ABOUT AACN CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

At AACN, we believe that acute and critical care nurses deserve recognition for all they do every day for patients, families and our profession. That’s why we created the Circle of Excellence awards: to honor and inspire our members through programs focused on excellence and innovation. This booklet showcases the exceptional efforts of our 2016 Chapter Circle of Excellence award recipients. These chapters deserve recognition for all they achieved in 2015 that exemplifies our mission, vision and values.

We hope the achievements detailed in this booklet inspire you as much as they inspire us. We also hope they motivate you and your chapter to apply for next year’s awards. Nominations open in July and will be accepted through Nov. 1. The President’s Award for Chapters is open through Feb. 15, 2017.

For details, please visit www.aacn.org/chapters > Chapter Awards.

Thank you for everything that you and your chapters do to further AACN’s mission. We are truly a community of exceptional nurses!
Honorable Mention

All chapters are vital to the success of AACN, and your work in your community of exceptional nurses helps to achieve our mission. Although the following chapters were not selected to receive a Circle of Excellence award this year, we want to acknowledge them and share our appreciation of their continued commitment to excellence.

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The Greater Portland Chapter (GPC) of AACN’s mission statement includes the desire to promote education, to foster communication, to collaborate among healthcare professionals, and to significantly contribute to the national organization of AACN and the profession of nursing. As a longstanding chapter we have learned that quality education relies on, and is inextricably linked to, the collaborative efforts of our dedicated team and community of critical care nurses.

The GPC was established in 1972, and the longevity and success of our chapter are based on a foundation of cooperation and collaboration in our city and the surrounding communities. We are fortunate to be situated in a metropolitan area with many healthcare systems in close proximity. This geographic proximity has fostered nurses and other healthcare providers to work together to achieve our educational outcomes.

This November, the GPC, in collaboration with the Oregon Society of Critical Care Medicine (OSCCM), will present our 42nd Annual Critical Care Fall Symposium. Our symposium is orchestrated by co-chairs from the GPC and OSCCM. Planning for the symposium begins in January, committee members are recruited from our local institutions, and our planning meetings are held at one of our local hospitals. Institutional support is a fundamental component of our success. Our symposium has grown in size and reputation over the span of many years. Our typical attendance is currently approximately 550 participants. A symposium of this size is possible only through the collaborative efforts and unwavering support of our local healthcare systems, our co-sponsor, OSCCM, and the members of industry that value supporting AACN. Through this collaborative, rural scholarships are provided for physicians, pharmacists and nurses to attend our symposium. Professional development is fostered by members and nonmembers submitting poster abstracts; an additional benefit is the opportunity to network with hundreds of AACN members in a collaborative environment.

In 1997, the GPC board proposed and developed an educational collaborative that became known as the Critical Care Consortium (CCC). Many of the GPC board members were clinical nurse
specialists and critical care educators. While serving on the GPC board they realized that they were duplicating efforts in their individual organizations, and these efforts could be shared for the benefit of all. The CCC was formed and has been a highly successful collaborative effort for nearly 20 years. The six-day course is offered three times per year and is hosted at one of our area hospitals. The CCC developed and continues to update the educational objectives, recruit and develop speakers, maintain a schedule and provide a course syllabus and a number of other important functions. To date, the CCC has provided entry into practice education for more than 3,000 nurses and has 14 organizations that continue to collaborate monthly, ensuring the ongoing success of the program. Through innovation and collaboration, the GPC has fostered a standardized educational program, provided for stewardship of resources and maintained highly reliable critical care education for our community.

Every other year, the CCC provides an Advanced Preceptor Workshop (APW) and awards scholarships to area hospitals for their preceptors to attend this educational event. The scholarships are intended to promote professional development and to celebrate the extra contribution that preceptors make for their organizations and novice critical care nurses. Through collaboration, we are able to provide this exceptional educational offering for our preceptors and community.

We recruit national and local speakers to provide pertinent educational content geared toward the challenges and rewards that are often encountered while precepting adult learners. Our APW committee collaborates with a local massage therapy school to provide mini massages during breaks in the workshop. A favorite component of the APW is the entertainment event that provides an element of fun for the day. We have collaborated with local entertainers, comedy or acting troupes, and dance teams in the past to provide this respite. To fulfill our aim to recognize the contribution that preceptors make to the organization and to their profession, we include a process for each organization to nominate their preceptors for the Wall of Honor. We display photos of each preceptor at the workshop, and from this pool a Preceptor of the Year is chosen, who is then recognized with some gifts and a pin at the close of the day. This successful collaborative is made possible by the efforts of our members and area organizations through the donation of volunteer time, funding and fundraising, and by providing resources.

Through collaboration, we are able to provide high-quality education for our community of critical care nurses and support AACN’s mission to provide the best care possible for critically ill patients and their families.
The Hawaiian Islands Chapter of the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (HIC-AACN) strives to live the life of Aloha by influencing our Ohana (family) community with love and compassion. Every year, the HIC-AACN offers community outreach with non-nursing volunteerism such as Honolulu Habitat for Humanity. This year, in an effort to engage our membership with our community, the HIC-AACN, the American Heart Association (AHA) of Hawaii and the Girl Scouts of America in Hawaii collaborated for the Girl Scouts STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) project.

Our yearlong journey of excellence led us to True Collaboration, building on the evidence-based “AACN Standards for Establishing and Sustaining Healthy Work Environments.” The journey began with our contact with the Hawaii Fire Department to ascertain ways we could help the community. From there we were directed to contact the AHA of Hawaii and the Girl Scouts of America in Hawaii. AHA’s mission to teach hands-only CPR throughout the Hawaiian Islands started with our chapter teaching it at the annual Girl Scouts of Hawaii STEM Project Camp.

Held in July 2015, our hands-only CPR presentation at the Girl Scouts’ STEM Project Camp was a great success. Over 90 Girl Scouts attended, ranging from kindergarten to 12th grade. Our six 45-minute rotations with the Girl Scouts included an introduction to the nursing profession; education on health promotion through healthy food selection and physical activity; stroke recognition; and hands-only CPR. The hands-only CPR portion included individual demonstrations with return demonstrations on mannequins provided by the AHA and Naval Health Clinic Hawaii. Additionally, HIC-AACN members wore red shirts in support of AHA’s Go Red campaign to encourage awareness of heart disease.

After meeting with AHA and the Girl Scouts, they expressed their gratitude to the nursing profession, and the STEM project leader invited our chapter to next year’s event. The Girl Scouts ranked the hands-only CPR presentation as their 2nd favorite event of the year and identified nursing as the best profession to represent the science portion.
in their STEM project. They also emphasized that HIC-AACN nurses are great role models, and they see the profession as empowering and inspiring for young girls to explore as a career that makes the world a better place.

