

# College of Nursing



## A Transformative Moment

***\$1M Dollar Gift***

***from Andrew and Kirsten Braccia  
Propels Arizona Nursing Forward.***

**In this edition:**

A new UArizona Nursing app helps with COVID stress,  
an alumna creates a first response network in rural Mexico,  
and Wildcat Nursing goes global!



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

## College of Nursing

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## A Letter From Dean Moore

Dear Wildcat Nursing Community,

Adapting to life with COVID-19 mitigation presented us with new and challenging experiences and we as a College rose to the challenge. Challenges can create opportunities and our outstanding team of staff and faculty have indeed turned chaos into opportunities for supporting our students on their educational journey.

Across the College, any academic program that was not already online or hybrid quickly moved to online delivery. Our amazing Learning and Healthcare



Technology Innovation team mobilized technologies to support online program delivery, while our simulation teams developed virtual scenarios that replaced “on ground” clinical experiences.

Recognizing the ripple effect of COVID-19, we reached out to students asking them to share their emergency financial needs, which were substantial. I am pleased that we used gifts from many of our generous donors to provide students with as much financial support as possible and continue to assess requests and receive gifts into our emergency fund.

As a result of the generous gift that Andrew and Kirsten Braccia made to the College of Nursing, we purchased virtual and web-based simulation platforms, additional mannequins, and supplies to support students who were no longer able to come to campus or attend in-person clinical rotations. It has been my pleasure to learn about the Braccia’s priorities for moving the College of Nursing forward in an era where state-of-the-art technology will most certainly be center stage. We are already witnessing the positive impact of their gift on students, especially those in entry to practice and advanced practice programs.

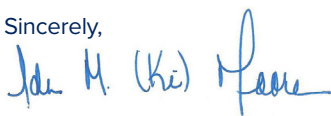
We remain in close communication and collaboration with our clinical partners. In response to the need for more nurses at the front line, some faculty worked extra shifts providing direct care to patients. We adapted telehealth technology to provide care remotely when direct care was not possible, with the added benefit for students who participated along with their preceptors. After taking an inventory of supplies in our simulation and research labs, we participated in a University wide initiative to donate unused personal protective equipment to our clinical partners and continue to look for ways to help in the community response.

Through it all, we have been impressed by the resilience and fortitude of our students. These men and women had to make abrupt changes to their learning environments, lost in-person contact with their peer and academic supports, and ended clinical experiences early, but they continued to persevere. Their continued academic success while pitching in to respond to community needs was inspiring, bringing pride to the Wildcat Nursing community every day.

2020 was proclaimed the “Year of the Nurse and Midwife” by the World Health Assembly. When we in the College created a taskforce to plan ways to recognize nurses throughout the year, we did not anticipate this pandemic nor the attention it has brought to our precious field. It has been heartwarming to see such positive attention to nurses world-wide, and we will work to share stories of our own Wildcat Nurses as the response continues to unfold. Please read more in this year-end magazine about our many amazing nurses who are leading the way in education, practice and research.

I wish you all the best as we move forward together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ki Moore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and "M".

Ki Moore, PhD, RN, FAAN  
Dean, The College of Nursing



# From the Heart

*Andrew and  
Kirsten Braccia's  
Investment  
in UArizona  
Nursing is a  
Personal Affair*

By Jason Gelt



For Andrew and Kirsten Braccia, being proud Arizona Wildcats has always been a family affair. The Bay Area couple, who recently gifted the University of Arizona College of Nursing with \$1M to fund material supports for nursing students and their educational teams, met as undergraduates at the University. They graduated together in 1998 – Andrew with a degree in Business from the Eller College of Management and Kirsten with one in Nursing – and went on to marry and start a family of their own. But their Arizona Wildcat legacy extends far beyond those beginnings. Kirsten's father is an alumnus, as are both of Andrew's parents, his brother and his uncle, Bob Baffert, the celebrated horse trainer. "It's a family tradition to attend the University of Arizona," Andrew says. "I grew up in the Bay Area but I always rooted for UArizona in all their athletic competitions. When the time came to make a college decision it was a very natural and comfortable choice to make."

So when it came time to focus their philanthropic activities, UArizona was an equally natural choice to make. They settled on UArizona Nursing in particular not only because of Kirsten's positive experience at the College but because of the example their giving sets for other University alumni. "As incredibly proud graduates of the University, we're excited not only to be able to give, but also be able to showcase the fact that there are many great opportunities to make an impact after you graduate," Andrew says. "What attracts us to the nursing school specifically is that it was a big part of shaping Kirsten as a young adult and propelling her into her career. We also have a tremendous amount of respect for the training and

development of the next generation of nurses, and the impact that they're going to make on the world."

Kirsten remembers her time as a Wildcat Nursing student fondly. She was drawn to the career as a young girl, when she lost her brother to cancer. "I built a lot of relationships with the nurses that were caring for him when he was sick, and I just felt like it was my calling," she says. "Going through that experience was a big part of what drove me to become a nurse. I knew I wanted to take care of kids and take care of people."

Kirsten was attracted to UArizona Nursing because of its stellar reputation and because she wanted the full college experience that the University offers. "It was a rigorous program but yet very rewarding at the same time," she says. "I built many relationships and friendships, had terrific instructors that really challenged me, got to know me personally and put me in clinicals that would suit my ability and personality." She was especially inspired by the simulation labs, a facet of the College that will be one of the beneficiaries of the Braccias' gift. "Simulations are a huge part of educating nurses," she says. "Looking back, I wish I had been able to do more simulation work. The College now has the opportunity to expand them, which is very beneficial."

Kirsten's nursing degree led to her work at Stanford University's prestigious Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), which cares for premature babies from across the country. She worked with some of the NICU's sickest infants, in one case taking part in open-heart surgery for a 23-week-old preemie.

