



Parish Nurse Newsletter

Fall 2009

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Mission Statement

The Parish Nurse Newsletter serves to:

- create a bond between parish nurses and the staff of LCMS Health Ministries
- report creative programs developed in the field
- inform parish nurses of resources available from various sources.



Restoring Christ's Toughness in Texas Inmates

By Joyce Polster

Jail ministry has a way of restoring toughness in underachievers. Underachieving in the Christian life is a common malady according to St. Paul (Romans 7:14-25). This applies to parents, pastors, professional workers of all sorts, pro sports players, parish nurses, as well as inmates incarcerated in county jails and state prisons. Achieving what we believe is our goal, or what our bosses assign as our goal, is too often paramount in our lives. The vital ingredients to restoring true toughness are God's goals ... to be achieved by those created in His image.

When we are called by the Lord to achieve something in a new area, we may think it is merely for consideration, and that no one would fault us for saying "no," especially when it is doing service for the Lord in a jail. Think of the risks, spiritually and physically, and a multitude of fears the devil will keep on your mind if you let him. "Oh yes, it should be done by one who loves the Lord, but it does not have to be me." When new doors open — and prayer does not close that widely-opened-door — it is time to get in shape and restore our toughness, to achieve something new in the name of Jesus Christ.

Our jail ministry began on a cold January night two years after the parish nurse program began at Trinity Lutheran Church, under the direction of Rev. Mark Cattau. The church had simply afforded a place for a small group of "others" to meet, not planning to get involved in the actual jail ministry.

Opening the door of the county jail that first 'church day,' I quietly prayed, "I know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified and risen in glory, victoriously!" I repeated it. Then the door closed and locked behind me. After proper registration, identification exchange, and other requirements, I entered a room and was greeted by inviting, smiling faces. Then, we all prayed together in the warm chaplain's office: there were

Joyce Polster is active in prison ministry, including at the Randall County Jail in Texas. She serves as a health/wellness coordinator and as the parish nurse representative for the Texas District.



two female lay people, two male lay persons, a pastor, and the chaplain. Females minister to female inmates and males minister to male inmates. The prayer was for the Holy Spirit to open the ears and hearts of inmates (and guards) and that all would hear the Word. We prayed for protection for ourselves, our families, guards, inmates, and their families, and for God's goals for all to be achieved in the almighty name of Jesus Christ (Isaiah 55:11).

A parish nurse has now been involved in this ministry for eight years. Nearly 20 other churches of various denominations join to share the love of Jesus and give Bibles to inmates. In the county jails, the sheriffs and their departments support jail ministry, citing benefits for the inmates and the jail.

What joy it is to share the Good News message with others! Short Bible studies (prepared with the support of current ministers at Trinity, Rev. Brian Hesse and David Schatte) reveal that those ministered to have gained new knowledge in the Word, learning attributes concerning Jesus that they had never heard before. And their prayer is that they and their families will follow and serve Jesus. These prisoners, who are precious to the Lord, are eager to hear that God loves them too (John 3:16). Their repentance and obedience to their loving God is basic for turning them from underachievers into achievers with toughness (Romans 6:17-18), not forgetting the blessed everlasting relationship with Him to come.

Praise God for the personal, spiritual growth realized by the participating parish nurse and those in the community who are involved in jail ministry. Witnessing our relationships and joy in the Lord has a way of leading even more to explore the Lord's presence, at times when he or she had not recognized He was there, as He works things out for our good (Romans 8:28). Sharing this with inmates gives them hope and peace. They have a Bible to read, and in repentance have His peace and joy. We pray for them and with them. And they have the assurance that the Holy Spirit, God Almighty is with them, ready to forgive and restore (His) toughness for their brokenness. The Potter is there, always with them. He molds, mends, and enables His children to be His achievers. Not forgetting that the new life for them, given by Christ Jesus' suffering and death on that cross of Calvary, is a free gift (Ephesians 2:8-10)!

The parish nurse/health ministry program continues to pray for restoration of toughness, wherever the LORD leads them, including: compassion visits, prayer vigils, disease prevention, health promotion and education, assessment visits, blood pressure ministry, sharing donated health home equipment, Bible studies, and yes, Good News visits ('church') at the county jail.

