



TRANSITIONS

A NEWSLETTER FOR STUDENT NURSES | SPRING 2010

STAYING EDUCATED AT GREENWICH HOSPITAL



Renee Rafferty, Education Specialist,
Greenwich Hospital

Renee Rafferty has been at **Greenwich Hospital** for nine years and has been the Education Specialist for nearly three. With two other nurses responsible for the on-boarding of new nurses, her weekly routine tends to be a multi-faceted one depending on what classes she is teaching or preparing for each day.

Like many others, Renee joined Greenwich Hospital as a nurse within a specific discipline. In her case, she had always done cardiac or gastrointestinal nursing. But as she gained more experience and her career progressed, she found herself becoming increasingly more interested in the educational aspect of it. Whether she is teaching a class, refining needs assessments or responding to new grads questions, she is undeniably one of Greenwich's go-to nurses.

"The ideal new nurse is someone within an insatiable thirst for more knowledge," Renee says. "You must be flexible and willing to learn on a daily basis. You never fully learn everything, so you'll always be a student."

Renee considers herself extremely lucky to have found the ideal nursing environment that she has. "It may seem to go without saying," she says, "but being part of a staff that is always smiling, incredibly friendly, truly happy with their work, and consistently satisfied with the work they do is something I never take for granted."

That very satisfaction and teamwork also rubs off on their patients, as Greenwich hospital patient and employee satisfaction scores are always high. And as a result, the morale of the staff remains high too. It's a culture of service excellence that is 100% dedicated to the patient, and often starts with the teachings of Education Specialists just like Renee.

What advice would you give to nursing students and new grads?

- The most important thing – find the hospital you want to work at first
- Make connections
- Be flexible
- It's hard to get the position you want at first. Be patient
- Impress people in the role you are in
- Embrace new avenues and the fulfilling career you covet will follow

“The ideal new nurse is someone within an insatiable thirst for more knowledge.”

— Renee Rafferty, Education Specialist,
Greenwich Hospital



A Letter from the Publisher

Dear Nursing Students,

I hope this newsletter finds you well, having a wonderful spring and a rewarding semester to date. As the end of another academic year winds down, I also hope you have many exciting opportunities from which to choose. As always, Transitions is written to help make your choices easier and more informed.



In this edition, nurses from various departments at our system institutions—Bridgeport, Greenwich and Yale-New Haven Hospitals—offer up new insights, helpful facts and unique perspectives on a variety of topics. Should there be a specific topic you would like to see covered in our next issue, please let me know. We always encourage suggestions from our readership and appreciate any feedback you may have for us.

On behalf of all of us here at Yale New Haven Health System, we wish you all a healthy and happy remainder of the year and a lifetime of professional success!

Sincerely,

Carol C. Pawlush • College Relations Recruitment Officer • Yale New Haven Health System
203-688-8458 • carol.pawlush@ynhh.org



ONCOLOGY NURSING AT YALE - NEW HAVEN HOSPITAL



Kim Framski has been with **Yale-New Haven Hospital** for 22 years now and wouldn't want to be anywhere else. Having a disabled brother and being heavily involved in his care, she always knew she wanted to help people and felt it was an obvious choice of a career.

After receiving her nursing degree, she did what many new grads do, she asked around for opinions on the best places to practice. Growing up in not too far away Prospect, Connecticut, it didn't take long for her to realize that Yale-New Haven Hospital would be the right fit for her.

"I always knew that I wanted to work at a large teaching hospital that offered the opportunity to learn a lot," Kim says. "But the fact that Yale-New Haven has so many types of patients and procedures and was known as 'the place to be,' made me determined to pursue employment there no matter what."

Kim has done many jobs and worn many hats over her two-plus decades within the system, including being the Nursing Supervisor at Yale-New Haven Hospital and covering all of the patient services from OB, pediatrics, and med/surg to the ED and ICU, at one point or another. However, she started on the Surgical Oncology Unit, and that's where you'll find her today as the Patient Service Manager, along with many of the people that were there when she first started.

The unit is very excited about their impending move to the new **Smilow Cancer Hospital**. The entire staff has been quite involved in the planning and they are excited to see their hard work come to fruition. "While change of this magnitude can be a little intimidating, it truly is a beautiful facility," Kim states confidently. "The rooms are larger, there's more advanced technology, and the patients are going to love it."

On a related note, change is what she loves most about her work as a nurse: "Every day I come in there's something new," she says. "And after 22 years, there's always something exciting happening that I may never have seen before."

What kind of personality does Kim believe it takes to succeed in nursing?

- You must be compassionate, regardless of what's going on
- You should always have the ability to put the patient first
- You have to be assertive and a patient advocate
- Take the initiative and be independent
- And most of all, be flexible, because things can change in a minutes

“As a nurse, you have to be very compassionate; regardless of what's going on, the patient comes first.”

- Kim Framski, Yale-New Haven Hospital, Patient Service Manager, Surgical Oncology Unit



CLINICAL EDUCATION

AT BRIDGEPORT HOSPITAL



Russell Hullstrung – Coordinator, Organizational Development & Education, Bridgeport Hospital

Russell Hullstrung was specifically hired for the position of Coordinator, Organizational Development & Education due to his experience as Assistant Dean of the School of Nursing at the College of New Rochelle in New York. Russell has two Bachelor's degrees, one in Nursing and one in Healthcare Administration, and he also holds a Master's in Public Administration. As a result, Russell is obviously well-versed in all aspects of patient-centered care, staff education and development.