**“Our goal is for UArizona Nursing to be one of the top nursing programs in the country, and most importantly graduate nursing students that are prepared to make a major impact on the world.”**

**~ Andrew Braccia**

She also gained experience in the cardiovascular intensive care unit, where she cared for older children as well. “A lot of times you only hear the sad stories, but there are 20 times as many happy stories coming out of the NICU,” Kirsten says of the work she performed. “It was very rewarding to see these babies do well. They come out at a very challenging time to heal, but they’re very resilient. It was a joy to send them home to their families. It also makes you appreciate – once you have your own children – how fragile life is.”

At a time when the COVID-19 pandemic has brought the importance of health care to the forefront of the national stage, Andrew and Kirsten are acutely aware of the need for a strong nursing workforce. They’re proud to be doing their part to aid UArizona Nursing in continuing its mission to provide students with the very best in learning resources and opportunities. “Nurses are such an essential part of keeping us all healthy,” Andrew says. “They require a combination of great training and skill. UArizona Nursing has always been at the forefront of skill development and clinical development, but it also emphasizes understanding the situation, understanding the patient and their family, and having empathy. That’s

one of the things Kirsten’s work has really taught me.”

The Braccias’ gift to UArizona Nursing will upgrade simulation capabilities at the Tucson, Phoenix Biomedical, and Gilbert campuses, and provide students with online access to virtual patient experiences. It will also enable the purchase of software subscriptions and other essential technology to support online teaching and learning due to the pandemic. “With a greater emphasis on online classes, you want them to be just as successful as in-person classes, so the timing is good,” Kirsten says. “Everything can be up-to-speed and up-to-date and all the students can have the ability to keep learning and continue their education as if it was in person.”

Andrew and Kirsten’s goals for the College extend well beyond the immediate moment, however. “Our objective is to really lay a foundation for investing in the College of Nursing that we can build around for many years to come,” Andrew says. “This is where we can really make an impact, because our goal is for UArizona Nursing to be one of the top nursing programs in the country, and most importantly graduate nursing students that are prepared to make a major impact on the world.”





# Year of the Nurse Profile:

***Agnes Poore***  
***Co-Founder of***  
***Casa de la Luz Hospice***

By Jason Gelt



During her 48-year career as a nurse, University of Arizona College of Nursing alumna Agnes Poore has exemplified the qualities being celebrated during the World Health Organization's Year of the Nurse: excellence, leadership and innovation. A native Tucsonan, Poore earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the College in 1972 and began her career working in pediatrics as a bedside nurse before realizing that her true passion lay in nurse leadership. In that capacity, she has tirelessly made a difference in the lives of patients and their loved ones by directing, encouraging and mentoring caregivers.

Over the years, Poore has served as Assistant Director of Maternal Child Nursing and Manager of Pediatrics at Tucson Medical Center, Director of Professional and Clinical Services at Kimberly Quality Care, and Director of Professional Services at several home care agencies. She found her true calling in 1998 as co-founder and Chief Clinical Officer of Casa de la Luz Hospice, which provides sensitive care and support for patients and their loved ones in the final phase of life. Additionally, Poore has given back to her community by volunteering as a board member for both the Pima Council on Aging and the Arizona Hospice and Palliative Care Organization.

Poore got her first taste of caregiving as the middle sibling of 12 children. "I did lots of caregiving for younger siblings and a couple who were older than me," she says. Because of that experience, nursing was a natural choice for her. Growing up in Blenman-Elm neighborhood within blocks of the UArizona Health Sciences buildings as they were first being erected, she always felt that

becoming a Wildcat Nurse was her destiny – and a big part of her DNA. Her father was a Wildcat, two of her cousins and a niece became Wildcat Nurses, and her three children are all graduates of the University. "Four of my siblings are UArizona grads as are a number of other family members," she says. "We are definitely a Wildcat family."

When she first entered the profession as a bedside nurse, Poore loved caring for families, but as she delved more into management she found that her skills were better served in that area. "I found I loved taking care of people, but what I most enjoyed was taking care of the people who take care of the patients," she says. "I love to see others grow in their profession. That might be in a clinical direction or a leadership direction, but it is wonderful to watch someone grow. It's very rewarding to me."

After stints as Head Nurse/Manager and later Assistant Director of the Maternal Child Department at Tucson Medical Center, she moved into the home health care field, which eventually pointed her in the direction of the kind of hospice care she provides today at Casa de la Luz. After meeting her future business partner, Lynette Jaramillo, and receiving the blessings of their families as well as securing a small business loan, Poore and Jaramillo co-founded Casa de la Luz in 1998. In November, the largest provider of hospice services in Southern Arizona will turn 22. The facility currently employs more than 270 individuals of varied disciplines and skills, including more than 100 registered nurses.

"To me, hospice is an incredible service where we get to care for





Ribbon cutting at Casa de la Luz Hospice located in Oro Valley, Arizona.



▶▶▶ Casa de la Luz staff  
2017



▶▶▶ Casa de la Luz staff  
2004

the patient and family—they are the center of everything we do,” says Poore. “Whatever it takes to get them the care they need, that’s what we do. Because, as we say, ‘we only get one chance to do it right.’ I tell many staff members that is what hospice is all about and why many of us got into nursing in the first place—it’s about caring for people.”

Poore stresses that creating a loving environment for end-of-life care means surrounding patients with the people who mean the most in their lives -- family, friends and loved ones -- is the best way to fight back against isolation and loneliness. An equally important factor is the health care professionals who make up the staff. With hospital wages and community pay often widely divergent, she has struggled at times to find staff, but she has managed to find like-minded people with a passion for care that matches her own. “Our staff find

that the rewards we have in this hospice work often far outweigh what difference there may be between hospital and community pay,” Poore says.