Joyce Polster, R.N., M.S.N., serves as the health/wellness coordinator and parish nurse representative for the Texas District, LCMS. She may be contacted at djpolster@clearwire.net.

Nurses for Newborns Caring for the "Least of These"

By Linda S. Spina

The poor ... the mentally ill ... the drug addict ... the prostitute ... the homeless. These people make up my parish. I am the director of parish nursing for Nurses For Newborns Foundation in St. Louis, Mo. My parish is north St. Louis city, an area that has an infant mortality rate twice that of Cuba.

With the words of my Father to guide me ... "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me ... whatever you did for one of the least of my brethren, you did for me," every day I work with the least of these my brethren; families that have no food, no heat, no hope.

Nurses For Newborns is a non-profit organization



A nurse with the St. Louis-based Nurses for Newborns Foundation checks the temperature of an infant. The non-profit cares for high-risk newborns in low-income families, in their homes.

that opened its doors in 1991. The mission is clear: send registered nurses into the homes of high-risk, low income families to assess the health of the newborns and provide care. The nurses also provide parent education in order to prevent child abuse and neglect.

As a parish nurse, not only do I go into the home to provide highly skilled nursing care, but I am always available to just listen – intentional care of the spirit – and to connect families with faith communities in their neighborhoods.

Linda S. Spina, RN, MSN, WHNP, is the director of parish nursing for Nurses For Newborns Foundation in St. Louis, Mo.

“The Nurse Is In” Program at Christian Friends of New Americans: Parish Nursing in Non-Traditional Settings

By Carol Broemmer

The *Nurse Is In* program at Christian Friends of New Americans (CFNA) offers parish nursing in a non-traditional setting. CFNA is an outreach ministry to immigrants and refugees in the greater St. Louis area. It is a mission society of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), with a mission to be involved in relationships with new Americans with whom we can share the Gospel through caring words and actions. English as a second language, computer and citizenship classes, along with Bible study, and sports and social events have been offered for the past seven years by CFNA at the Peace Center on South Grand in an underserved area of St. Louis city. A wide assortment of immigrant refugees from 17 different countries with 67 different languages are currently being served.

The planning committee for *The Nurse Is In* program met in the spring of 2008 and included six immigrant women, a representative from Faith Based Health Care Initiative, teachers, nurses, and parish nurses. The project was designed to minister to the health needs of the immigrant and refugee community residing near the Peace Center, providing health knowledge and health care connections. These new arrivals often lack resources to meet their health care needs and the knowledge of basic educational information and how to access care. *The Nurse Is In* program (32 hours per month) is funded by grants from Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, Wheat Ridge Ministries, Missouri Foundation for Health, Lutheran Women’s Missionary League, Concordia Lutheran Church Kirkwood, Mo., other local LCMS congregations, and by private donor contributions.

The program coordinates 10 screenings annually, which are staffed by professional medical volunteers. Screenings include nursing assessment, blood pressure, height and weight, body mass index, waist/hip ratio, and vision screening. Participants discuss their health concerns with a nurse, physician, dietitian, and ophthalmic technician. Translators from within the ethnic communities assist the volunteers and participants. An international “healthy meal” is prepared by participants and shared at the screening providing opportunities for interaction and one-on-one opportunities to teach good health habits along with good nutrition and proper cooking techniques. The last 10 screenings have served over 250 immigrant and refugees.

The screenings further serve to assist participants in connecting with much-needed community resources. *The Nurse Is In* program coordinates the volunteers for the screenings and follow up. The program assists participants in making medical appointments, ensuring that translation is available, filling prescriptions, obtaining over-the-counter medications, serving as a health advocate, and coordinating volunteers



Parish Nurse Carol Broemmer, right, cares for a recent immigrant to the United States during a free clinic sponsored by Christian Friends of New Americans.

A young immigrant woman's blood pressure is measured during a "The Nurse is In" program.

who also provide these services. Home visits offer needed assistance in organizing medications and filling out the paper work required to establish eligibility, as well as to share hospitality and friendship.

