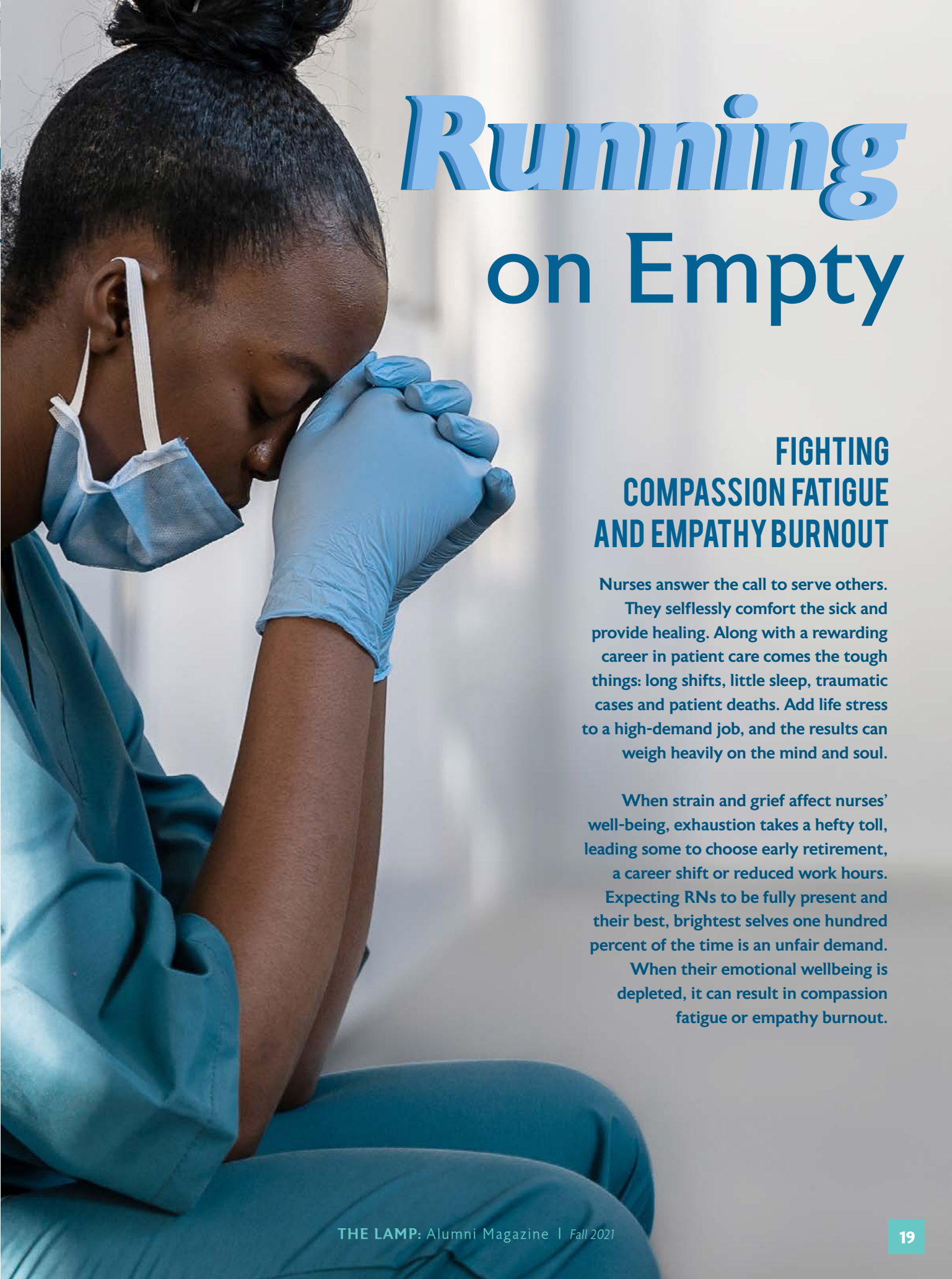
To those who receive this scholarship: “I hope you may find satisfaction—even soul satisfaction—in this Healing Modality—always remembering that those we are, and those we serve, are more than bodies. My very best to you, I am thankful I could help with your education. Hang in there, I’m pulling for you,” -Juanita Burnett Marchand, 2015

