Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education Visits Hopkins

The Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing completed the accreditation process with the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) February 13-15. CCNE visitors examined the quality and integrity of the baccalaureate and master’s nursing programs at Johns Hopkins.

“The CCNE visit gives the school the opportunity to showcase our excellent programs, students, faculty and staff,” said Anne E. Belcher, PhD, RN, AOCN, FAAN, Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. “Holding accreditation from CCNE is important for us in recruiting future students, faculty, and staff.”

Martha N. Hill, Dean and Professor; Kristina M. Johnson, Johns Hopkins University provost and vice president for academic affairs; Deborah Dang, director of nursing practice, education, and research for Johns Hopkins Hospital; and Debra Case, coordinator of nursing programs for Johns Hopkins Hospital, were among the numerous JHU and JHUSON representatives who met with the visitors.

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Worldwide, Future Nurses Meet on the Web

Fifty-one newly accepted students from across the country met in cyberspace this January to chat with faculty, admissions staff, and financial aid officers from the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing. According to Mary O’Rourke (front), Director of Admissions and Student Services, “These online gatherings give students opportunities to meet and they become friends before coming to Baltimore!”
Hopkins Researchers Make Great Discoveries

Researchers at Johns Hopkins have made some of the world’s greatest discoveries. From developing new medicines, to solving world health issues, to determining how people communicate, Hopkins leads the way in discovering how to make life better. The Johns Hopkins Federal Credit Union is also dedicated to improving lives with a full range of financial services, including:

- Free Checking with Monthly Dividends
- Free Online Banking and Bill Payment*
- Great Rates on Savings, Loans and More
- Access to More than 26,000 ATMs Nationwide

Discover how JHFCU has helped more than 35,000 Hopkins employees improve their financial health today at www.jhfcu.org.

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*JHFCU’s online bill payment is free with direct deposit when used to pay at least one bill per month.
A New Look for Johns Hopkins Nursing

The Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing has a new look. “The New Face of Nursing: People, Places, Possibilities”—clean, bright, smart, and colorful—is reflected in the school’s website and viewbook and provides a glimpse into the future of the profession. Prospective students (and prospective faculty, staff, and donors) will enjoy the large photographs in the new viewbook, punctuated with images and quotes from our exceptional people, an overview of important places around the school and Baltimore community, and an exploration of the possibilities that await the Hopkins nurse.

The school’s newly redesigned website draws in and engages visitors with user-centered design, navigation, and visual balance. The content illustrates the depth and breadth of the Hopkins nursing academic community and showcases the academic programs and research activities. Visit the new site at www.son.jhmi.edu.

According to Dean Martha N. Hill, PhD, RN, FAAN, “Our materials now reflect what we tell the world: that the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing is a place where exceptional people discover possibilities that forever change their lives and the world.”

Dean Hill Announces Initiative to Enhance Teaching Excellence

In keeping with the spirit of innovation that has established the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing as a national leader in nursing education, Dean Martha N. Hill, PhD, RN, FAAN recently announced a new strategic initiative for the school: “Enhancing Teaching Excellence.” The initiative is designed to address the need for an educational model that will prepare students for the rapidly changing world of nursing.

According to Hill, the announcement comes in response to the enthusiasm that students have expressed for “more flexible and exciting options,” both inside and outside of the classroom. “They want distance-learning, inter-professional teaching, simulation, and stimulation,” she says.

Anne Belcher, PhD, RN, FAAN, ANEF will transition from her current role as Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to become the inaugural Director of the Office of Teaching Excellence. Belcher will begin by sitting down with student focus groups to determine what they are enthusiastic about and what works in the classroom. “We’re not planning on making any changes before we consult with students,” says Belcher. A task force will also be created to make recommendations on how teaching excellence can best be promoted throughout the program.