The daylong program led to another effort with AHA to bring hands-only CPR to all Hawaii schools, including neighboring islands. In order to alleviate the responsibility from the Hawaii State Department of Education (DOE), a program was set up by our chapter in collaboration with AHA and the DOE. Our first endeavor was at St. Ann’s Model School in Kaneohe, where we taught students from first through seventh grades how to perform hands-only CPR, health promotion through healthy food selection and physical activity, and stroke recognition.

The AHA is very pleased with our collaborative efforts to increase awareness of the nursing profession, health promotion, stroke recognition and hands-only CPR. Plans are in motion to present the program to subsequent schools. Our chapter will continue to engage our Ohana and use our resources to provide valuable information and Courageous Care to the underserved in our community.
The Rochester Chapter continues to demonstrate excellence in chapter collaboration with a multifaceted approach, resulting in desirable and mutually beneficial outcomes, which exemplifies AACN’s mission, vision and values. By continuing to “Focus the Flame,” while striving to achieve the new AACN theme of “Courageous Care,” our collective efforts and initiatives ultimately affect our patients, families and our profession on local, state and national levels.

Each June, several Rochester Chapter members volunteer at Camp Superkids, the American Lung Association’s camp for children with asthma. The objective of this camp is to improve the physical condition and psychological outlook of children with asthma, while providing education in a fun and secure environment. Camp Superkids is a five-night residential camp where 160 campers ages 7-15 come to the YMCA Camp Ihduhapi to learn more about managing their asthma and experience all the adventures of an outdoor summer camp, in a medically safe environment. Our Rochester Chapter treasurer serves as director of health services for Camp Superkids.

Monthly, a number of Rochester Chapter members volunteer at Community Food Response (CFR), a volunteer-led nonprofit organization that provides free meals to adults and children in the Rochester area. Volunteer drivers collect food donations from restaurants, cafeterias, businesses and grocery stores. The food is sorted and distributed, free of charge. In addition to helping people in need, CFR helps reduce the amount of food waste generated by area restaurants and businesses.

The Rochester Chapter collaborated with a local establishment to hold an annual beanbag toss tournament and fundraiser to help support nursing education and conference fees. Rochester AACN T-shirts were sold as an additional fundraising activity at this event as well as others. This event was both a friend-raiser and a fundraiser, raising awareness about the contributions of acute and critical care nurses.

Each February, a number of Rochester Chapter members volunteer as science project reviewers at the GATEway Annual Science Fair. This science fair is open to all interested students in grades three
through six currently enrolled in any public, private or home school in the Rochester area. Participants have an opportunity to meet science professionals who offer the students positive feedback to encourage their love of science.

Each April, a number of Rochester Chapter members collaborate with the Rochester Community and Technical College Student Nursing Forum to participate in the Nursing Career Fair. This event serves as a great platform to help recruit student nurses into our organization.

Each September, a number of Rochester Chapter members collaborate with our community by participating in a Disaster and Humanitarian Response Training exercise or “Bounce Day,” responding to a “Zombie Apocalypse” at the Gamehaven Scout Reservation. Bounce Day aims to improve community resilience through an integrated disaster response experience that provides opportunities for education, collaboration and innovation. Bounce Day is put on by a collaboration of Mayo Clinic researchers, educators and students, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, military medical personnel, local medical alliances, theater groups and lay community members. Actors simulating illness (zombies) and those affected by the crumbling of society interact with participants, learning both medical and nonmedical response protocols ranging from vaccination and treatment to refugee camp management and security.

Throughout the year, several Rochester Chapter members collaborate with the Minnesota Organization of Leaders in Nursing (MOLN), a nonprofit organization that consists of nurse leaders throughout the state. MOLN gives nurse leaders a collective voice in guiding nursing and impacting the healthcare system of Minnesota. One chapter member serves on MOLN’s Policy and Advocacy Committee and has participated in a number of fall and spring conferences and a poster presentation. Rochester AACN serves as a collaborative partner, and several Rochester Chapter members and nursing students participate in MOLN nurses “Day on the Hill” (formerly the MOLN “Day at the Capitol”) held annually in February/March. This unique event provides constituents an opportunity to interact with legislators and the State Board of Nursing, as well as learn more about the legislative process and effective nurse advocacy. Rochester Chapter’s symbiotic relationship was instrumental in advocating for the successful passage of favorable legislation that allows advanced practice registered nurses to practice to the full scope of their education in Minnesota. These collaborative efforts resulted in a number of motivated nursing students joining our Rochester Chapter.

Throughout the year, a number of Rochester Chapter members collaborate with the American Assembly for Men in Nursing (AAMN). Our Rochester Chapter was represented at the last three national meetings, including the last meeting held in Minneapolis. A number of Rochester Chapter members have presented posters, given a podium presentation and received awards. These collaborative efforts have contributed to increased funding for nursing scholarships.

The Rochester Chapter has embedded into its culture the spirit of true collaboration and is dedicated to serving our community.
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The focus of the Lagniappe Chapter of AACN, since its inception in 2012, has been to promote and provide evidence-based educational opportunities, serve the public through various community outreach programs, and facilitate collaboration among critical care nurses and other healthcare professionals. Community education and public service are one way the Lagniappe Chapter provides courageous care while witnessing the mission, vision and values of AACN in action. Public service is rooted in the theme of our chapter’s name “lagniappe,” a French term that means “a little something extra.” Our chapter is composed of dedicated critical care nurses who selflessly give of their time, talents and finances to provide that little extra care to the public.

Throughout every outreach program, chapter members exemplify a desire to be engaged with not only their fellow chapter members but with the public as well. Members routinely give their time Saturday mornings at the Central Louisiana Food Bank of Alexandria. On these mornings, the chapter will spend up to four hours sorting and preparing boxes of donated food for the elderly in the community. In addition to volunteering at least once a month at the food bank, the chapter has reached out to local rural nursing homes to provide Halloween treats and to fulfill the Christmas wish lists of those residents without family or additional financial support.

The chapter has connected with other programs to form other collaborative partnerships as well. Members contacted Hope House of Alexandria, a shelter for battered women and children, and identified the needs of the facility. Through skilled communication between the director and the members, financial support was met and Christmas wish lists were filled. A donation was made to the Avoyelles Parish Council on Aging for them to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables for the elderly citizens of the parish. And, for the second consecutive year, the chapter established communication with the American Heart Association and assisted in certifying over 600 participants in bystander/hands-only cardiopulmonary resuscitation during the Start-A-Heart campaign at the Riverfront Center in Alexandria.
But this was not enough. Our members wanted to give more, so the search was on for new and innovative ways to bring education to our community and provide that something extra to the public. Chapter members found inspiration for new volunteer endeavors by becoming champions for the causes that touched them on a personal level.

