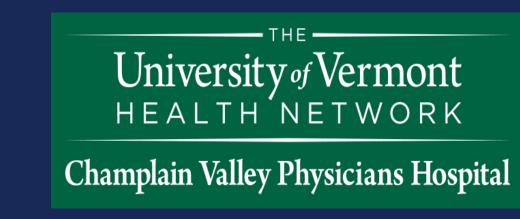
"Honor Thy Nurse": Establishing a Nursing Honor Guard Joni-Jill Tobrocke, RN, CNN, Wanda Flynn, BS, CNN, CEN

UVM Health Network - Champlain Valley Physicians Hospital , ARA Plattsburgh Associates – Renal Services





PURPOSE

To implement a program that recognizes men and women who have dedicated their professional lives to nursing, and to pay respect to fellow nurses, (retired or active N.P., R.N. or L.P.N.), at the end of life's journey, for the devotion and commitment they demonstrated in caring for the vulnerable.

BACKGROUND

- > The Honor Guard was established after the unexpected passing of Shelley Willette. Shelley was a Nephrology R.N. who was interested in starting an honor guard in the greater Plattsburgh area. She had envisioned doing something similar to what military, police, and firemen do for their fallen colleagues.
- ➤ In June 2013, an introductory meeting was held where Shelley shared the information she had obtained with 4 or 5 interested colleagues. The group was excited to move forward to establish a local honor guard. When Shelley passed, shortly after our first meeting, her colleagues sprang into action and were able to make her dream a reality at her services. Nurses lined the entry to the funeral home and stood at her casket during her wake. We also lined the entry to the church and processed down the aisle together at her funeral. In her memory, we call our honor guard "Shelley's Watch".

METHOD

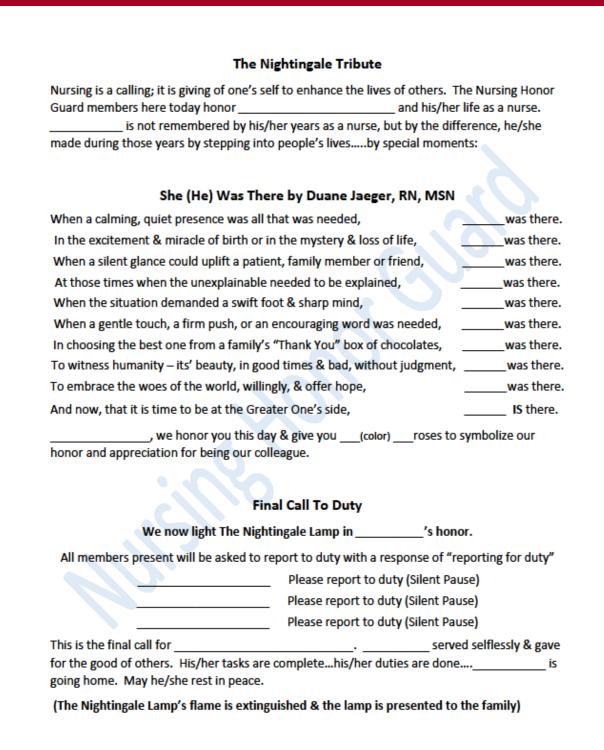
Moving Forward Included:

- Regular meetings to formalize services
- > Developing a dress code and brochure
- ➤ Hand delivering informational letters and brochures to all local funeral homes
- > Creating an account and procedures for managing funds
- > Seeking donations to cover the cost of brochures, Nightingale lamps, flowers etc. The hospital foundation was instrumental in donating seed money and created a "Shelley's Watch" account to manage the funds. Local businesses, nursing organizations, and Shelley's family also made donations. We pass a nurses cap at meetings and our volunteer nurses are always generous.
- > Advertising: Letter to Editor, articles in local newspapers, hospital newsletters, and social media.
- > Creating master list of members volunteers are current and retired RN's, NP's and LPN's from all nursing backgrounds
- > Deciding how to communicate with members: Facebook, e-mail etc.
- Developing a service outline

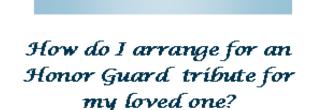
SERVICES

Services can be individualized based on the wishes of the deceased or family. They may include "A Nurse's Prayer", "The Nightingale Tribute", (developed by the Kansas State Nurses Association), "She Was There" by Duane Jaeger, RN, MSN, and a Final Call to Duty. During these readings, a porcelain Nightingale lamp with a white candle is lit in the nurses' honor. When the nurse doesn't respond to a third and final call, they are relieved of their earthly duties, and asked to rest in peace. The candle is extinguished, and the lamp is presented to the family along with roses to signify the nurses devotion to his or her profession. We hope to move toward requesting, when available, honor guard members who are reciting the tributes and final call, wear a white uniform and cap, along with a vintage (or replicated) nurses' cape.