According to Dr. Belcher, “the fact that the Dean is committing resources and that the faculty and students are committing their time and expertise to this venture will ensure that the ‘Enhancing Teaching Excellence’ initiative will have an immediately positive impact. This is an exciting time for the School of Nursing.” —RM
New Fellowship Established in Psychiatric Nursing

The Morton K. and Jane Blaustein Foundation has endowed a 2-year postdoctoral fellowship at the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing (JHUSON). The Blaustein Fellowship provides funding for promising scholars to conduct research that advances the mental health and wellbeing of individuals and families in hospital or community settings.

Deborah Gross, DNSc, RN, FAAN, the JHUSON Leonard and Helen R. Stulman Endowed Chair in Mental Health and Psychiatric Nursing, will provide mentorship for the Blaustein Fellow. “This endowment from the Blaustein Foundation will go a long way toward training the next generation of mental health nurses,” says Gross. “I am looking forward to working with a bright new researcher interested in the treatment or prevention of mental illness symptoms.”

With an emphasis on multidisciplinary and collaborative research approaches, the Blaustein Fellow will also receive mentorship from other faculty from the School of Nursing and the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences in the School of Medicine. The fellowship comes with an annual stipend ranging from $35,000 – $51,000 (depending on experience), annual tuition up to $1,000, and an annual fund for research-related expenses.

For more information, or to apply, visit www.son.jhmi.edu.

Letter to the Editor

After the release of the Fall 2007 issue, nurse leader Claire Fagin e-mailed Dean Martha Hill that Johns Hopkins Nursing “is fabulous. It was a pleasure to read and look at.” Fagin has served as Director of the John A. Hartford Foundation Program: Building Academic Geriatric Nursing Capacity, Scholar in Residence at the Institute of Medicine, and Dean of the School of Nursing at the University of Pennsylvania.

Corrections:

In “Faculty, Staff, and Student News” (Fall/Winter 2007, p. 11), Nicole Weddig’s name was misspelled.

The photograph that appeared in “Defining Moments” (Fall/Winter 2007, p. 52) was taken at the SouthEast Community Organization Head Start Program, not the Wald Clinic as reported.

The Spring 2008 issue is the first to be printed on 30% recycled paper certified by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative.
Getting Smarter about Diabetics’ Heart Health

Even though 80 percent of people with type II diabetes will develop and die of heart disease, little is known about how well these patients and their health professionals recognize or manage heart disease risk factors. In presentations at the November 2007 American Heart Association’s featured research session, a research team from the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing highlighted both the need for significantly more provider and patient education to manage heart disease risk factors among this population and the urgency of further research on reducing the damage caused by the combined impact of these two serious chronic illnesses.

Jerilyn Allen ScD, RN, and her colleagues Cheryl Dennison, PhD, CRNP; Allison Purcell, BS ‘07; Sarah Szanton, PhD, CRNP; Martha Hill, PhD, RN, FAAN; and Rosemarie Previte, BS explored whether diabetic patients believed themselves to be at risk for heart disease. Surprisingly, belief and reality did not match. Some with significant coronary disease risk factors thought themselves to be at low risk; others with few risk factors perceived themselves to be at greater risk.

Looking at the same data from the perspective of the quality of care these patients were receiving, Cheryl Dennison, PhD, CRNP, led the team to find that management of heart disease risk factors—including diabetes itself—often was subpar. Despite the fact that these patients were in care and that most had health insurance, clustering of uncontrolled diabetes and other heart disease risk factors was common. In this ongoing study, Allen and colleagues are testing multifactorial interventions to manage heart disease risk factors in this high-risk population.

—Teddi Fine

Hopkins Fall Risk Tool Gaining Traction

To grandma and grandpa, the fate of Humpty Dumpty who “took a great fall” takes on new and ominous meaning. Each year, around one third of older adults (age 65 and up) will have a fall. Many will suffer injuries that make it hard to get around or live alone. Like Humpty Dumpty, some will not be able to be “put together again”; over 14,000 adults will die as a result of fall-related injuries. Health care costs related to falls among older adults totaled over $19 billion in 2000. Direct and indirect costs associated with falls could rise above $40 billion by 2020, giving new meaning to the term “baby boom” generation.