Her schedule bursts with activity, including administrative tasks such as meetings with department directors and the management/supervisor team, but she always makes sure to maintain a human connection with her entire staff. “I like to make rounds in the office, seeing the staff—and not just the nurses,” she says. “We have a number of administrative staff who are ‘behind the scenes’ as well as our own physicians, a whole IT department, plus our field staff who are working all throughout the community using laptops and remote connections.”

That sense of interpersonal connection is one of the things Poore prides herself most on, although it

**“I found I loved taking care of people, but what I most enjoyed was taking care of the people who take care of the patients. I love to see others grow in their profession.”**



**~ Agnes Poore  
BSN, MBA, Co-founder and  
Chief Clinical Officer, Casa de  
la Luz Hospice**

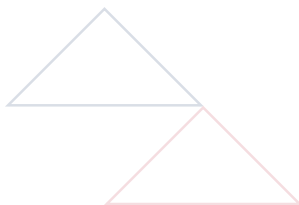


has been strained by the current COVID-19 crisis. All but a handful of Casa de la Luz staff are working remotely. Less than 10 staff members work in the office to try to keep things business-as-usual for patients, families and referral sources, forwarding messages, concerns and other issues to appropriate staff off-site for follow-up. “It’s been a challenging time while so many of us are working from home and social distancing,” says Poore. “We look forward to a time when we can get back to normal, working closely together again.”

Poore acknowledges that it’s difficult being present for patients without being in their presence. But she and her staff are rising to the occasion, connecting patients to the services and people in the community who can help them best. “Keeping them connected to their families, friends,

and loved ones helps them to not feel so isolated,” she says. “We have staff making frequent phone calls and doing some ‘virtual’ visits with and for them with Facetime, Zoom, and other applications.”

No matter what, Poore has optimism for the future of nursing, and she continues to maintain a strong commitment to her alma mater. At Casa de la Luz, she continues to work with students from UArizona Nursing and over the years has hired many UArizona graduates who she is proud to have on her team. To students just entering the field – or considering a nursing education, she has some simple words of advice: “There are so many opportunities in nursing. Find your passion, what makes nursing meaningful for you. And don’t be afraid to follow a dream, as long as you know where you are headed.”





# Portrait of a Wildcat Nurse Leader:

*Dr. Sue Roe's Passion  
for Leadership and  
Education Fuel Her  
Quest for Knowledge*

By Jason Gelt





Leadership has been in nurse Sue Roe's DNA from her early days as an undergraduate at the University of Arizona College of Nursing. Under the guidance of the College's first Dean, Pearl Coulter, Roe took her very first leadership course. "She was very insistent that if you became a nurse, you had to become a leader," says Roe, DPA, MS, BSN, RN, who earned both her Bachelor's of Science and Master's of Science in Nursing degrees from UArizona Nursing. Dr. Roe was among the first of the College's nursing students to obtain a master's degree, which proved to be a game-changer for her. Her passion for nursing – and her belief in the core values that were instilled in her as a UArizona Nursing student – led Dr. Roe and her husband Bill to give a generous endowment to the College that would represent their shared vision and perspective. Additionally, she will assume the role of Chair of the UArizona Community Advisory Board in August.

In the years since, she has more than fulfilled the hopes Dean Coulter harbored for her, earning a Doctorate in Health Policy and Administration, and wearing such diverse professional hats as an instructor, author, administrator, consultant, holistic medicine expert and community leader. And that's just the tip of the iceberg. Never one to slow down, Dr. Roe is currently the program chair of the Graduate Nursing Pathway (GNP) Program at AT Still University of Health Sciences, which specializes in innovative academic programs with a focus on whole person healthcare, interprofessional education, diversity, and underserved populations.

"Sometimes I take on more than I should," says Dr. Roe with a smile. "But I've been very fortunate that my nursing career has been extremely varied." Over the years, she has headed training divisions, helped develop the University of Phoenix's nursing program and serving as its first provost, authored multiple books on holistic health care and run her own consulting firm, The Roe Group, which helps health care organizations and educational institutions achieve optimal performance through workforce development.

Dr. Roe has diverse administrative experience in both private and public sector institutions and has keynoted and been a presenter at a variety of conventions, seminars, workshops, and programs across the country. She has taught and designed academic courses for over 35 years at several public and private universities/colleges using a variety of delivery formats. "I've gone outside of nursing, but never away from nursing," she says. Her example is so inspiring that she was selected as the 2019 Alumna of the Year for UArizona Nursing.

Through their estate plan, the Dr. Sue and Professor Bill Roe Endowment for Integrative Nursing will enable the College to create an endowed chair that



▶ ▶ ▶ Dr. Sue Roe,  
UArizona Nursing  
Alumna of the Year.





Dr. Sue and Bill Roe ride in the 2019 Homecoming parade.

will focus on building whole-person health care framework for nurses working on a master's or doctorate. Bill, a professor emeritus of behavioral sciences, acknowledges that a love of nursing runs deep in their family. "My mother was a nurse and my grandmother was a practical nurse," he says. "I am very supportive of the whole idea of nursing and what it can be."

"It felt like we could really make an impact, and it felt right to do it here because this is where I started my nursing career," says Dr. Roe. "Dean Moore is such a wonderful person, and we felt very welcomed. And we knew that the endowment would be meaningful here because the College already has a substantial integrative health initiative."

Dr. Roe and her husband hope that the endowment will develop integrative nursing as a transformational practice. "We want to move things forward, not maintain the status quo," Dr. Roe says. "I love the notion of changing practice, because nurses could make that difference. They're right there, but they have to think about it and see that as part of their practice, and they don't always do that."