We may never know the tremendous trauma, both physical and psychological, these U.N. sponsored immigrants/refugees have experienced. The recent Bhutanese refugees were mostly farmers prior to having their homes and property taken away and being forced into refugee camps 18 years ago where they lived without productive occupations. Their children were given basic education and most speak some English. They lack understanding of everyday issues such as purchasing over-the-counter meds or having prescriptions filled. Some experience depression, others are overwhelmed, and some just need a little hand up. The Medicaid coverage that they receive for a few months upon entry to this country is confusing, even for seasoned medical professionals who traverse the red tape. Limited medical resources are available to Medicaid and uninsured populations. Networking with other not-for-profits is essential to identifying resources and opportunities.

This is truly parish nursing in a non-traditional setting, which at times is a little out of my comfort zone. But, as it says in John 15:15 "...I have called you friends..."

Carol Broemmer, R.N., serves as parish nurse manager for Christian Friends of New Americans in St. Louis, Mo.



A Parish Nurses' Insights on Disability Ministry

By June Kamm

The message of John 10:10: "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" is for all people — including those with disabilities.

People with disabilities have desires and dreams just like people without disabilities. All need to go to church and Bible classes to celebrate and learn about Christ. All need to pray. All will benefit from Christian friends who will pray with and for them. All need the full life. The parish nurse can help the members of the congregation learn to appreciate the special traits and gifts of the disabled person.

Bethesda Group Home in Sycamore, Ill., is home to 10-12 adults (25-45 years of age) who have developmental disabilities. Each person is different and each is a delight. They need to be led and instructed differently and often respond to a form of sign language. I am learning to communicate in this sign language and will begin a monthly meeting next year.

The residents are eager to please and to be noticed. Their method of response is different from others and this may cause a distraction. The distraction, however, is an opportunity to teach congregants about the residents' special needs — and to appreciate what they can offer.

All people share the gift of eternal life through faith in Jesus. Parish nurses can share God's love with all people and be a model of patience, knowledge, and love as they serve in the congregation and the community.

June Kamm is the parish nurse/parish assistant at Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. John, Sycamore, Ill. Part of her service has been with the residents of Bethesda Home in Sycamore — at their facility and within the congregation.

Cruising with the LWML

The Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) and LCMS Parish Nursing have enjoyed a long friendship as we share similar goals — especially reaching out to others with the caring Christ. Local LWML groups have often provided encouragement and support for parish nurses in their congregations. Some districts have provided grants for the development of parish nursing within their district or beyond. Resources related to Christian care giving are available from the LWML and have been useful to parish nurses as they facilitate, equip, and support care-giving volunteers in the congregation.

More than 250 people participated in the cruise to Alaska following the LWML Convention—many were nurses. One of the vacationers was Marcia Schnorr, coordinator of parish nursing for LCMS World Relief and Human Care. Conversations often included parish nursing and several potential new parish nurse ministries were identified.

At least four practicing parish nurses were on the cruise: Dorothy Degnitz of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Watertown, Wis.; Judy Paulson of St. Peter Lutheran Church in Hilbert, Wis.; Marcia Schnorr of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Rochelle, Ill., and coordinator of parish nursing for LCMS World Relief and Human Care; and Linda Arnold of Trinity Lutheran Church, Lisle, Ill.



Dorothy Degnitz of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Watertown, Wis.; Judy Paulson of St. Peter Lutheran Church in Hilbert, Wis.; Marcia Schnorr of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Rochelle, Ill., and coordinator of parish nursing for LCMS World Relief and Human Care; and Linda Arnold of Trinity Lutheran Church, Lisle, Ill., participated in the Alaskan cruise following the LWML convention. This photo was taken just before a standing room-only worship service led by Rev. J.R. Jones of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Boca Raton, Fla.