Funds will be donated this Thanksgiving, so that food baskets can be prepared for the military families stationed at Fort Polk. We are also very excited about participating in their annual lighting of the Christmas tree program and will provide blood pressure screenings and education on hypertension. The chapter has also become involved with the Walk to End Alzheimer’s, participating in not only the local walk held here in Alexandria, but also in Lafayette. We constructed and delivered 40 care kits to school-based nurses across Rapides Parish for children diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. The kits contain supplies that can be used in case a child experiences hypoglycemia or hyperglycemia. And members also find time to give back to our four-legged friends by volunteering at a no-kill animal shelter, Boudreaux’s Animal Rescue Krewe (BARK), here in Alexandria.

In order for members to be kept up-to-date on all our activities, our board created the position of social media chairperson. The chairperson is responsible for sending email reminders about our upcoming volunteer opportunities and meetings, and for posting pictures of our members in action on our Lagniappe Chapter Facebook page.

Community education and public service is at the very heart of all of the actions taken by the Lagniappe Chapter. We look forward to giving that little something extra back to our community and feel that by doing so we truly see the mission, vision and values set forth by AACN. It would be an honor for us to not only be recognized for our community involvement during NTI 2016, but a privilege to accept the award in our home state and would enable us to do even more in our community. We will continue providing courageous care to our community and strive to find new opportunities to give of our time and knowledge.
The West Houston Chapter of AACN is composed of dedicated members with various abilities who are empowered to collaborate with diverse groups to deliver education and services to the community. The mission, vision and values of AACN have been integrated into our quest to achieve community education and public service through this year’s theme “Courageous Care.”

Our chapter has effectively communicated and disseminated knowledge while promoting AACN and the critical care nursing profession by paying it forward throughout our community. During the last year, the West Houston Chapter has accomplished this through program planning; community service events and activities; and educational offerings.

**Educational Planning and Offerings**

The community education and public service committee chairs coordinated with leaders from the Katy, Texas AARP and the City of Katy Senior Center to provide 10- to 15-minute educational sessions, as requested by their targeted populations. In August 2015, a stroke class and a heart attack class were presented. These programs were well received with 20-25 community members attending.

During October 2015, chapter members participated in a health fair at the City of Katy Senior Center, delivering information on pneumonia and stroke, including the American Stroke Association FAST APP. Approximately 65 community members attended.

**Community Service Events and Activities**

Our chapter is actively fighting hunger in the community:

- Ten chapter members and their families volunteered at the Houston Food Bank on Aug. 29, 2015. About 10,296 pounds of canned and nonperishable food donations were sorted. This is equivalent to 8,580 meals for community recipients.
- Home-delivered meals: Several chapter members have delivered lifesaving meals and warm greetings to 80 homebound seniors or seriously ill adults per day in the Katy area.
Snack package bags (e.g., bottled water, energy bars) were distributed to the homeless or others in need. These bags are prepared by chapter members and are available at every meeting for a donation.

The West Houston Chapter is assisting pregnant women, infants and children in need by supporting the Pregnancy Help Center West Houston (Connor’s Closet and Megan’s Wardrobe). A year ago, our community education and public service chair collaborated with organizers of the Pregnancy Help Center West Houston by ascertaining the needs of women affected by an unplanned pregnancy. Our members donate on a continuous basis, because there is a need to constantly replenish these articles. To date, the chapter has delivered three carloads of donated items to the center.

Items collected for Connor’s Closet include hooded bath towels, diapers of various sizes, baby wipes, baby toiletries, baby bottles, baby clothes (new and gently used), infant blankets, crib sheets, and Ziploc and paper bags. Items collected for donation to Megan’s (Mother) Wardrobe include maternity clothes and toiletries.

**Existing Community Service**

In 2013, our chapter committed to support Christ Clinic, a non-for-profit clinic serving the community by extending a healing ministry. The clinic offers high-quality healthcare and health-related services to those who are uninsured or underinsured.

Chapter members have given 1,664 volunteer hours at Christ Clinic over the past year in various capacities, such as managing the triage area, giving discharge instructions, taking vital signs and blood draws, working in a Class D pharmacy manned by volunteer pharmacists and nurses (dispensing donated medications as ordered by the practitioner and providing patient education for chronic disease management such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, tobacco abuse, COPD and nutrition), assisting the clinic in a wellness program, Walk with the Doc, managing the health station and providing educational materials on multiple occasions. The goal is to educate and engage clinic patients on the importance of exercise and empower them to exercise on a routine basis.

**Future Plans**

At our November 2015 chapter meeting, members will bring children’s toys for donation to Marine Toys for Tots Houston. In May 2016, American Stroke Month, the chapter will produce a video with chapter members singing the American Stroke Association FAST song. This video will be placed on the West Houston Chapter Facebook page.

The key to our success has been incorporating Courageous Care into our professional activities. Teamwork, perseverance, communication and collaboration allow the West Houston Chapter to pay it forward to our community. We continue to strive for excellence in all that we do. Our chapter has successfully promoted the mission, vision and values of AACN through health education and volunteering in our community. We will continue to pursue projects to evolve and strengthen our community education and public service volunteer programs over the next year. We want to thank our AACN leaders for all their help and support of our local chapter.
A main tenet of the mission statement of the Greater Portland Chapter (GPC) of AACN is to provide quality educational offerings to the community of critical care nurses in Portland, Oregon. Nurses from the Portland metropolitan area and beyond have looked to the GPC for relevant, evidence-based continuing education since the inception of our chapter in 1972. GPC offers a wide variety of education geared toward critical care nurses at all stages of their career, from novice to expert.

The GPC Annual Fall Critical Care Symposium is an event our members look forward to all year. We proudly host approximately 600 critical care nurses and other healthcare professionals for a two-day conference that focuses on current trends in critical care. This is truly the event of the year for our members! We consistently are able to procure local and national experts who speak on a wide variety of topics. GPC is proud to have both adult and pediatric tracks of learning at this event and are excited to host the AACN president and president-elect as speakers.

We are further proud to have been asked to help gather information for the exciting Barriers to Practice work that is currently underway at AACN National. The symposium planning committee invites members to display posters highlighting the great work that happens at the bedside on a daily basis. One of the most popular sessions of the Fall Symposium is 20, 20, 20: Tales From the Bedside, which is a podium session delivered by bedside nurses who have positively impacted the care of critically ill patients at their institution. Additionally, to support the learning needs of GPC’s rural counterparts, multiple full scholarships for this high-quality educational offering are awarded to healthcare professionals from less-populated areas of Oregon and Washington. We also acknowledge Beacon Award units, Critical Care Nurse of the Year, our GPC Lifetime Member and Circle of Excellence award recipients.