The future is a bright place for Dr. Roe. While many of her peers are retiring, she is moving tirelessly forward with her quest for knowledge and her desire to lead by example. "I know it sounds crazy, but I'm not at the end of my career," she says. "I'm re-upping. I've always been excited about nursing. Even when I didn't have nursing jobs, I was excited about what I was able to do, whether it was because I brought with me learning and experience, or because I was able to impact delivery of care or students who would be delivering care. It's always been about how I could impact that person to help other people."





# *Improving* **Career Advancement** *for American Indian Communities.*

By Jason Gelt

Thanks to a five-year, \$2 million award from the Indian Health Service (IHS), the University of Arizona College of Nursing has created an academic program, American Indians in Nursing: Career Advancement and Transition Scholars (INCATS). The program seeks to increase the number of Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) and advanced-practice Native American nurses who will practice in tribal facilities.

The INCATS program is led by Michelle Kahn-John, PhD, RN, PMHNP-BC, GNP, clinical associate professor of nursing, with mentorship from Mary Koithan, PhD, RN, CNS-BC, FAAN, former associate dean of professional/community engagement, and Professor Joan Shaver, PhD, RN, FAAN. INCATS builds on the success of the college's Arizona Nursing Inclusive Excellence (ANIE) program, a federal Health Resources and Services Administration-funded initiative to improve diversity in the nursing workforce and strengthen

efforts that improve inclusivity and student support.

"I am most grateful to Drs. Kahn-John, Koithan and Shaver for their creative approach to increasing the number of undergraduate and graduate Native American nursing students in the College of Nursing," said Ida M. "Ki" Moore, PhD, RN, FAAN, dean of the College of Nursing. "With support from this highly competitive national IHS award, the INCATS program will support our efforts to build new partnerships with tribal communities and to increase the diversity of the next generation of nursing leaders."

A cooperative agreement with the IHS Division of Health Professional Support, INCATS will fund and support nursing career transition and advancement of American Indians and Alaska Natives interested in entering or advancing their nursing careers. It also will create new pathways for associate degree

**“The INCATS program expands our capacity to partner with our American Indian communities in the shared mission to increase the number of skilled, competent, caring, compassionate Wildcat Nurses who will serve as role models and health-care leaders in their tribal communities.”**



*~ Michelle Kahn-John,  
PhD, RN, PMHNP-BC, GNP*



nurses to advance their careers and build new tribal-academic practice collaborations that expand the Native American workforce prepared to improve care of native populations.

“With much excitement, we began 2020 by supporting five American Indian/Alaska Native scholars on their academic journeys,” Dr. Kahn-John said. “The goal of the INCATS team is to offer an inclusive, safe, supportive, and enriching academic experience for every student who attends the UArizona College of Nursing. The INCATS program

expands our capacity to partner with our American Indian communities in the shared mission to increase the number of skilled, competent, caring, compassionate Wildcat Nurses who will serve as role models and health-care leaders in their tribal communities.”

All of the tribal health-care systems in Arizona’s 22 federally recognized tribes/nations report extreme nurse shortages, particularly American Indian registered nurses. Leaders report the most critical needs are RNs who can move between



acute and primary care and nurse practitioners in family and psychiatric/mental health specialties.

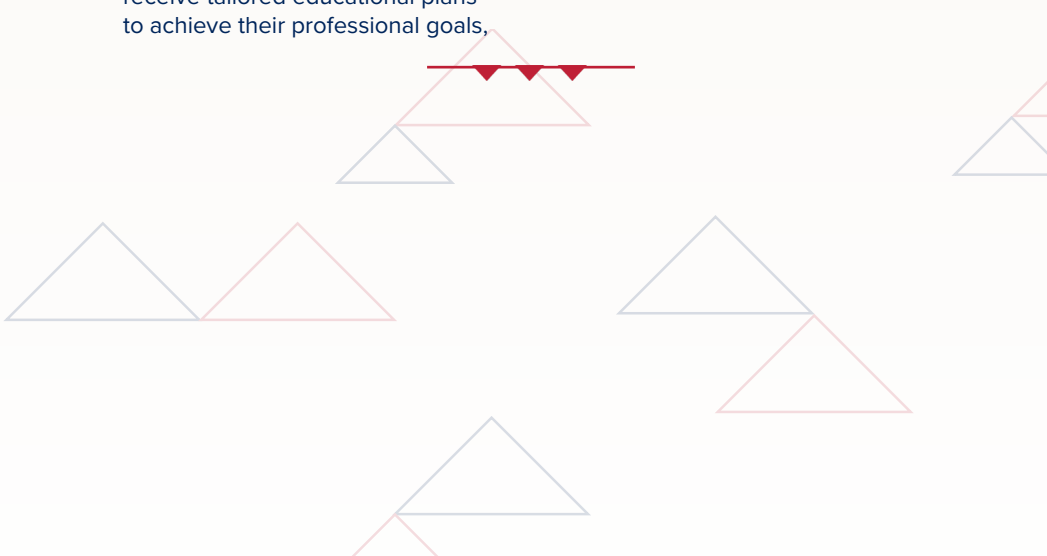
“The University of Arizona College of Nursing’s firm commitment to inclusive excellence is building a better world for our students and our state,” said UArizona President Robert C. Robbins, MD. “The INCATS program will help create a more diverse and culturally competent nursing workforce primed to serve our community partners.”

Dr. Kahn-John and her team will develop and implement the INCATS program in collaboration with their tribal community partners throughout Arizona, as well as other tribal partners in South Dakota and Montana.