Without question, fall prevention has become critical from both human and economic perspectives.

Five years ago, Johns Hopkins Hospital and Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing researchers Stephanie Poe, MScN, RN, Elizabeth Hill, PhD, RN, and others began a fall safety initiative. The goal was to develop and implement a set of evidence-based methodologies that help health care professionals identify adults at greatest risk for falls. Reporting on their work to date in the October/December 2007 Journal of Nursing Care Quality, they describe the process of developing and testing the 8-part Johns Hopkins Fall Risk Assessment Tool, including not only pilot testing throughout The Johns Hopkins Hospital, but also the unique use of a “murder board” of clinical experts to “tear the tool apart.” The rigor with which Poe and her colleagues approached the creation of this important tool may well help explain the “high degree of acceptability” the Fall Risk Assessment Tool already has received by clinical users. The researchers plan to conduct further reliability and validity testing to help establish the instrument as a best practice in fall prevention. Their goal is to help end falls for everyone—except the characters in children’s poems. —TF
Pilot Aims to Help Seriously Mentally Ill People Make Successful Hospital-to-Home Transition

For many people with a broad range of chronic illnesses, transitional care practices ease the move from hospital to home. But those practices don’t often benefit the many people living with serious mental illnesses—until now. Thanks to a team of Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing researchers, a new model is addressing how the special hospital-to-home challenges for people with severe mental illnesses, and for their families, can be better met.

According to the SON’s Linda Rose, PhD, RN, and her faculty colleagues Linda Gerson, PhD, RN, and Cynthia Carbo, MSN, BSN, reporting in the December 2007 Archives of Psychiatric Nursing, three elements are central to successful community transitions for seriously mentally ill patients:

- Staying on track with medications
- Finding meaningful work and social activities; and
- Maintaining good individual and caregiver physical health.

Their nurse-based, transitional care model focused directly on those core elements. Preliminary, primarily descriptive findings from the pilot study suggest that the model can help people with serious mental illness and their families improve successful hospital-to-home transitions.

In their conclusions, the researchers cautioned that the small sample size, coupled with the setting’s demographics and the potential idiosyncrasy of the nursing logs underscored the need for more extensive study on larger, more diverse populations. At the same time, however, Rose, Gerson and Carbo posit that, to succeed, a transitional care model needs to be flexible, able to create community service partnerships, and able to meet individualized needs of patients and their families.

“We hope,” said Rose, “that further study will allow us to identify an effective intervention to address the needs and improve the quality of life for this often underserved and most vulnerable population.” —TF
Knowledge Matters for Korean Americans with High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure isn’t the American Dream that recent immigrants expected or wanted. Unfortunately, it has become a reality for far too many, including Korean Americans among whom 32% have hypertension, in contrast to 22% among their counterparts in Korea and 24% among Americans in general. Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing (JHUSON) nursing researchers Miyong T Kim, PhD, RN, FAAN, Hae-Ra Han, PhD, RN; Seonghee Jeong, PhD, RN; Hyunjeong Park, MPH, RN; and colleagues at the Korean Resource Center (Ellicott City, MD) and universities in Korea have discovered that, consistent with studies of other populations, over half of Korean Americans with hypertension (53.8 percent) either intentionally or accidentally do not take their blood pressure medications regularly. The reasons behind this noncompliance, however, differed. Unlike the general population for whom depression is the key reason for quitting medications, among Korean Americans, cultural issues and patient knowledge are central. Cultural factors can affect how much information Korean Americans disclose to their doctors. To avoid appearing disrespectful or confrontational, some individuals stop taking their medications instead of discussing troubling side effects with their physicians. Others may not ask clarifying questions for the same reasons.