We also currently facilitate a Critical Care Consortium (CCC), which provides basic knowledge for RNs seeking to enter the specialty of critical care. The planning committee is composed of CNSs...
and clinical educators from many healthcare systems. The award-winning CCC also serves to develop fledgling speakers through mentorship and provides opportunities for bedside nurses to hone their public speaking skills while exposing new critical care nurses to high-quality, meaningful education.

Our chapter greatly values the dedication it takes to become nationally certified and strives to facilitate and ease this process for our members. We are proud to say that more than 50 percent of our membership is a CCRN or PCCN certified nurse. GPC offers two CCRN/PCCN review courses per year with a nationally renowned speaker at the helm and have seen steady increases in the percentage of certified nurses in our chapter. For recent courses, attendance has been limited only by the size of the venue. Evaluations of this review course have been favorable and help to identify other educational needs.

GPC hosts a biannual Advanced Preceptor Conference to celebrate the essential role of nurse preceptors. This is a day that not only offers high-quality education from nationally known experts in precepting, but also delivers enrichment to attendees through world-class entertainment, free massages, a Wall of Honor for recognized excellence as a preceptor and the Preceptor of the Year award.

Annual GPC educational offerings have grown over the course of the last couple of years. We have added a Cardiac Surgery and Cardiac Medicine (CSC/CMC) subspecialty review course based on feedback from members. The implementation of the CSC/CMC review course has been in the planning stages for some time, but GPC is proud to announce that we have successfully held our first review of this type and have plans to continue offering it on a biannual basis.

Our annual Member Appreciation Dinner includes an educational component. This year, we focused on the timely, relevant topic of Social Media Use in Healthcare, delivered jointly by a nurse manager with experience handling the missteps that nurses take while engaging in social media and a lawyer with case expertise. The topic was well received by attendees whose questions went beyond the allotted time.

Content development for educational offerings is conducted in a variety of ways, including through comments on evaluations of past courses and current national trends in critical care. Many of the topics included in our Fall Symposium and Member Dinner were identified by members of GPC and communicated through evaluations or direct communication with the GPC board. The education chair, co-chairs and symposium chair use this information to guide development of the educational programs the GPC offers.
Since 1983, the Metropolitan Orlando Chapter (MOC) has served the Orlando area, providing monthly educational meetings to critical care nurses. Today, nurses from at least four different counties surrounding Orlando attend our meetings. The MOC membership has grown to over 150 nurses; typically 60-70 attend each month’s lecture. The MOC believes it has been successful in attracting so many Orlando-area critical care nurses because of the hard work of the MOC board and the educational committee.

The MOC strives to provide educational opportunities to the Orlando area of critical care nurses in a timely manner and in response to the needs of the community. Educational lectures are held for 10 months each year from September to June. Planning begins early in the fiscal year. During the summer months, the MOC board meets to discuss planning for the upcoming year. A tentative agenda of the education topics is discussed at this time. Board members and members from the education committee are encouraged to reach out to their colleagues for speakers and sponsors for each of the lectures. A review of the planning process is conducted monthly during the MOC business meeting.

The MOC believes that it is important to assess the educational needs of its chapter members. This past year, the MOC education committee decided to explore the interests of our members for future lecture topics through a survey. Fifty chapter members completed the survey near the end of 2014. The incumbent board used the input from its members to help design the education program agenda for upcoming lectures. Consideration of national trends, relevant specialties in our metropolitan area and topics that would propel professional development were strongly considered. Thirteen education topics of interest were reported from the members. Topics ranged from renal and liver transplantation to sepsis, VAD therapy and hypothermia. The members also reported an interest in stroke and trauma lectures where hours toward certification could be awarded. Of those topics, eight have been provided or have been planned for future lectures. The
education planning committee attempts to offer a wide variety of topics and topics that will satisfy all of the CERP categories. Specifically in December, we coordinate a speaker whose presentation emphasizes more CERP B components, such as topics that are motivational, ethics related and encompass diversity and self-care. Additionally, topics are coordinated with associated health observance months.

Once our education topics are decided upon, the education committee begins coordination of expert speakers and vendors. We have been fortunate to attract both local and national speakers, which we recognize as a key ingredient of our well-attended lectures. The education committee attempts to coordinate vendors with products that correspond to the education topic being presented. The vendors happily support our meeting with a meal due to the large turnout of nurses who show an interest in learning about new products.

Lectures are held at one of the two large healthcare organizations in our area. Communication of our program is accomplished through fliers that are emailed and posted on units, and through email notifications to those who register online. We also advertise on our Web page and Facebook. On the journey of continual improvement, this past year, we identified ways to provide free parking for all of our attendees by working collectively with the healthcare facilities where the monthly meetings are held.

The MOC evaluates the quality of lectures through program evaluations each month. This gives chapter members an avenue to provide feedback regarding the current speaker, topic and presentation. Feedback from our members is valued, and the MOC awards merit points to members who help identify speakers and topics for future lectures.

In an effort to maximize educational opportunities and to improve our current processes, the MOC board developed a subcommittee to improve chapter engagement. The subcommittee examined MOC functions in order to evaluate areas of improvement and to further enhance areas that were functioning well. A computer-based and paper survey was given to chapter members for assessment for a period of one month. Thirteen questions assessed member engagement in a variety of MOC activities, including questions about educational meeting involvement. Seventy-seven (51 percent response rate) members participated in the survey, and 75 percent of responders reported that monthly educational lectures were a key function of the chapter. Most reported that they attend half or more of the educational lectures. When asked to rank the order of importance of MOC activities, evidence-based education was number 1 among survey participants.

The MOC is proud of the work we produce in offering educational opportunities to the Orlando community of critical care nurses and feels confident that our work is viewed as beneficial by our chapter members.
The Ventura County Chapter of AACN (VC-AACN) uses its motto, “Live Your Commitment,” as a personal compass to guide the chapter as it continues to provide high-quality and relevant educational opportunities. Our chapter has a well-established, 10-year history of conducting daylong Spring and Fall Symposia, each averaging 75 attendees, and growing. VC-AACN has made a conscious effort to meet nurses where they are and provide them with the latest evidence-based educational topics from leading national and local industry experts. As a result, the chapter began the VC-AACN’s Best Practice Series. We have hosted speakers such as Barbara McLean, Kathleen Vollman, Mary Kay Bader, Tom Ahrens and Chris Pasero.

In recent years, along with our symposium’s program evaluations, we provided a survey to analyze the educational needs of our program attendees, while gathering information related to community trends and obtaining feedback from hospital stakeholders. After reviewing the survey data, our chapter board determined that it was time to modify its educational format to meet the following demands:

- Nurses requested after-work dinner lectures, non-classroom education and increased opportunities for socialization and networking.
- The community and hospitals wanted us to engage the nurses and deliver evidence-based information that would have an immediate and long-term impact on the community.
- The student nurses had a different request entirely; they needed assistance with career preparation and transition.