Running on Empty

FIGHTING COMPASSION FATIGUE AND EMPATHY BURNOUT

Nurses answer the call to serve others. They selflessly comfort the sick and provide healing. Along with a rewarding career in patient care comes the tough things: long shifts, little sleep, traumatic cases and patient deaths. Add life stress to a high-demand job, and the results can weigh heavily on the mind and soul.

When strain and grief affect nurses’ well-being, exhaustion takes a hefty toll, leading some to choose early retirement, a career shift or reduced work hours. Expecting RNs to be fully present and their best, brightest selves one hundred percent of the time is an unfair demand. When their emotional wellbeing is depleted, it can result in compassion fatigue or empathy burnout.





COMPASSION FATIGUE
AND EMPATHY BURNOUT
RESULT FROM OVERWHELMING
CAREGIVING DEMANDS THAT BECOME
TOO MUCH TO MANAGE

WHAT ARE COMPASSION FATIGUE
AND EMPATHY BURNOUT?

Compassion fatigue and empathy burnout result from overwhelming caregiving demands that become too much to manage.

Compassion means showing kindness and a willingness to help others during stressful events, conditions or situations and caring enough to want to lend a hand. Empathy is a little different; it's the ability to understand what someone is feeling and embody their distress. Empathy is a communal sympathy, where one's imagination of another's pain allows them to feel the ache to their core. It is normal for chronic stress to make feeling compassion and empathy difficult. While some health care workers can be more prone to breaking points than others, even the most experienced and stoic providers can identify with periods of feeling chronic worry or apathy. In a line of work where physical hazards are constantly addressed, like correctly moving patients or disposal of sharp objects, it's also essential to address the emotional threats to nurses.

THE SYMPTOMS

Up to forty percent of intensive care workers report periods of battling compassion fatigue. The prevalence is much higher in those who repeatedly witness and care for trauma patients. Nurse and administrator awareness of the propensity for exhaustion and burnout is half the battle. Knowing the signs to look out for can help signal issues before they become problems.

Here are some of the warning signs:

- Quick to anger
- Stifled emotions
- Isolating from others
- Excessive workplace complaining
- Poor self-care
- Chronic fatigue or physical ailments
- Lack of concentration
- Chronic illness
- Substance misuse
- Becoming compulsive or turning to addictive behaviors for comfort

THE SOLUTIONS

Being mindful of symptoms allows nurses to be proactive in addressing their needs while allowing coworkers to be conscious of one another. The good news is there are ways to combat and soothe both fatigue and burnout.

ACCEPTANCE

Giving yourself grace in the moment by realizing this is where you currently are does not mean you will always feel this way. Acknowledging stressors is the first step towards solving them.

BE KIND TO YOURSELF

A little self-care goes a long way. Schedule it into even the busiest of days to rejuvenate your caregiving soul.

ROUTINES AND RITUALS

Sometimes, the drive home isn't enough to transition from work to home adequately. Many rely on other means to relax and wash away the day's worries. From audio books to kickboxing classes, find an activity that rejuvenates you and commit to it.

UTILIZE PERSONAL TIME OFF

You may be banking vacation days for something special, yet sometimes that "something special" most deserving of your focus is you.

YOU ARE YOUR BEST ADVOCATE

Coping during this time can mean setting boundaries and saying "no" to invitations, extra tasks and perhaps politely removing yourself from draining commitments, and that's okay.

ASK FOR HELP

As well-meaning as friends and family are, coping and recovering sometimes means finding someone to talk with who understands what you are experiencing and can help you navigate it. From coworkers to mental health experts, there are trusted sources ready to listen. ■

FAMILY PRACTICE

LEGACY SPOTLIGHT: EMILY ENGLER

When Emily Engler sat in her first class this fall as an incoming, first year student at St. Elizabeth School of Nursing, she had more than family moral support going for her. Upon graduation, Emily will join the generations of family RNs that came before her, a legacy that began with her grandmother and mother whose influence made an impact.