Han and her colleagues suggest that individualized, culturally relevant education can help change the equation not only for Korean Americans with high blood pressure, but also for other ethnic minority populations with similar problems. —TF
Marguerite Baty ’04, MSN/MPH ’06, is preparing to defend her dissertation proposal and then head into the field to begin her research. She is among a handful of SON-educated nurses on the fast track toward careers as nurse researchers. As elsewhere, doctoral education at the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing builds on undergraduate and master’s study, usually at a series of different institutions. For a small, but growing number of students, however, virtually the entire course of study, from BSN to PhD, is taking place at the JHUSON. And if Associate Dean for Research Jerilyn Allen, ScD, RN, and PhD program director Marie Nolan, PhD, MPH, RN, have anything to do about it, that handful will multiply exponentially.

The timing couldn’t be better. Government data suggest that the nursing shortage not only continues in clinical care, but also is growing among nurse researchers and educators. That’s why it’s important to encourage research early and often. And that is just what has been happening at the SON. Under the leadership of Drs. Allen and Nolan, through a unique approach to nursing education, linking research to clinical practice right from the start of nursing education, the SON is growing new generations of nurse researchers.

According to Allen, the School is fortunate to attract the best and the brightest. Some students already are looking toward research careers and matriculate knowing that the SON ranks seventh among the nation’s nursing schools for NIH funding, a sure sign of research leadership. But, whether simply curious or already “primed” for a potential research career or simply inquisitive, Allen notes that “most students recognize that creating an evidence base for nursing is critical, and that research is the way to find answers not already there. Our SON programs are designed to take advantage of that natural curiosity, right from the start of nursing education.”

With 18 young students in the current cadre, the Research Honors program, for example enables baccalaureate students to engage in every step of the discovery process under the leadership of a faculty mentor. Most baccalaureate students are socially aware and, like Baty, with previous education and experience under their belts. As a former Peace Corps worker, Baty says she found the fast-track BSN program for former volunteers, coupled with the MSN/MPH program, made the SON a perfect fit that enabled her to “continue one-on-one clinical work, and training from a global public health perspective. I was able to gain more experience and move straight through toward my PhD faster and well prepared.”

Being prepared for the rigors of research is critical. PhD program director Nolan says, “Our PhD students flourish under the close mentorship of an advisor with an established funded program of research. Students also learn to lead multi-disciplinary research teams, and develop research colleagues among faculty and students in the Schools of Nursing, Medicine, and Public Health.” Nolan and Allen agree that the ability to “make change happen” makes a research career particularly appealing. In addition, Allen observes that “research also is a lot of fun.”

In the meantime, Marguerite continues to prepare for her proposal defense and her planned research in the Philippines focused on HIV risk, relationship power and intimate partner violence. And when she’s finished, she plans to take her career full-circle to again become an educator and mentor, but this time to future generations of nurse researchers, clinicians and educators. —TF
For the first time, the evidence-based practice model used at Johns Hopkins is available to all nurses. The Institute for Johns Hopkins Nursing, in partnership with Sigma Theta Tau, the Honor Society of Nursing, has published *Johns Hopkins Nursing Evidence-Based Practice Model and Guidelines*, which provides a clear and concise approach to implementing evidence-based practice. “Nurses and other health care professionals must explore continuously the most effective practices in patient care based on the best evidence available in an environment of ever-increasing scrutiny and heightened expectations,” said Karen Haller, PhD, RN, FAAN, Vice President for Nursing and Patient Care Services at The Johns Hopkins Hospital. “We believe every nurse needs to understand and use the principles of evidence-based practice to make critical patient-care decisions. EBP will continue to expand as the foundation for policies and procedures in health care settings and the curriculum at many schools of nursing.”

The 224-page book is targeted to nurses in clinical practice, nursing school faculty, and students. The publication covers the definition, history, and relevance of EBP; an overview of the Hopkins model with guidelines on how to use it; and recommendations on building and sustaining an environment supportive of EBP.