To be eligible for the INCATS program, scholars must be American Indian or Alaska Native, enrolled at the UArizona College of Nursing as a pre-nursing or nursing student, and must be nominated by a community partner, such as a tribal clinic, college or organization. INCAT Career Advancement Scholars will receive tailored educational plans to achieve their professional goals,

mentorship, and academic navigation to ensure best outcomes for each scholar and each tribal community partner. These efforts will result in additional BSN-prepared RNs and advanced-practice American Indian and Alaska Native NPs (nurse practitioners) to practice in tribal facilities.

In addition, the grant supports flexible career-advancing degree pathways for American Indian and Alaska Native RNs with community college degrees through an RN-MSN program in clinical systems leadership. Interactive continuing professional education resources will be created and shared with tribal partners to support and enhance clinical competence and improve the quality of care delivered to tribal communities. College leaders note partnerships with tribal community colleges will foster greater capacity to support tribal and community-based academic programs as “stepping stones” to a UArizona education, as well as enhance the college’s development of a culture that nurtures and sustains American Indian/Alaska Native students.





# **Dr. Marylyn Morris McEwen**

## ***Named Associate Dean for Global Nursing***

By Jason Gelt

University of Arizona College of Nursing Professor Marylyn Morris McEwen, PhD, RN, FAAN, has been named Arizona Nursing Associate Dean for Global Nursing. With a longstanding passion for – and established track record in – global nursing, Dr. McEwen is eminently poised to lead trailblazing efforts for global education at the UArizona Nursing.

The position was created in part as a response to the UArizona strategic plan and the UA Health Sciences (UAHS) strategic plan to extend the reach of UArizona Nursing programs across international borders.

The newly created leadership position enables UArizona Nursing to support the UArizona strategic plan's fourth pillar, Arizona Global, which redefines the international university experience by engaging with communities globally.

When UArizona leadership was reviewing the university's current

microcampus partnerships, a recurrent theme was that Arizona Nursing's expertise was in high demand globally. The idea of expanding the College's international profile was presented to Arizona Nursing Dean Ki Moore, PhD, RN, FAAN, who enthusiastically accepted the challenge. UA Global will supply the connections and Dr. McEwen will forge the bonds that lead to UArizona Nursing microcampuses worldwide. Partnerships have been proposed for Mauritius, the Philippines, Cambodia, Peru, and India.

The UA has microcampuses in 10 nations, including Peru, China, the United Arab Emirates, Vietnam, Mauritius, Indonesia, Jordan, Cambodia, Iraq, and the Philippines. Ultimately, the strategic plan's goal is to establish 20 microcampuses by 2025, with 10,000 students across regional hubs in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

Under Dr. McEwen's leadership, UArizona Nursing will be among



the first colleges to implement the UArizona Health Sciences' global initiative.

"I am pleased that Dr. McEwen has accepted the appointment as the first Associate Dean for Global Nursing," Dean Moore said. "She now will be leading all of our global strategic initiatives that are closely aligned with the Health Sciences and UA strategic plans. We have an exciting opportunity to engage with new global partners seeking our academic programs. Marylyn brings the ideal credentials and vision to lead global nursing at our university."

A fellow in the American Academy of Nursing's global health expert panel, Dr. McEwen has co-authored immigrant health and border health white papers and published on health issues in the U.S.-Mexico border region. Her career has addressed wide-ranging global health concerns. "When I finished my undergraduate program, I knew I wanted to focus on

global health," she said.

In 1989, Dr. McEwen taught a rural community health rotation that brought nursing students to the U.S.-Mexico border for their public health nursing rotations. That was her first experience teaching in the border region and it fueled her passion for achieving health equity and decreasing health disparities for people of Mexican origin in this unique geopolitical region. "I saw the border region as an amazingly rich environment in which to examine the multiple and diverse factors that influence health and well-being for people in two countries that share a common border," Dr. McEwen said.

Testament to her collaborative talents, Dr. McEwen provided leadership in a 15-year HRSA-funded interdisciplinary rural health training grant that focused on border/binational health, with students and faculty members from UArizona Nursing, Public Health, Pharmacy,



College of Medicine – Tucson, and Nutritional Sciences and Arizona State University School of Social Work. Each semester, with her UArizona College of Pharmacy colleague, she facilitated student tours of the Mexican health-care systems in Nogales, Sonora, Mexico, and discussed local and binational health-care issues with Mexican health-care professionals. She is known for her interprofessional workforce development model for building community capacity, her community-centric program of research, as well as her culturally congruent community-based interventions to promote health.

“My research team always has been composed of colleagues from diverse disciplines, including promotoras, or community health workers. I have

extensive experience in conducting community-based research, primarily development and testing of culturally and linguistically tailored interventions, using a participatory research approach, with Mexican American adults with type 2 diabetes and their family members.”

Dr. McEwen has disseminated her research findings at international professional meetings in Ireland, Australia, Mexico and Italy.

UArizona Nursing’s global program has a head start, thanks to the college’s Global Nursing Advisory Group, which has developed partnerships with nursing programs in Sonora, Mexico; Universidad de Sonora (UNISON) School of Nursing in Hermosillo and Instituto Interamericano de Educacion

**“It’s a wonderful opportunity for our DNP students, and for our students across all program levels. Students who experience a different health-care system in action is an amazing and professionally enriching opportunity. Students who learn about international health-care systems, compare and contrast those with the U.S. systems and learn from one another strategies to improve their own practice and health-care delivery systems.”**



**~ Marylyn Morris McEwen  
PhD, RN, FAAN**

Superior para la Salud in Guaymas. Dr. McEwen has been active in the work of the advisory group, and with another colleague, extended the Master's Entry into Practice Nursing (MEPN) public health nursing clinical rotation to UNISON in Hermosillo last summer with eight students. "We have an impressive group of faculty members at the College of Nursing who are committed to strengthening our Sonoran partnerships and extending teaching/learning opportunities with other partners in Mexico and Central America. I have no doubt they will fully embrace the microcampus concept as well."