To better engage chapter members and recruit additional healthcare professionals, we began a process at each board meeting to strategically plan, align and maximize our finances with the resources of local talent to augment and elevate our chapter’s current and future educational offerings. From these planning sessions, coupled with our survey results, our chapter developed additional CEU educational offerings:
A quarterly dinner lecture program that grants between one to two hours of CEU credits. The dinner offerings are held in local restaurants with lectures given by community nurse leaders and physicians. The time of the lectures is usually 5:30 to 9 p.m., allowing for the lecture, dinner, time to meet and greet, and return home at a reasonable hour. One of our early dinner lectures featured Congresswoman Lois Capps. As a registered nurse and community leader, she readily engaged attendees in the role of nurses in our government. We have an average of 55 attendees at dinner lectures, with increasing demand for additional seating.

Our year-end holiday event is a spinoff of the dinner lecture. It includes a CEU lecture (with program fees “at cost only”), a charity campaign, networking and a member appreciation gift on departure. This year’s holiday lecture will be “Ventilator Black Belt Training: Be a Master!” presented by a respiratory therapy colleague.

In addition to the symposiums and dinner lectures we have brought back (by popular demand), our “Wine Tour, Lecture & Luncheon” program. The chapter charters a bus and partners with Santa Ynez area wineries to schedule tours, luncheons and tastings for our members. The lecture takes place on the two-hour bus ride en route to the winery. Upon arrival, the group is given a tour of the winery, wine for tasting and a complimentary souvenir wineglass from the winery. Later, the group is served lunch outside on the grounds. Time to socialize and make purchases before departure is provided. The average wine lecture daytrip is from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Our most recent wine tour was to the Gainey Winery. The lecture, “Using Antibiogram to Guide Antimicrobial Therapy and Reduce Resistance,” was presented by a local hospital pharmacist. This event provided attendees with two CEUs, a great time and an alternative from the traditional classroom setting.

The student population and educational development component of VC-AACN is our newest endeavor, and one of our most exciting as well. The board developed a student liaison coordinator and three student liaison positions to represent each of the three schools of nursing in our local area. Student needs are routinely surveyed to determine areas where they would like additional education and information they deem vital to their transition and the first year of employment. Currently, the students, coordinator and board are working to offer a daylong educational program at the first annual VC-AACN Student Symposium to support our current theme of Courageous Care. The symposium will offer focused evidence-based lectures from local nurses. Students will have an opportunity to network and have nurses answer the questions that are significant to them as they enter the nursing profession.

VC-AACN continues to seek opportunities to educate, motivate and nurture nurses as they provide evidence-based Courageous Care to the community. It is our chapter’s goal to lead by example and show our determination to exemplify our motto to “Live Your Commitment.”
The Central Indiana Chapter (CIC) has a long, rich history of fostering leadership in the ranks of our board. Each year, the CIC actively recruits from healthcare facilities, not currently represented, to continue to invigorate our ranks with new faces and fresh ideas. At each of our monthly meetings we keep an eye to the future and the direction that we envision taking our chapter.

This past year, we made a particular push to add depth from the bedside to our board and expanded several roles in new ways that help foster our continued growth. We have added positions such as social media chair to continue to keep us relevant for our multigenerational membership. Each of our board positions has either the elect position being groomed to take the reins in the next fiscal year or an apprentice learning the requirements of the position. For example, we are very fortunate to have robust vendor support of our local chapter. Every month, from October through June, we have a meeting with an education topic, and dinner is sponsored by a local critical care vendor. Our programs person works closely with our vendors to make sure that the needs of both the chapter and the vendor are met. The programs apprentice is involved throughout the process, learning to post the meetings on our website as well as ensuring vendors have the paperwork that they require. This fosters a smooth transfer of roles at our transition meeting each July.

Accordingly, succession planning and transition is a big part of our successful leadership development. At our annual Transition Meeting we spend several hours together, initially with the departing president and then the incoming president discussing the successes and opportunities for improvement from the past year as well as the vision and goals for the next year and beyond. The board, as a unified force, sets specific objectives and targets such as:

- **Community outreach** – We have selected projects that will directly impact our neighborhoods and patients’ families. Each time we meet we have a focused charity drive.
- **An eye to the future** – For instance, we are planning ahead and have established an...
NTI planning committee so that we are positioned and ready when NTI comes to our city in five years. We want to be a knockout host chapter.

- Membership recruitment – We anticipate being able to expand our meeting attendance numbers beyond our current average of 50 per month. One strategy is to work closely with our vendor sponsors and be open to unique venues for our meetings.

- Communication enhancement – Through the diligent and up-to-date use of our website we will keep pertinent information at members’ fingertips. In addition, we will expand the use of smartphone technology and social media to remain relevant for our growing number of younger members.

- Early professional organization engagement and local chapter awareness – We have developed strategies to partner with nursing schools to recruit these eager young minds as well as engage staff early in their careers, starting with the orientation phase.

- Specialty certification promotion – Our current goal is to increase our membership’s certification rates 10 percent. One specific way to influence this is through our spring CCRN/PCCN Review Course.

Our chapter also chooses to lead and teach leadership by example. The annual spring conference is the responsibility of the president-elect. This gives the officer the opportunity to develop along the way with the expertise of the current president as a guide and mentor. The support of the current and past presidents not only ensures the success of our conference but ultimately cultivates leadership with this continuous mentoring.

The most effective way that we model and perpetuate great leaders is to draw from our past. We have four past-presidents who actively participate as advisers on our board and another four to six who attend our meetings regularly. This wealth of nursing and leadership knowledge helps safeguard the success of our chapter. No matter the dissimilarities, we have a past-president that the current president is comfortable using as a sounding board. Our past-presidents have proven to be a wealth of vital information and resounding supporters of our current president and board.

The Central Indiana Chapter is a vibrant and thriving example of how excellent chapter leadership can create longevity and purpose in our local nursing community. Our chapter is a shining example of how developing a board of likeminded nurses with a vision toward the future can preserve our chapter prominence. We hone leadership on the board by embracing diversity and supporting each other to achieve a common goal. No matter our backgrounds, disciplines or practice differences, we have dedicated ourselves to promoting nursing by fostering growth in each and every member of our chapter.
The Greater Kansas City Chapter of AACN has a 40-plus-year history of providing a professional home to critical and progressive care nurses in the two-state area of Kansas and Missouri. In those 40 years, a clear strategic plan, clear definition of job responsibilities for board members and a solid transition plan have been integral to the success of the chapter. However, in 2013, we were struggling to obtain and retain board members. Our board membership had become stagnant, consisting of the same members serving in different roles from year to year. We needed an infusion of young, sharp minds to reinvigorate our chapter and connect us with nurses early in their practice. Our past president, Heather Nelson-Brantley, had an idea.