The book is available in print or as an e-book through Nursing Knowledge International (http://www.nursingknowledge.org). For more information, visit www.ijhn.jhmi.edu.

**Deborah Baker**, accelerated ’92, MSN ’97, has been named Director of Nursing in Surgery. Baker started as a Clinical Nurse Intern in 1992. In 1997, she became an Acute Care Nurse Practitioner and was promoted to Advanced Practice Manager in 2003 and Assistant Director in 2005. During her career, Deb has garnered numerous awards for academic performance, clinical excellence, and outstanding leadership. She is known to be creative and collaborative; a good mentor; and a strong, clear communicator. She also serves as president of the Johns Hopkins Nurses’ Alumni Association.

**Josephine Brumit**, MSN, BSN, RN, has been named nurse manager of Halsted 5. Brumit is a 20-year Navy veteran who was an adviser to the Navy’s surgeon general and a triage nurse during a six-month voluntary deployment to Iraq in 2003.

**Karen Davis**, MSN ’94 has been named director of nursing for the Department of Medicine. Beginning at Hopkins in 1989 as a clinical nurse primarily assigned to the neuro critical care unit, Davis was promoted to nurse manager in the Department of Medicine in 1994 and to the assistant director in 2005. 

**JoAnn Z. Ioannou**, MSN ’05, RN, received the third annual Human Resources Presidential Award, given to a Johns Hopkins Hospital manager for leadership strengths, contribution to the greater mission of JHHSC/JHH, ability to adapt to new challenges, creating a positive work environment, and staff development. Ioannou has been the Nurse Manager of Osler 4, a Medicine Unit, since 2000.

**Barbara (Bobby) Lyons**, BSN, RN, nursing shift coordinator, has received a 2007 Evidence-based Practice Fellowship from Hopkins Hospital’s Standards of Care Committee to conduct an ED project to decrease the length of stay of patients who receive antibiotics.

**Deborah Trautman**, PhD, RN, has accepted a prestigious Robert Wood Johnson Fellowship in Health Policy. She left her position as Director of Nursing for the Emergency Department to work in Washington, D.C.
The first biennial report on the state of nursing at The Johns Hopkins Hospital has been published. The report is organized into three areas, each reflecting strategic initiatives that have been and continue to be our focus. These strategic foci are: (1) Demonstrating excellence and discovery in patient care, (2) promulgating collegiality and respect, and (3) promoting a positive workplace environment.

Our strength could be reported in statistics and graphs, but we chose to reflect it in the faces and stories of those who stand behind the numbers. The report celebrates the talents of Hopkins nurses who have contributed to our successes in patient care, teaching, and research.

Hopkins Nursing stands for the discovery of knowledge; its application at the bedside; and excellence in the delivery of safe, quality care. We have among us experts who specialize in the treatment of illnesses and whose aim is to prevent common problems such as falls, delirium, and infection—using the latest scientific evidence.

Hopkins Nursing promulgates collegiality and respects the diversity among us. It takes all of us to stand in the forefront of health care and nursing practice.

Hopkins Nursing promotes a positive workplace environment; because we know that in such a climate, nurses can cultivate their professional growth, individually and collectively. Hopkins nurses step up and out to lead efforts that create positive patient outcomes. They advance nursing locally, nationally, and internationally.

You may find a copy of the Johns Hopkins Nursing Biennial Report, 2007 on our website at www.hopkinsnursing.org.

Gina Szymanski, MS, RN, Receives Oncology Nursing Society Linda Arenth Excellence in Cancer Nursing Management Award

Gina Szymanski, MS, RN, nurse manager at the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, MD, is the recipient of the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) Linda Arenth Excellence in Cancer Nursing Management Award. Candidates for this award must be recognized experts in cancer nursing administration for contributions at the local, state, and national levels. They also must demonstrate commitment to mentorship in cancer nursing administration.