Dr. McEwen is excited about her increased capacity to champion global partnerships, not only for the increased exposure they will bring to UArizona Nursing, but for the benefits that both domestic and international students will receive. Ultimately, she would love to see a student exchange program established that would benefit every nation involved. "It's a wonderful opportunity for our DNP students, and for our students across all program levels. Students who experience a different health-care system in action is an amazing and professionally enriching opportunity. Students learn about international health-care systems, compare and contrast those with the U.S. systems, and learn from one

another strategies to improve their own practice and health-care delivery systems."

UArizona Global Nursing is slated to start in fall 2020. Dr. McEwen, in responding to global partners' requests, plans to begin with the entry-into-practice-level nursing program before extending into graduate and doctoral-level programs. The College will assess the capacity and readiness for prospective partners to engage in the program – determining prerequisites that must be met by students seeking entry into the program, faculty capacity and assessment of local health-care systems to support clinical experiences. The programs will be delivered in UA Global microcampuses, with the ultimate goal of allowing students to sit for state nursing board exams and potentially practice nursing in the United States.

"It's such an amazing opportunity for global nursing to participate in an innovative model that promotes the health of the people through completion of a UArizona Nursing degree, improves the level of education by increasing local faculty capacity and ultimately elevates the delivery of health care," Dr. McEwen said.

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*Thank you to each and every one of you who makes giving to the College a priority. Private philanthropy allowed us to quickly maneuver the challenges we faced in the face of COVID-19.*



# ***Student's*** **Substance Abuse Research** ***Implemented at*** ***Marana Health Center***

By Jason Gelt

UArizona Nursing Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) student James Fiske's DNP project has had a concrete impact on patient care for substance abuse issues. Fiske, who did his clinical rotation at Marana Health Center (MHC), researched the communication aspects of the Addiction Severity Index (ASI) test, which led to the assessment being implemented in MHC's substance abuse treatment program. Fiske's focus on the most effective uses of the semi-structured interview designed to address seven potential problem areas in substance-abusing patients is just one example of the exemplary impact our DNP students have on the care of patients.

The potential problem areas in substance-abusing patients that the ASI addresses include: medical status, employment and support, drug use, alcohol use, legal status, family/social status, and psychiatric status. In one hour, a skilled interviewer can gather information on recent and lifetime problems in all of the problem areas. The ASI provides an overview of problems related to substance, rather than focusing on any single area.

When he was brainstorming his dissertation, Fiske, who graduated from the DNP program in December, realized that the need for nurses to administer the ASI test would be beneficial for patients and providers alike. "The ASI is intended to establish whether the person who is walking through the door has accepted that substance use is a significant problem in their life," explains Fiske.

The ASI interview yields two different measures: the Interviewer Severity Ratings and the Composite Scores. The Interviewer Severity Ratings are qualitative items that provide a summary for people who want a quick general profile of a client's problem status in each section of the ASI. Composite Scores are mathematically sound measures of change in problem status.

In addition to helping devise a treatment strategy, the ASI is also useful for psychotherapy because results indicate whether the patient would benefit from psychotherapy or chemical therapy. Training medical providers – including nurses – to effectively administer the ASI is key to the success of the assessment tool. Fiske conducted a one-day training at Marana Health that provided training on two different levels: to train providers to understand what the scores they will be looking at mean and also to train nurses how to provide the assessment.

Marana Health Center was so impressed with Fiske's ASI innovations that it adopted the program for use with addiction treatment. After new patients receive a psychiatric evaluation from a physician, Fiske takes over as point person for the ASI. "I sit with them for 30 minutes and I do the ASI," Fiske says. "We assess for depression, anxiety, and psychosis. It's important for psychotherapy because once the person is going for psychotherapy, then they can focus on what they need to address their problems."

A native of West Africa, Fiske holds a bachelor's degree in political science and history from the University of Ghana, and a bachelor's of science in nursing and a master's in professional communication from East Tennessee State University. He has worked as a war reporter and as a research analyst in Liberia's Office of the President and spent time as a refugee from his war-torn home country.

As for the future, Fiske plans on giving back to his birthplace. He is motivated by his desire to aid disadvantaged communities through the spread of up-to-date health care strategies. Now that he has a DNP, he plans to work in the U.S., save money and ultimately build a teaching clinic in Liberia. He hopes to structure the clinic so that nurses from both Liberia and the U.S. can rotate between countries, thereby increasing their knowledge of new research and growing their capacity to deliver health care.

**“This is my philosophy: Everybody cannot migrate to the United States of America. But the United States can migrate to people in those ways. In the realm of science and medicine we can reach out – and that is truly significant.”**



*~ James Fiske, RN*



# ***UArizona Nursing*** **Student Researcher**

## ***Recognized with Western Institute of Nursing's New Researcher Award***

By Jason Gelt

The Western Institute of Nursing (WIN) recently announced that University of Arizona College of Nursing PhD student Christine Platt had been selected as the recipient of the 2020 Carol A. Lindeman Award for a New Researcher. Since 1976, the award has provided a fledgling researcher with a \$100 cash prize and the opportunity for their research to be included, in its entirety, in WIN's annual conference.

Platt's study, entitled "Placement Disruption of Children with Disabilities in Foster Care," has the potential for life-changing results for both disabled children in the foster care system and the families that care for them.

With experience as a registered public health nurse, a hospital staff nurse, and a critical care RN in both cardiac and neuro intensive care units, Platt currently sees patients at her professional dermatologic clinic and volunteers in the evenings to serve the community's under- or un-insured population. But it's her 10 years as a foster mom that informs Platt's very personal interest in her research.