In addition to serving as chapter president, Heather is a professor at a local school of nursing. She shared with us that nursing students interested in critical and progressive care were frequently unaware of the local chapter’s presence in the community and were eager for opportunities to grow in the role and to have access to mentors in their area of interest. She shared her vision of a leadership development and transition program that would help new nurses build relationships with the local chapter and develop leadership skills that would facilitate a smooth transition to practice and chapter leadership. Thus, the Authentic Leadership Mentor-Mentee (ALM-M) Program was established.

The ALM-M Program is grounded in authentic leadership theory, an AACN-adopted essential standard for creating healthy work environments to promote optimal patient outcomes and clinical excellence (AACN, 2005; Caza & Jackson, 2011). Over a period of three years, participants progress from shadow, to elect, to AACN Greater Kansas City Chapter board member positions in parallel with their transition from nursing student to nurse professional. The ALM-M Program contributes to a return on investment for our local chapter by ensuring a sustainable cadre of future critical and progressive care nurse leaders.

The program uses a three-year progression approach. In the first year, the main objectives
are establishing a solid mentoring relationship between student nurse and chapter board mentor, successful completion of the NCLEX exam, and obtaining a position in a progressive or critical care area. During the first year, the mentee attends board meetings with the mentor and completes several activities to enhance understanding of the mission, vision and values of the AACN organization.

For example, first-year mentees complete a scavenger hunt to familiarize themselves with the national AACN website and its many benefits to chapter leaders. In year two, the focus is on successful transition to practice. ALM-M mentees work with their mentors to identify a board position to run for and become chair-elects of the board. The program culminates in year three when the objective becomes expanding leadership capacity in AACN, hospital governance boards and other professional nursing organizations. In this year, the mentee becomes more independent from the mentor, serving in a full board position, attending the Leadership Development Workshop at NTI and serving as a mentor for an incoming mentee. This approach ensures a continuous cycle of leadership succession planning and leadership development to sustain the future of the GKC Chapter board.

The program is in its second year of operation, and three mentees are currently involved. We have our first ALM-M mentee serving in a chair-elect position on the board this year. Mentees have been actively involved in planning our annual Visions Symposium, introducing speakers at the symposium and other continuing education events, and presenting at our annual certification celebration dinner. These experiences have provided an opportunity for our mentees to become actively involved in the leadership of our chapter, develop speaking and event planning skills, and help inspire them to set certification as a professional goal.

Mentees apply for the program in the summer before their senior year in their nursing program. All applications are reviewed, and mentees are selected by the board. Students are encouraged to apply for the program through fliers distributed by deans of the schools of nursing throughout the GKC area. This process has increased our visibility and connection with the future of our profession in two key ways: (a) through national and chapter AACN membership, which has increased substantially since the start of the program, and (b) through student attendance at our annual AACN GKC Chapter Visions Symposium.

Another measure of the program’s success can be seen in the rise in the number of applications we received in the second year of the program. The first year we had a total of three students apply. In just our second year, that number increased to 11. We currently accept two students per year to ensure that we are adequately growing the size of our chapter board, while at the same time ensuring each mentee has a strong, personalized mentoring experience.
This past year, following a long period of recycling Triangle Chapter members through the various leadership positions, many leaders had burnout. The foundation for success was directly attributable to their commitment, but current board members knew that sustaining growth would come only by developing new leadership initiatives — and modeling chapter leadership development alongside AACN’s Healthy Work Environment Initiative.

The Triangle Chapter is fortunate this year to be “leadership wealthy.” We achieved this by focusing on the authentic leadership of both the chapter vision and its members. We begin with outgoing and incoming chapter leadership convening for a Chapter Board Member Transition Meeting and for the development of our yearly strategic plan. Using AACN’s Chapter Resource Library, we outline the expectations of serving in a chapter leadership role and formally sign the Board Position Contract. We review chapter communication norms and complete the officer transition checklist. Each board member mentors their elect position. This year, incoming leadership was also presented with a complete position description. Each member is given the opportunity to discuss their specific job responsibilities and expectations among everyone and asked to improve upon these descriptions as chapter needs evolve throughout the year. In a positive and supporting environment, each position is held accountable to their role and importance in the chapter. This entire process allows for the individualization of transition plans for each role, ensuring the elect-positions are fully oriented and functional in their assumed position by the following July. This has already proven successful, as a newly elected secretary has already transitioned to managing a monthly chapter meeting roster and database.

The chapter leadership is fluid and responsive to what the members need and how resources are accessed. To build upon transparency and true collaboration, the progress of each transition plan is openly discussed at each quarterly chapter board meeting. All board meeting agendas and discussion topics are communi-
cated to board members via email before each meeting, properly ensuring that all voices are heard in any discussion. To further improve our open and skilled communication, all board meeting agendas, minutes, notes and chapter-associated documents are uploaded to an “officers only” protected section of our website for review and access.

With these initiatives we fostered an environment that supported new interest in a leadership role. The chapter has successfully filled the position of webmaster this year, alleviating some of the workload and responsibilities from other positions. Appropriate staffing of our chapter board positions has provided a welcome opportunity to continue evolving our leadership roles, allowing for more timely communication between board members and effective decisions as a unified team.

With confidence in our leadership structure and the success of our 2015 membership recruitment goals, we have focused on chapter succession planning and leadership development. The Triangle Chapter has always utilized its members in various work units of nearby hospitals for continued integration and involvement in our chapter. This year, the Triangle Chapter started a unit ambassador program. Unit ambassadors are essential for maintaining ties to our local community; furthering the mission and goals of AACN. All chapter members were invited to participate in the program. Key highlights include encouragement to attend board meetings, championing organizational and chapter promotion in their unit, and most importantly, helping to foster meaningful recognition of the courageous work nurses do every day. The initial call to action resulted in 12 new unit ambassadors. With a community of over 400 nurses, the unit ambassadors are vital in helping the chapter celebrate the successes of its members. Along the way, unit ambassadors are exposed to chapter leadership positions, communication with board members monthly and encouraged to seek opportunities for growth in the chapter. We are excited to see how many of these ambassadors courageously step into board positions later this year!

In response to great leadership momentum after a chapter leader attended LDW, we have solidified a process for continued chapter participation yearly. In order to fulfill our commitment to strong chapter leadership, one leader of the Triangle Chapter will attend LDW each year. Past participants have brought back strategies for networking, chapter growth and membership recruitment — all of which have helped us achieve our chapter strategic goals. As a group, we are committed to providing this opportunity to future leaders to continue the chapter’s growth.