Russell joined **Bridgeport Hospital** two years ago. "I wanted to be involved in some type of setting where individuals really need someone to advocate and help navigate them through the system," he says. "I wanted to get back into the service side of care while staying connected to the education side."

His department consists of six professionals responsible for coordinating new employee orientation, specific programs for RNs and other patient care service staff members. They also collaborate with other members of the Hospital to coordinate many additional educational initiatives. Russell's department works with new grads and experienced nurses alike. The educational programs span a wide range of educational specialties, like skill competency assessment and validation, critical care orientation and cardiac dysrhythmia. Other programs relate to patient satisfaction enhancements, safety programs like fall prevention, Joint Commission standards and hospital accreditation.

Russell is a firm believer that to succeed in nursing, you have to be committed to life-long learning. "You have to be willing to be flexible and embrace change," he says. "What happens today is definitely not going to be what happens tomorrow." And while of course he speaks to the ongoing collaborative nature that is nursing, he also believes success is made from those willing to step forward and be a leader.

Russell's characteristics of an outstanding nurse at Bridgeport Hospital:

- Strong foundation in the art and science of nursing practice
- Always serves as a patient advocate
- Is sensitive to individual patient and family needs
- Truly incorporates the patient and family into the plan of care

Interviewing Advice from Russell Hullstrung Organizational Development & Education:

- Hospitals are now looking for practitioners who view quality care as providing a quality patient experience. This includes safe, effective practice while exceeding patient/family expectations.
- Speak to the interpersonal skills that you can offer their organization and their patients. Specifically, explain how you interact and engage with the patients while providing nursing care.
- Recognize that organizations understand your clinical knowledge and skills will come in time. They are interested in learning if you have a patient centered, customer service attitude.
- Adapting to change is also an important characteristic organizations look for. Provide examples of how you manage change.





MAKING THE TRANSITION

CONVERSATIONS WITH RECENT NURSING GRADS



A conversation with
Jenny Craighead, Nurse
Bridgeport Hospital
BSN-Fairfield University's Accelerated
Nursing Degree Program

“Your patient outcomes are directly affected by your approach and attitude toward their care.”

—Jenny Craighead, Nurse, Bridgeport Hospital

Q: Why did you decide to go into nursing?

I went into nursing because medicine has always fascinated me and I was immersed early on into it, as my dad is also involved healthcare. I like being part of the healing process; I want to make being in the hospital a better experience for my patients and my patients' families. It is very important to me.

Q: What are three characteristics you feel are unique to Bridgeport Hospital Nursing?

- The genuine camaraderie between interdisciplinary departments.
- The hospital fosters a great learning environment through intense training and our educators/mentors have invested in a true commitment to our success as new graduate nurses to evolve into well-rounded nurses. The staff is always willing to share their knowledge and expertise.
- The diversity of nursing experiences.

Q: What kind of personality does it take to succeed in nursing?

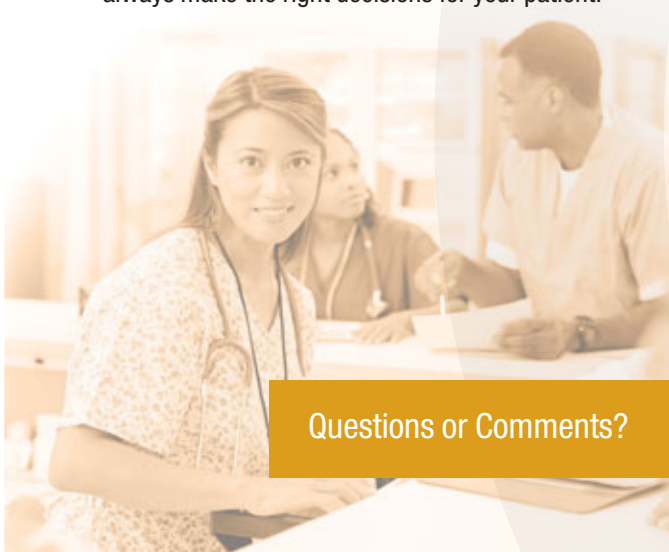
You have to be a very patient person and have a lot of integrity in what you are doing. Often times you are faced with incredible challenges. Your patient outcomes are directly affected by your approach and attitude toward their care. If you have that patience, you can overcome anything! You also need to be very passionate about the care you are giving and nursing as a career, as well as be willing to assume the role of patient advocate. In being so, you will always make the right decisions for your patient.

Q: Describe the unit where you work, your daily routine and your favorite aspect of it.

I work in the Emergency Department and just started working nights from 7pm to 7am. My routine is ever-changing. Right now, I provide direct patient care for a max of 5 patients. I really enjoy the diversity in the patient population, as well as the diversity in the nature of the illnesses and injuries that present daily. Every patient is so different—each has a story to tell, and those stories are what make each patient unique.

Q: What kind of advice would you give nursing students and new graduate nurses?

- I would tell nursing students to be proactive about getting a student nurse position or a new graduate nurse position, as opportunities aren't just going to happen by themselves. The job market is so competitive and you need prior experience. I was very motivated to secure a Student Nurse Internship at Bridgeport Hospital. It was an opportunity that led to me being hired after I graduated last August. Being proactive separates those who want it from those who want it and are willing to work hard for it!
- You will almost certainly have to give up some of your personal life for a short time when you begin your career as a new graduate nurse. However, it is worth it!
- Last but not least, DON'T GIVE UP!



Questions or Comments?

Please contact:

Carol C. Pawlush
College Relations Recruitment Officer
Yale New Haven Health System
789 Howard Avenue, MCS-2109
New Haven, CT 06519

(203) 688-8458
carol.pawlush@ynhh.org