"Because of my intensive care and pediatric clinical experience," Platt says, "the state really liked to place children with special needs and medical conditions in my home, because they knew that if something went wrong they had someone with the training to handle that situation."

As a part of the community of families raising foster or adoptive children with special needs, from learning disabilities to severe physical disabilities, Platt saw how foster families grew confidence and strength when things went right, but she also saw how painful results could become when families lacked the resources, education or training to take in a child with special needs.

Her first step was to examine whether what she was seeing in the community – children with disabilities jumping from foster family to foster family and ending up spending more time in the system – was an accurate



representation of the facts. An investigation of data and trends revealed this was true. Platt's second step was to examine the successful resources and protective factors that help foster families provide a stable environment for these unique kids.

"My research will focus on qualitative information and quantitative data to see what help is available, and then look at interventions, whether through training, education, or even political action, to give these kids a real fighting chance and improve the system for them," Platt says.

She theorizes that the right combination of training and education will be key for foster family success. Platt also plans to take a holistic approach with her research, examining how the situation affects not just the foster parents and the foster child, but also any other siblings that may be in the home. "The foster parents may be receiving education," she says, "but what preparation do the kids in the home have to be able to help out and incorporate a foster child into their home and give them the love and the stability that they need?"

That preparedness, Platt theorizes, will lead to improved outcomes for this vulnerable population. With everything stacked against them, she believes her research can ultimately improve their health, not only for the period they spend in state custody, but for their lifetime.

Asked about her feelings about being awarded WIN's New Researcher award, she expresses pride in being recognized by her peers. "It tells me that what I'm doing matters," she says. "I love research. I enjoy writing. I love helping people, but I'm at a point in my career when I feel like I can give back to my profession."

***“I love helping people, but I’m at a point in my career when I feel like I can give back to my profession. And the way to give back to my profession is really to make a difference in research and teaching. It’s validation that even when the nights get long and circumstances get challenging, to keep going.”***



*~ Christine Platt  
first-year PhD student*



# **Dr. Sharon Hitchcock**

## ***Nominated by March of Dimes for Nurse Educator of the Year Award***

By Jason Gelt

Last year, UArizona Nursing Clinical Assistant Professor Sharon Hitchcock, DNP, RN-C, was nominated for the 2019 March of Dimes Nurse of the Year award for her outstanding contributions to the field of education. Dr. Hitchcock was among 24 finalists culled from more than 250 nominations for this year's recognitions.

With a mission to fight for the health of all moms and babies, the March of Dimes Nurse of the Year initiative recognizes exceptional nurses throughout the state, celebrating the profession and creating awareness of the strides made in this growing field. A natural fit for this arena, Dr. Hitchcock's focus on infant safety stretches back years, although her formal work as an educator on the subject is more recent. Dr. Hitchcock's desire to educate nurses and parents about the importance of infant safety grew while working as a bedside nurse in the mother/baby obstetrics unit at Carondelet St. Joseph's Hospital.

It was in her capacity as a hospital educator that she met Arizona Nursing's Connie Miller, DNP, RNC-OB, CNE, CCCE, who encouraged her interest in furthering her nursing career as an educator. After earning her master's degree, Dr. Hitchcock joined the College of Nursing faculty. Four years after that, she completed her DNP degree.

"Sharon is passionate about her day-in, day-out work at the University of Arizona and the nursing students she serves," says Dr. Miller. "She takes pride in the creative ways she teaches, her drive to help students become scholars, and she looks for ways to engage and excite students regarding obstetrical topics."

Educating nursing students about the importance of providing new parents with sleep safety guidelines is Dr. Hitchcock's abiding passion. "There



are about 3500 deaths a year, most which are preventable, related to infant sleep,” she says, noting that this breaks down to 10 U.S. infant deaths per day. “Nurses are at the forefront of this. If we were able to adequately educate parents, we could prevent most of these deaths.”

In service of this important goal, Dr. Hitchcock and her colleague Melanie Welch, MSN, RN, teach Arizona Nursing’s Obstetrics course for Bachelor of Science in Nursing students. “We come into the classroom with a basinet that’s unsafe, we come in as a mom who is resistant to the safe sleep recommendations, and we role play,” she says. “The way we prepare them in the classroom works, because when we go into the hospital setting they’re well-prepared to talk to parents, and they do it!”

Additionally, Dr. Hitchcock is part of the national Association of Women’s Health Obstetrics and Neonatal Nurses and in Arizona she is a member of the state’s Safe Sleep Task Force, which works to promote safe sleep through home visiting programs that work directly with families and in hospitals around the state.

All of her efforts boil down to a passion for education. As an educator, she strives to not only prepare students with the technical skills they need, but also with the sense of caring they need as they go forward to work with patients.

“Our graduates have been trained to be leaders that care about patients and our healthcare system,” she says, “and as educators, we need to make sure they have the knowledge and critical thinking skills they need. I tell our students, ‘We’re sending you out with a bachelor’s degree, and that means you’re going to go into our health care organizations to be great nurses, and leaders that can solve big problems.’”

**“Our graduates have been trained to be leaders that care about patients and our healthcare system and as educators, we need to make sure they have the knowledge and critical thinking skills they need.”**



*~ Sharon Hitchcock  
DNP, RN-C*



**Arizona Nursing BSN Alumna's**

# Passion for Serving

***the Underserved Transcends Borders***

By Jason Gelt

Humanitarian nursing is part of University of Arizona College of Nursing alumna Katherine Stradling's DNA. The 2013 Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) graduate founded Hands to Hearts, a nonprofit that provides education and resources to empower people to save lives. The organization offers life support courses to underserved communities in the United States, while building the first response system in rural Mexico. Hands to Hearts grew from Stradling's experiences as a Registered Nurse with the Flying Doctors, a non-profit organization that aims to improve the health and well-being of underprivileged communities through the provision of no-cost medical, dental, and optometry clinics. "I love working in rural hospitals in impoverished areas, helping people that medicine sometimes misses," Stradling says.