This award is in memory of Linda Arenth, a leading nurse administrator at The Johns Hopkins Hospital who was active in ONS and Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation. Szymanski received her master of science in nursing degree from the University of Maryland in Baltimore. She is an active member of ONS, the Greater Baltimore Chapter of ONS, and Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing.

ONS is a professional organization of more than 35,000 registered nurses and other healthcare providers dedicated to excellence in patient care, education, research, and administration in oncology nursing. The largest professional oncology association in the world, ONS maintains a web site at www.ons.org.

America’s “Best” Hospital

For 17 years, The Johns Hopkins Hospital has led U.S. News & World Report’s ranking of America’s best hospitals. In 2007, only 173 of the nation’s 5,462 medical centers scored high enough to rank in even a single area. And only 18 made it to the magazine’s Honor Roll—topped by Hopkins and reserved for medical centers that excel in at least six of 16 difficult areas of care.

Johns Hopkins nurse staffing and certification as a Magnet facility are among the factors that place us in the forefront of this elite group, along with such measures as severity of illnesses treated, use of key technologies, patient and community services, commitment to research and use of advanced treatment guidelines.
Karen Armacost, BSN, RN, director of Hopkins ElderPlus, was appointed to the National Interfaith Coalition on Aging, a member group of the National Council on Aging. Armacost will serve as a representative of the National Gerontological Nurses Association, the organization in which she was granted fellowship status earlier this year.

Armacost also is a board member of the National PACE Association and was recently appointed to the Home and Community-Based Services Development Cabinet of the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (AAHSA).

Jo Deaton, MSN, RN, has been appointed director of nursing for psychiatry at Johns Hopkins Bayview. She is responsible for nursing in the Medical Center’s Inpatient Psychiatry Unit, Addiction Treatment Service (ATS), Behavioral Pharmacology Research Unit (BPRU), Community Psychiatry Program and Center for Addiction and Pregnancy (CAP).

With over 20 years of leadership experience in nursing executive and management positions, Deaton comes to Johns Hopkins Bayview from a management position at Howard County General Hospital.

The Advisory Board, a prestigious health-care consulting firm, awarded Beth Petterson, RN, the 2007 Future of Nursing Leadership Award. The award is presented to three nurses nationally who have shown tremendous individual growth and professional development.

Petterson, a nurse in the Johns Hopkins Bayview Care Center, developed an innovative suite of patient education tools and materials to help avoid hospital readmissions due to non-compliance with medication. The solutions included a formal pharmacy education profile for each patient, a medication time chart and pill box specially designed for elder patients who take multiple medications throughout the day.

Petterson also developed a house-wide staff education program about the new discharge policies. As a result, patient satisfaction scores related to home care and education increased from the 80th percentile to the 95th percentile.

Wendy Houseknecht, BSN, RN, obstetrics, received the 2007 Nursing Excellence Award for mentoring. The award was created by Nursing Spectrum and NurseWeek to recognize contributions nurses make to their patients, each other and education in Zambia and medical assessment in an orphanage in Uganda. In her spare time, Murray enjoys quilting and paper crafting.

Alice Massey, RN, has received Nursing Informatics certification.

Lori Davidson, IMC, RN, recently received a certification in Progressive Care.

Mary Jo Lombardo, MS, RN, CEN, clinical program manager for the Emergency Department, served as a contributor and reviewer for the 2008 Nursing Spectrum Drug Handbook.

Lolly McCance, BA, RN, CWOCN, Wound and Ostomy Program Manager, has been named Nurse of the Year by the MidAtlantic region of the
Wound, Ostomy, Continence Nurses Society (WOCN).

**Bianca (Chuen-Chin) Chang**, MSN, RN, has been promoted to Senior Clinical Informatics Analyst in the Clinical Informatics Department.

**AnnMarie Duggan**, MSN, MHA, RN, FNE-a, nurse manager, 3 South, recently received a master’s in Nursing and a master’s in Health Administration from the University of Phoenix. Duggan also recently received certification as a forensic nurse examiner (FNE).