As our first group of “new generation” chapter leaders soon vacates their positions to incoming leaders, we will continue to use this framework for success. As positions are transitioned, officers will become board members, collaborating with future chapter leaders to continue building upon the initiatives started this year. Through effective decision making and maintaining the foundation of our transition process, we guarantee successful leadership succession and a strong, active chapter for years to come.
The Greater Portland Chapter of AACN recognizes the value of certification and has a longstanding history of promoting it through the engagement of our members in a wide variety of ways. Nationally certified nurses are instrumental in increasing patient safety, ensuring best outcomes, implementing evidence-based practice and empowering nurses to provide the best possible care to critically ill patients. The GPC has instituted a focused campaign to increase the number of CCRN and PCCN certified nurses, and we are happy to report that the current percentage of nationally certified nurses in our chapter exceeds 50 percent.

GPC takes the following steps to promote certification to our members:

- Increased Awareness: In all GPC publications the value of certification is promoted, especially when advertising the chapter’s twice-yearly CCRN/PCCN reviews, which typically occur in January and June. Benefits to the individual, employer and profession are addressed in the fliers and brochures for this extremely popular course. GPC leaders and members are instrumental in increasing the awareness of the benefits of certification in the community on an everyday basis and lead by example, with 94 percent of the GPC board being nationally certified.

- Education: In order to facilitate certification for GPC members we have held a twice-yearly review course taught by a nationally renowned speaker for a number of years. This course has steadily grown in attendance and now has approximately 75-100 participants at each offering. In an effort to offset some of the cost of certification, GPC coordinates group applications for attendees to register for the exam at a reduced rate. Evaluations of GPC’s CCRN/PCCN review are consistently high, and the chapter has seen growing enthusiasm for certification among attendees, who spread their newfound enthusiasm to the colleagues they work with at the bedside. The best accolades come from our members, who encourage one another to attend the GPC-sponsored CCRN/PCCN review course as the first step into the world of certification.
• Celebration: Accomplishments deserve celebration, and national certification is certainly an accomplishment. GPC celebrates CCRN and PCCN certified nurses annually during National Nurses Week by providing each certified RN a gift card to enjoy coffee on us. This has been very well received and has led to increased rates of retention and renewal of GPC membership. Certified nurses are celebrated and acknowledged at other GPC events.

• Challenge Accepted: In light of the success GPC has enjoyed in increasing rates of CCRN/PCCN certified nurses, GPC members communicated a clear need and desire to take on the subspecialty certifications of cardiac surgery and cardiac medicine (CSC/CMC). GPC courageously answered our members’ call and accepted this challenge. The chapter education chair and co-chairs started the planning phase of a CSC/CMC review course and successfully held the first GPC-sponsored CSC/CMC review course in October 2015, with an inaugural attendance of approximately 60. The chapter currently plans to continue offering this review course every other year.

GPC is committed to continually contributing to a culture of certification and will continue to offer regular certification review courses, celebrate the accomplishments of our members and spread the word about the benefits of national certification.
Achievements and contributions that support and foster the advancement of certified nursing practice in high acuity and critical care

For the last five years, the GRAFL Chapter has sponsored a CCRN/PCCN review class. Members have the opportunity to attend a local review session for a reasonable cost and are eligible for a $50 rebate when they take the exam. The last three years we have coordinated a group registration for the exam to help facilitate members to take the exam after the review class. Linking the class with the exam registration has resulted in more certified members. We continue to budget for this incentive program each year at the strategic meeting. The chapter purchased some practice exam booklets and made them available for purchase for the members.

Success in increasing in the number of certified nurses

This past year we had 28 registered nurses representing six hospital systems in Upstate New York attend the review class. And 18 members took advantage of the opportunity to register for the exam and become eligible for the $50 rebate upon completion of the exam. This was our best-attended class and exam registration to date. At the time of this application, 12 members have successfully obtained their certification. Currently, our chapter membership certification rate is 52 percent, which is the highest it has ever been. All of our board members have either PCCN or CCRN certification.

Success in increasing the renewal and retention of certified nurses

GRAFL provides meaningful recognition for certified members. Each year, members receive an individual invitation to attend the certification recognition dinner. The dinner is free of charge, and members also receive a recognition gift. This year, our certification coordinator provided each member with a certificate of accomplishment recognizing the number of years they have been certified, along with the lapel pins available through the AACN marketplace. We recognized 50 CCRNs, seven PCCNs, five ACCNS-AGs, three CCRN-Ks and one CSC. We are able to track our membership certification with our online registration system. The GRAFL Chapter also offers members a variety of opportunities to obtain CEUs and/or CERPs to facilitate the maintenance...

Greater Rochester Area Finger Lakes Chapter

New York
of certification. Over the course of the year the chapter provides opportunities to obtain credit for each of the CERP categories.

**Success in influencing the preparation and/or ability of nurses to qualify for certification**

Some of the members have transitioned out of full-time clinical roles and were no longer eligible for CCRN certification but were unaware of the CCRN-K option. We communicated the availability of the new certification during our monthly educational offerings and anticipate some members will take advantage of the certification when they are required to renew. We already have three CCRN-Ks in our membership. Certification is discussed at every educational event. Members are recognized for obtaining their certification, and then they are encouraged to support a colleague through the process. CERP booklets are available for members at the registration table of every event. This year, we are exploring the feasibility of offering a Web-based review class. Our chapter spans a large geographic area, and it has been difficult for some of our nurses to commute the distance to attend the traditional review classes. The chapter is in a position financially to explore this opportunity and is excited to offer it to the members. If needed, to provide technical support for the Web-based program, we will partner with various schools of nursing. Members will have the opportunity to participate from a variety of locations, which will be an innovative solution to the geographic challenges our region faces.

**Success in increasing public awareness of certified nursing practice**

The membership and certification coordinators both monitor certifications for the chapter. Each month newly certified members are recognized at dinner meetings. We also recognize existing members and ask them to stand to be recognized at the beginning of each meeting. We encourage certified members to mentor a non-certified colleague to obtain certification. Newly certified members are recognized on our public social media site. This year, we are exploring the feasibility of recognizing our certified members in the newspaper on Certified Nurses Day, March 19.
The Pacific Crest Regional Chapter (PCRC) of AACN is one of only four chapters in the state of Oregon. We operate as a “chapter without walls,” serving a vast geographic area that stretches across more than nine counties with a diversity of practicing critical care nurses. Some of our nurses work in critical access hospitals and areas where excellence is driven by individuals rather than organizations. In the pioneering spirit that enlivens these nurses and roots our chapter, we embrace a courageous mission to reach all of these nurses and support their excellence through certification.