SAMPLE SERVICE OUTLINE

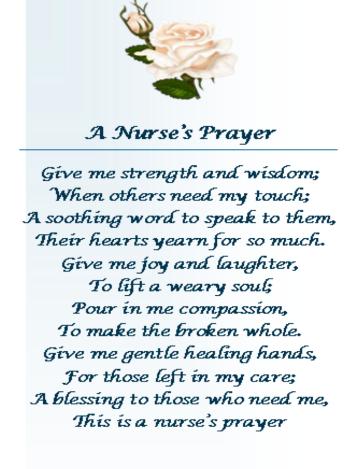


BROCHURE



- work of the Nursing Honor Guard. To make a donation or to request the presence of the Nursing Honor Guard at a nurse's services, please contact one of the following: Joni-Jill Tobrocke: 518-569-3277 Wanda Flynn: 518-572-7712 Jill Tedford: 518-534-3191

Peggy Tolosky: 518-578-0460





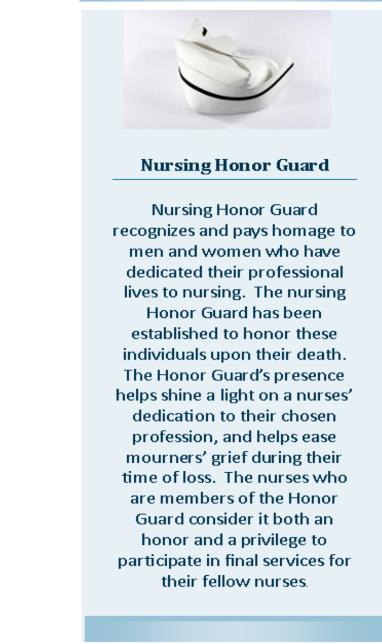




"Shelley's Watch"

Nursing

profession that cannot be lived each other for the synergistic effect of teamwork in our efforts of care giving. It is appropriate that we honor our colleagues not only during their career, but also at the end of life's journey.





Nursing Honor Guard

lursing is a profession steepedir for those who have given so much and the deceased or family and based on the availability of volunteers. Services may

- The Nightingale Tribute, developed b
- She Was There by Duane Jaeger, RN ♦ Final Call to Duty
- O Casket or entry way Honor Guard Services may be held at varying sites
- Funeral Home Church or House of Worship Oemetery
- Private home Other venue

Members of the Honor Guard will wear any combination of navy blue & white nursing uniforms, scrubs,

Any Registered Nurse, Licensed

Practical Nurse, or Nurse

Practitioner whose funeral service is within a 50 mile radius of

Plattsburgh, Honor Guard service

are provided based on the availability of volunteers. Nursing

colleagues of the deceased are

welcome to participate.

Nursing Honor Guard

<u>Members</u>

RESULTS

In the 4 years the honor guard has been established, we have been called upon for 18 services. We continue to adjust, organize, and improve our tributes. These free services have been held at funeral homes, churches, cemeteries, and private homes. Funeral home staff members have been supportive of our efforts. Many times, the service is very emotional, for both families and honor guard members. It provides comfort to family and friends. People paying their respects express feeling very touched and thankful. Our membership continues to grow, and includes over 289 nurses from hospitals, doctors offices, public health, education, hospice, home care and others. As nurses attending services for colleagues witness what we do, many choose to become a part of it.

PAST SERVICES















CONCLUSIONS

The honor guard's presence gives meaningful recognition to the nurse who has passed, and helps to ease mourner's grief during their time of loss. The nurses who are members of the honor guard consider it both an honor and a privilege to participate in final services for their fellow nurses. We hope to inspire others to create similar groups in their communities. If you're interested in assistance facilitating the formation of a nursing honor guard, please contact me at jjtobrocke@hotmail.com.