“Wendy stands out from other nurses with her clinical excellence and consistent ‘can do’ attitude. She is often described by staff as a cheerleader who promotes a positive attitude and whose energy is always available to assist with managerial or clinical issues. She is able to transition quickly from administrative responsibilities to assisting the team during a clinical emergency.

“Wendy’s efforts have been successful in gaining interdisciplinary staff support for changes in how safe patient care is provided on a daily basis. She has contributed to the nursing profession through her commitment and ongoing efforts, which empower the obstetrics (OB) team to advocate for the safety of mother and baby. Wendy has worked collaboratively with the newly developed role of the OB safety nurse during the implementation of this critical initiative.

“Wendy’s energy is contagious. She has the ability to make others smile and see the positive side in almost all situations. These positive attributes are quickly observed and appreciated by her colleagues and supervisors.”

Three other Johns Hopkins Bayview nurses were named finalists for the 2007 Nursing Excellence Award and recognized at an awards ceremony in June. Congratulations to **Rowena Orosco**, RN, Johns Hopkins Burn Center (clinical care); **Delores Sweets**, RN, pediatrics (community service); and **Linda Miller**, RN, CNS, Magnet Project (teaching), on their nominations.
As a nurse, your goal is to make a positive, lasting impression on your patients. At Johns Hopkins, we provide you with a number of settings and services to accomplish this, from an academic medical center in the city, to a community hospital in the suburbs, and a host of health services and home care options in between. Combine this with outstanding pay and benefits, and you have all the makings of a great career.

With our rich history of healing and world-famous reputation, there’s no better place for you to leave your mark.
Caring for Community from Southern Africa to East Baltimore

By Robby MacBain

Hopkins nursing students pursue a surprisingly rich variety of career paths before attending nursing school. Rather than viewing the transition to nursing as a step away from past careers, many students see it as a natural progression.

After volunteering as a non-violent interventionist in the West Bank, Rachel Katonak ’08 has learned to approach problems from multiple perspectives. Working alongside Palestinians and Israelis, she found that politics on the ground were far more complicated than they appeared in American news. Now, working in a hospital setting, she is wary of jumping to conclusions about her patients. “I understand what it’s like to have preconceived notions,” she says.

Anthony Pho, accelerated class of 2008, is prepared to bring the flexibility he learned in his job as a Microsoft program manager into the field of nursing. “Software is a complex system—like a person,” he says. “Of course, with a person, the stakes are much higher. As a program manager, you have to like people and you have to understand each specialist’s underlying role. The same thing applies to nursing.”

For Kyle Blount ’08, the key link between his experience as a potter and his new career in nursing is patience. As the manager of a camp art department in New Mexico, Kyle worked to transform “imperfect mounds of various elements” into works of art. “In both pottery and nursing, the essence of your medium does not change, it is only reformed, refined and given new life through your intervention. As both a nurse and a potter, I am a catalyst for change, promoting a reaction and patiently waiting for the outcome.”

As a performer and director in an improv and sketch comedy group, Brian Miner ’08 was more concerned with spontaneity than he was with patience. Upon discovering that one of the theaters in his hometown was short on rent, Brian gathered a few friends and put together a show that was initially slotted to run for four weeks. It turned out to be such a hit that it ran for 18 months! How does comedy relate to nursing? According to Brian, “working as a comic has taught me to think on my feet and to keep a positive attitude through laughter in difficult situations.”

Olivia Robbie, accelerated class of 2008, valued her ability to put her students at ease when teaching English as a Second Language. “Students were often very nervous about making mistakes. It was important to gain their trust so that they could relax and think clearly.” As a foreign teacher in Seoul, South Korea, Olivia found out how difficult it can be to feel at ease in an alien environment. “When you’re in an unfamiliar place—whether it’s a foreign country or a hospital—even the smallest things can seem frightening. A nurse who understands this can help a patient to relax.”