Lois Thoennes (1930-2018), Emily's grandmother, was a Tippecanoe County medical innovator. She developed emergency medicine protocols and worked with Dr. Wayne Knochel to launch ambulance services in Greater Lafayette. Lois

retired after thirty-eight years as a nurse with St. Elizabeth Hospital and was the Emergency Outpatient Department Director for twenty years. Emily's mother, Denise Engler, works in emergency medicine at Franciscan Health like her mother before her. The impact of these women had a tandem influence on Emily growing up. "My mom followed in her mother's footsteps, then my sister and now me. Their impact upon my life made becoming a nurse a reality."

A Lafayette native, Emily explored other careers after graduating from Jefferson High School, yet the call to be a nurse truly came while she recovered from surgery. "I appreciated the quality of care given to me by the medical staff. It impacted me, and I knew it was time to pursue what I was meant to be," Emily shares. Upon graduation, her desire is to work in Labor and Delivery or the NICU. Her passion for this area stems from spending time visiting a friend's twins who were born prematurely. "The experience opened my eyes and also helped me decide to follow my passion to care for others."

When considering schools, St. Elizabeth—part of the Franciscan Health family—was an immediate, natural fit for Emily. "So many of my peers attended St. Elizabeth along with my grandmother: one of my greatest role models. The school's reputation is well-known in the health care field. Why go anywhere else?"

Our sentiments exactly, Emily, and a warm welcome to you and to all of our new enrollees at St. Elizabeth School of Nursing!



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

KRISTEN LOUCK

Kristen Louck, a 2018 St. Elizabeth School of Nursing alumnae, is a big believer in striving for excellence, performing community service and advocating for others. A former NICU RN in Lafayette, Kristen is currently studying for her master's in nursing administration and is the mother of two teenagers. Get to know Kristen, her passion for healthy communities and what led her to answer the call to become a nurse.



Why did you become a nurse?

I wanted to help people who didn't have the capacity to help themselves. My grandfather was a paraplegic. Helping to care for him is where my passion for health care stems from. I learned compassion and empathy through him, and I now pass that onto my patients.

Why did you choose St. Elizabeth School of Nursing?

St. Elizabeth's location, reputation and the hands-on experience they provide led to my decision to enroll. Nursing Admissions Officer and Department Chair Anita Reed was instrumental in my decision to go back to school. When I was an LPN, we performed sports and back-to-school physicals for a local family practitioner. During our lengthy conversations, she encouraged me to pursue my bachelor's degree, and I'm forever grateful.

What advice would you give prospective St. Elizabeth students?

Nursing is a career that centers on caring for others and serving your community. Do a deep dive to not only make sure it's the right field for you but that your desire to help others is why you feel called to health care. After graduation, continue to expand your knowledge and soak up all the information you can to always provide the best in patient care.

How did St. Elizabeth School of Nursing prepare you for your career?

Our professors educated us to always advocate for ourselves and our patients by being a leader. They nurtured and polished us to walk into the world ready to be RNs. It's an institution that only wants the best for their students. That sentiment and those authentic relationships with St. Elizabeth teachers and staff go into the working world with you.

If you weren't a nurse, what would you be?

I would love to study forensics and be a crime scene investigator. I'm fascinated by solving mysteries; the science and puzzle of it all intrigues me.

What do you like most about your current job?

I love caring for the residents of Jasper County. Although our current focus is county-wide COVID vaccinations, our team takes great pride in educating the community about all vaccinations, health care and how to make informed medical decisions. Knowledge is power.

How do you see your nursing practice through the lens of the school's mission of preparing nurses to continue Christ's healing ministry?

The Sisters of Franciscan Health instill within all who grace their doors as students and health care providers that the work is always about giving. Regardless of who you are, what your checking account balance is or what is occurring in your life, I will always provide you with the best care.



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