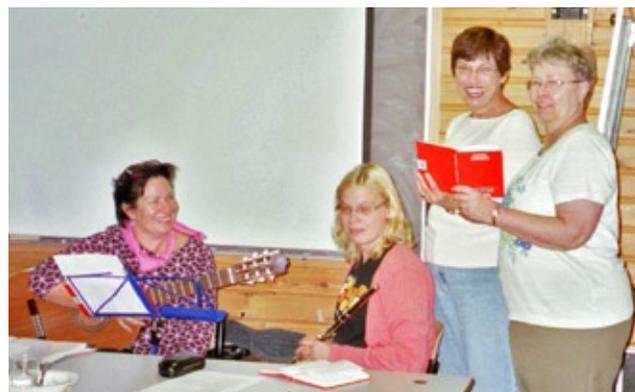
U.S. Nurses Return from Trip to Finland

Carol Broemmer, parish nurse manager for Christian Friends of New Americans in St. Louis, Mo., and Marcia Schnorr, coordinator of parish nursing for LCMS World Relief and Human Care, were privileged to spend 10 days in Finland as guests of the Diaconal University of Applied Sciences in Oulu, Finland. They had several opportunities to meet with diaconal nurses (parish nurses), deacons (diaconal social workers), and clergy who serve within the region of Oulu. The experience began with a meeting at the Oulu Diaconia Institute and a visit to a center that provides care for people (from Iraq, Somalia, and other locations) who have been victims of torture. Broemmer and Schnorr then attended a retreat meeting of the diaconal workers at a camp in Vasamo with leaders of the Diaconal University of Applied Sciences at their guest cabin in Iso-Syote National Park.

Broemmer and Schnorr each made presentations at the Annual Conference of Diaconal Workers in Oulu. The theme for the conference was "Caring for the Body and Soul through Health Promotion." Schnorr provided a plenary session on "Spiritual Nursing Care—Implications for Parish Nurses" and Broemmer led a workshop on "Health Promotion by Parish Nurses." Additional presenters included diaconal nurses, clergy, and others who provide diaconal care.

Some interesting comparisons and contrasts can be noted between parish nursing in Finland and the United States:

- In Finland, diaconal nursing is an option for a beginning nursing student. The nurses' education includes the traditional nursing courses and theology woven together to prepare them for diaconal nursing. This is in contrast to the U.S., where the registered nurse takes additional education to become a parish nurse (or in some cases may take an elective course in parish nursing as a part of the curriculum).
- In Finland, it is the law to have at least one diaconal worker per congregation. Many have several. Diaconal workers are all



Marcia Schnorr, far right, and Carol Broemmer, worship with fellow parish nurses during their 10-day trip to Finland.

paid. In the U.S., congregations may opt to have a diaconal worker, but it is not required by law. Few parish nurses in the U.S. are full-time salaried.

- In Finland, there is only one main church per town and the citizens are taxed 1% for the support of the church. This is in contrast to the U.S., where tax dollars are not used to support the church.
- In Finland, any church worker is “ordained” but they have different types of ordination. There is a clear distinction between the clergy ordination and the ordination of the diaconal worker. In the LCMS, we reserve ordination for the clergy, but commission (or dedicate) the parish nurse.
- In Finland, the people are shy and are less verbal (in public) about their faith. Perhaps this is because most everyone is Lutheran (at least in name). Some of the conference participants responded that they appreciated the openness that we had about sharing our faith in public.
- In Finland and in the U.S., diaconal nurses and parish nurses sometimes feel isolated from others who have similar vocations.
- In Finland and in the U.S., diaconal nurses and parish nurses provide many services to the congregation and community — often with little recognition.
- In Finland and in the U.S., diaconal nurses and parish nurses are dedicated and determined to serve the Lord faithfully.

Portfolio Review for Parish Nurses

Although we encourage parish nurses to take a traditional parish nurse educational program, we recognize that there are various reasons why this may be difficult for some.

A portfolio review is available as an option for those whose education is “self-directed readings,” to document that they are able to meet the educational objectives and receive recognition for their achievement. It is also possible that some practicing parish nurses may opt for a guided review of their parish nursing. The portfolio review may serve either audience.

For more information, contact Marcia Schnorr, coordinator of parish nursing for LCMS WR-HC, at marcyschnorr2009@gmail.com or 815-562-6823. If you would like more information about a traditional Christ-centered parish nurse course, contact Dr. Carol Lueders Bolwerk at carol.lueders.bolwerk@cuw.edu.

Resources

Hope and Healing

The Church Health Center in Memphis, Tenn., launched HopeandHealing.org, a Web site with resources dedicated to health ministry. The variety of resources offered is excellent for parish nurses’ ministry life and personal life. The staff members of The Church Health Center and Wheat Ridge Ministries are in the midst of discussions about future collaborative opportunities related to this new Web site.