Realizing that underserved communities also suffer from a lack of Emergency Medical Training, Stradling was inspired to establish Hands to Hearts in order to offer a full roster of emergency training for in-need communities. With a mission that stresses that no one should die of treatable medical emergencies due to lack of education and resources, Hands to Hearts offers life support courses to community members both in rural Mexico and in the United States. Stradling and her team have provided training to more than 2,500 people and improve quality of life by donating unused medical supplies and equipment to medical organizations in need.

***Tell us about the genesis of Hands to Hearts.*** The Flying Doctors was the inspiration for Hands to Hearts, which has slowly developed over the last couple years. Now we actually offer a full three-week Emergency Medical Training program for emergency response responders and also people in rural communities.



We officially hit our two-year mark as a non-profit in October 2019, but I've been doing things very similar to Hands to Hearts for about three years now. Recently, I switched gears and left hospital nursing full-time, so now I live in rural Mexico for half the year.

***What led to your passion for humanitarian work?*** I was raised in a family that did charity work. It wasn't something optional to volunteer, it was just what you did. I absolutely love working in the more rural hospitals in impoverished areas. It's what I enjoy and I feel like it makes a huge difference. Nurses can really go above and beyond and make change for those who need it most.

***Tell us more about the programs Hands to Hearts offers.*** We offer a CPR and First Aid course. We offer an education school course, which is designed for teachers and high school kids. It's a two-day course that is designed for teachers and coaches. We also have a four-day emergency first response program, which covers how to best use your resources to get somebody to the hospital alive. Then we have the three-week pre-hospital emergency response program, which is equivalent to an emergency medical technician program.

We believe in education plus resources to empower community members. After they graduate, we give them the supplies they need to execute those courses on their own. We also work with the rural hospitals, teaching classes. We've done a two-day trauma symposium, which was one of the first of its kind in Baja for nurses and doctors.

***How did your studies at UA Nursing inform your current work?*** I'm really big on simulations, because the UA stressed simulations all the time. I adopted a lot of that structure for our program. In addition, there were always resources around helping people in the community and health equality. I became a disaster nurse because of our final semester of nursing school, because we had a rotation where they told us about the Red Cross.





# **New Guided Imagery App**

***from UArizona Nursing Researcher  
to Help Reduce the Stress and  
Anxiety of Social Isolation***

By Jason Gelt

During the COVID-19 pandemic many people are sheltering in place and staying home, with little access to the outdoors or ability to engage in activities they enjoy. But a new mobile app hopes to address the negative health effects of social isolation by reducing stress and anxiety using a technique called Guided Imagery, which has been used to help people quit smoking, get into shape, and reduce stress. Last month, UArizona's BIO5 Institute awarded UArizona Nursing Associate Dean for Research, Judith Gordon, PhD, a seed grant to pursue COVID-19 team projects. Dr. Gordon and her team will receive \$20,360 to pursue their project, "See Me Serene: A Guided Imagery mHealth App for decreasing Anxiety Related to Social Isolation."

While social media can provide connections with others, social isolation removes people from nature and the outdoors. People who cannot go outdoors may experience increased stress and anxiety as a result. The vast majority of Americans across age, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status own smartphones; and of those, most use mobile apps. Dr. Gordon's project addresses this stress by offering a mobile app that delivers a Guided Imagery intervention.

Guided Imagery is a proven method that uses enhanced visualization to help people deal with stressful situations, including social isolation. More than just visual images, Guided Imagery involves imagining sights, sounds, tastes, smells, tactile senses, and the emotions. Dr. Gordon and her colleagues have used Guided Imagery successfully to help people make positive lifestyle changes, like quitting smoking and getting more exercise. Guided Imagery also has been shown to be effective at reducing chronic pain and anxiety.

"Using a simple mHealth app to deliver Guided Imagery audio files will provide endless possibilities for simulating outdoor experiences for the millions of Americans experiencing social isolation," Dr. Gordon said.

The See Me Serene app provides users with immersive, vivid, nature experiences designed to reduce stress and anxiety related to social isolation. The app will be a more affordable and scalable solution than Virtual Reality, which requires expensive and specialized equipment. “See Me Serene allows users to select from at least 50 different audio files, each describing a different outdoor experience. The app also contains links to mental health resources that are available 24/7,” Dr. Gordon said.

The goals of the See Me Serene research project are to pilot test the app with 100 participants. Participants will provide self-report survey data and will be tested for cortisol levels collected from saliva. Cortisol is a biological marker for stress. Participants will use the See Me Serene app for four weeks. People interested in participating can contact the research team from within the app.

“Our hope is that See Me Serene will be easy to use and that it will help people cope with the stress and anxiety they’re feeling as a result of being stuck indoors,” Dr. Gordon said. “If our pilot results are promising, we will seek funding to conduct a large-scale efficacy trial. In the meantime, the app will be free for anyone to use.”

The BIO5 grant was made possible with resources from the BIO5 Institute and the Technology and Research Initiative Fund (TRIF) to help researchers quickly pivot their work to address the pandemic in areas related to improving the health of Arizonans.

To download the app visit [nursing.arizona.edu/see-me-serene](https://nursing.arizona.edu/see-me-serene).

***“Using a simple mHealth app to deliver Guided Imagery audio files will provide endless possibilities for simulating outdoor experiences for the millions of Americans experiencing social isolation.”***



***~ Judith Gordon  
PhD, UArizona Nursing Associate  
Dean for Research***



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