LPNI Debuts New Web site

The new Web site for Lutheran Parish Nurses International is now up (but still a work in progress). Check it out at www.lpni.org.

Reach Out to Military Veterans

Perhaps you attended the session “Beyond the Yellow Ribbon” at the Concordia Conference? Whether you did, or did not, you will still find it useful to be aware of

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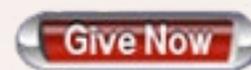
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Support LCMS Health Ministries

LCMS Health Ministries is an outreach of LCMS World Relief and Human Care. All programs of LCMS Health Ministries are funded strictly by donations from caring people like you. No dollars come from the Missouri Synod’s unrestricted budget.

Your generous gift to the international and domestic work of LCMS Health Ministries will make a tremendous difference and help to uphold the message of Christ’s mercy to all in body and soul.



News Welcomed!

We want to know what you’re up to, what big issues you are facing, and what programs are working in your congregation or agency! We welcome story suggestions, questions, short articles, or photographs that highlight achievements in parish nursing.

If you have news you’d like to share, contact Dr. Marcia Schnorr at marcyschnorr2009@gmail.com or 815-562-6823.

Please note: editorial staff reserve the right to edit or decline articles.

ways parish nurses can reach out to military veterans and families. Chaplain David Sorenson has shared a Web site that will be useful as you need to provide outreach to returning veterans. See www.onearthpeace.org/programs/peace-witness/welcome-home-project/TenIdeas.html

“Spiritually Healthy Relationships” Workshop

Diane Stelling developed a workshop appropriate for parish nurses, professional church workers, and lay congregants entitled “Spiritually Healthy Relationships.” The six-hour workshop explores and focuses on the elements and characteristics of healthy relationships from a Biblical perspective. It is concerned with the wholistic health and well-being of all individuals. Throughout her work with abuse education during the past six years and the feedback she received from victims, she realized there are basic spiritual concepts that individuals are either not hearing from their pastors and congregations, or they are not assimilating. This workshop addresses these issues in a more general setting, not specifically dealing with abuse. However, the result is abuse prevention through education about what constitutes healthy relationships. Diane developed this workshop in consultation with Rev. Carlos Hernandez, director of Districts and Congregations with LCMS World Relief and Human Care. For more information contact Diane at dianestelling@yahoo.com.

Mercy Works Magazine

This fall, the deaconess ministry-focused *Mercy Works* magazine will only be available online.

Produced and distributed by LCMS World Relief and Human Care (LCMS WR-HC) since 2006, the purpose of the magazine, as stated in its inside cover, is “to lift up the place of mercy in the life of the church, grounded in the Lutheran theology of faith, active in embodied love, that recognizes and serves Christ, who hides himself in the suffering of the neighbor.”

Past issues were mailed to more than 40,000 church workers, congregational and LWML leaders, parish nurses, universities and seminaries, Lutheran social ministry organizations, and LCMS partner churches.

But to save on distribution costs, *Mercy Works* will be sent as an e-mail with a link to the issue online, similar to the LCMS Parish Nurse Newsletter. To sign-up to receive this complimentary publication, visit www.lcms.org/enews and look for *Mercy Works* under LCMS World Relief and Human Care.

Congregational Health and Hope Grants

Since 1996, Wheat Ridge Ministries has provided Congregation Health and Hope Grant awards (one-time, matching grants up to \$2,000) to Lutheran congregations initiating ministries of health and hope.

Wheat Ridge Ministries is currently going through an extensive process to evaluate and improve the Congregation Health Ministries Program. As a result, the Congregation Health and Hope Grant Program will not be accepting proposals in the fall of 2009. However, please check the grant guidelines after January 1, 2010 to see how this program has been altered. We anticipate accepting proposals for the congregation grants in the spring of 2010.

To make certain you are notified of changes to the program, join the Wheat Ridge e-mail list at <http://tinyurl.com/ykm79pg>, and you will receive a press release shortly after the first of the year.

INSPIRATIONS

Joyce VanMatre Research Published

Joyce VanMatre, Florida-Georgia parish nurse representative, was a part of a team who conducted a research study and developed the article titled “Integrative Cognitive-Behavioral and Spiritual Counseling for Rural Dementia Caregivers with Dementia” that will be published in *Rehabilitation Psychology*. This scholarly paper provides interesting insights that parish nurses could use as they serve people with dementia and their family caregivers.

Remembering Rev. Howard Mueller

LCMS Parish Nursing lost a dear friend Sept. 11 with the passing of Rev. Dr. Howard Mueller. He served as the director of Health and Healing Ministries from 1984-2002. During this time parish nursing was initiated, and he continued to be a friend and supporter for parish nursing ever since.

His family requested that his memorials support LCMS parish nursing – a ministry that he valued deeply. Contributions should be made to LCMS World Relief and Human Care with a memo to “Parish Nursing-Howard Mueller Memorial” and sent to Sandy Burris, LCMS World Relief and Human Care, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295.

Thanks from the South Wisconsin District

Thanks to all who contributed to the South Wisconsin Parish Nurse mission project. Your cards that were collected at the

Concordia Conference for Parish Nurses in May were delivered to female inmates at a correctional institution in southern Wisconsin.

"My workers sorted the cards last week and were just oohing and ahhhhing over how wonderful they were and the great assortment of cards there were," wrote Mary Jean Lange, parish nurse at Hope Lutheran Church, Fond du Lac, Wis. "PLEASE express our thanks to all the dear women who thought of the ladies here and provided the cards. We are most grateful!"

CONFERENCES

International Council on Active Aging Conference 2009, will be held Dec. 3-5 in Orlando, Fla. Find information at www.icaa.cc/convention/seminarsandspeakers.htm or call 866-335-9777. Register at www.icaa.cc/convention/registration.htm.

Nurses Christian Fellowship offers the following conferences and events in the coming months:

Who is My Neighbor? An Introduction to Short-Term Missionary Nursing will be held on Feb. 5-7, in Round Top, Texas. The purpose of this conference is to provide nurses with introductory knowledge and skills to provide competent, short-term missionary nursing care to underserved people in cross-cultural settings. The biblical perspective of missionary service will also be addressed. For more information visit www.ncf-jcn.org/conferences/main.php#tx, or contact Jane at 254-772-8174 or hall2j@hotmail.com.

Surviving or Thriving: Making a Difference in Your Workplace is offered Feb. 13 in Charlotte, N.C., on Feb. 15 in Wytheville, Va., and on Feb. 20 in Silver Spring, Md. The purpose of these conferences is to identify and address significant issues facing nurses in today's health care environment. For information on the Charlotte event, contact Elizabeth at donlineberger@earthlink.net or 704-568-1720. For information on the Wytheville or Silver Spring events contact Robert at robertcampbell@gmail.com or 804-594-2318.

Lutheran Parish Nurses International will host a study tour/meeting to Bethlehem and other holy land sites April 16-25. Actual cost will be released in early 2010, but is estimated to be about \$2,400 for airfare, ground transportation, lodging, educational expenses, some meals, and some sightseeing.

LPNI is a newly organized network that includes Lutheran parish nurses from any Lutheran denomination in the global community. For more information about LPNI or the trip, contact Dr. Marcia Schnorr at marcyschnorr2009@gmail.com or call 815-562-6823.

The annual LSA Conference is scheduled for April 26-28 in Sacramento, Calif. For more information, including a conference schedule, visit www.lutherservices.org/conference09_schedule.

The 18th Annual Concordia Conference for Parish Nurse and Congregational Health Ministries will be held June 2-4 at Concordia University, Mequon, Wis. It will focus on the theme, "Christ Be My Leader." LCMS parish nurse district representatives will meet prior to the conference.

The 24th Annual Westberg Parish Nurse Symposium will focus on the theme "Thriving in a Changing World," September 17-19, in Saint Charles, Mo. Keynote speakers are Judy Siegle, Director of Women's Ministry at Hope Lutheran Church in Fargo, N.D.; Joan Borysenko, Ph.D., President of Mind-Body Health Sciences, LLC; and Jan DeMasters, Ph.D., R.N., an independent health consultant and a CEO of DeMasters & Associates. For more information, visit http://parishnurses.org/WestbergSymposium2010_264.aspx or contact Mary Slutz at 3140920-9941 or msslutz@eden.edu.



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