Our big event this fall was putting on a two-day CCRN/PCCN review course by nationally renowned speaker Nicole Kupchik. From start to finish, our chapter board members organized the successful class. Nearly three weeks before the course was planned to open, our registration rates were extremely low. Within just a few days, each PCRC volunteer reached across our region electronically and in person to spread the word. When the day arrived, we had 62 participants. Of these 62, 20 signed up for the group testing registration, and several others signed up afterward. We neared a 50 percent testing signup rate! By staging one regional event, we impacted a significant number of nurses in pursuit of certification. In 2015 alone, we have already increased these numbers by over 30 newly certified nurses.

We will celebrate this success at our annual certification celebration. Every year we host a certification dinner and social event that highlights the newly certified and honors the previous ones. We have guest speakers, and attendance usually includes at least 60 people. Our chapter provides this free to members, and several bring along paid guests to increase the fun. Last year, we enjoyed an evening at a local winery catered by upscale local restaurants; we are currently planning the 2016 event.

Another way we serve our region in certification is by offering an annual scholarship for the
AACN National Teaching Institute. This $1,000 scholarship is applied toward tuition, airfare and travel expenses for a local CCRN/PCCN. Criteria include AACN membership in our region, active bedside practice and certification. Each applicant submits an essay based on the current AACN theme of the year and how their attendance at NTI both exemplifies the theme and helps the nurse. Our PCRC board members review the applications and announce the winner in January.

Informally, through our monthly chapter meetings and chapter lending library, we keep our focus on certification as a path to excellence in critical care nursing. Chapter members can discuss regional concerns at our meeting or borrow the latest DVD study materials for test preparation. Nurses network across our region in multi-county work groups and help promote certification across all levels of care. We are proud of our certification rates and ability to come together as a diverse and active AACN chapter.
As soon as our former chapter president and incoming president returned from NTI, they were very excited to share this year’s theme of “Courageous Care.” At the first strategic planning meeting, the chapter board felt this theme really resonated with every acute and critical care nurse. One of the past chapter presidents gave new board members mugs with the new theme to help promote the theme in the work environment.

During the planning meeting, it was decided to incorporate the theme in everything we planned to do this year. Our first opportunity was integrating the theme into our annual local Albuquerque AACN Chapter Circle of Excellence awards. Traditionally, we have given at least one or two lifetime achievement awards to members who have had exemplary careers in nursing.

This year, a Courageous Care award would be given to a nurse who exemplifies the meaning of courageous caring. We had the perfect candidate, suggested by our president-elect. One of our colleagues was dying and in hospice care. This nurse had worked nights at the bedside in a local medical intensive care unit for over 30 years. In this teaching facility, she had mentored countless nurses new to the field of critical care, as well as medical residents and medical students. In the event that the nurse would not be alert enough or strong enough to attend our event, our president-elect collaborated with her family and colleagues in her unit for a special presentation at her home a month before our banquet. It was a huge success! Her colleagues decorated her backyard with a large banner that read “Courageous Care,” and we presented her with a plaque in the presence of her colleagues, friends and family.

One month later, at the Circle of Excellence awards, the president intentionally talked about this year’s theme to the group, emphasizing that nurses often do not think of themselves as courageous, and encouraging all to listen to each nominee’s exemplar, as there were many examples of courageous care being recognized. Our chapter had more nominations from progressive care than in previous years. One progressive care awardee told the president...
that she had never been to such an encouraging and energizing event.

Our annual fundraiser in December was for the Albuquerque Rescue Mission. The mission was chosen as an example of a nonprofit organization that “courageously cares” about helping the homeless in our community. We had an educational dinner sponsored by a vendor where the “fee” for the dinner was an item such as clothing or toiletries to donate. Again, the president discussed “Courageous Care” and how the chapter connected the theme to our chosen nonprofit organization. We collected a carload of items for the shelter.

The next endeavor is our annual critical care update conference in April. Our chapter has invited AACN President-elect Clareen Wiencek to speak. We have asked her keynote address to be on the annual theme, Courageous Care. In addition, we have invited a nurse practitioner to speak about her involvement and knowledge in the care of Ebola patients as another example of courageous care.

Last, the Albuquerque Chapter-AACN will participate in an annual community event, “Project Heart Start.” This event is a large-scale endeavor, sponsored by a local cardiology practice, local TV station and several other businesses to teach CPR to non-medical members of our community. What better exemplifies courageous care than a bystander helping to possibly save a stranger’s or loved one’s life by performing CPR? When we ask for volunteers from our chapter to participate as instructors for this event, we will advertise it as a way to demonstrate courageous care. Project Heart Start has trained 40,000 people in New Mexico to perform CPR since its inception in 2010. An estimated 13,000 were trained in 2015.

In addition, we have used allowable artwork from national AACN for our communications and website. On our website, the president has written a piece about the theme, Courageous Care, and has provided a link to a study in Journal of Nursing Scholarship on courageous traits of nurses. At all our major events, we give out door prizes to the participants, and many of these door prizes are AACN theme products and books.

It is the hope of the Albuquerque Chapter-AACN that we have promoted the message of this year’s theme in a way that President Karen McQuillan has meant us to communicate to the members and our community. Please consider our chapter for the 2016 President’s Award for Chapters.
The Central Oregon Chapter members came home from NTI last year inspired with the new theme, Courageous Care. We went home with a challenge: to rethink and reimagine how we deliver our care to our patients and to our community. We pushed ourselves outside our comfort zone, went deep inside to gather courage and made great strides in our chapter.

Throughout the year, at each chapter meeting and educational opportunity, the theme artwork is present, and Karen McQuillan’s Courageous Care message is read. Each meeting and educational opportunity is structured to support and cultivate this year’s theme; focusing on better patient care and outcomes. Theme logo table tents are in evidence at every event. The artwork shows our hands and our hearts reaching out; it exemplifies our growth, individually and as a chapter, in the branches of the tree and the establishment of a strong foundation in the roots.

As a result of all the hardships and family stress we encounter every day at the bedside, the Central Oregon Chapter focuses on the promotion and facilitation of meaningful conversations about end-of-life care. The Central Oregon Chapter has taken bedside patient advocacy a step further and reached out to our community. After a particular patient/family experience, our president-elect felt we “need to get the information out there.” To achieve this goal she had the courage to ask for and received a grant from the Advance Illness Management Team to purchase a KEY Conversations Workshop kit and educational training program. Conversation workshops are taking place in churches, social clubs and homes.

Our current outreach is in collaboration with the Central Oregon Parish Nurses with a networking approach to community education. Chapter members also set up a table in the hospital lobby on the annual National Healthcare Decisions Day to answer questions and deliver advance care planning packets. The Central Oregon Chapter is a noted sponsor of the Oregon Health Decisions Planning Guide.

This last year has shown an increase in acuity and patient census for our region. A resulting
increase in stress, compassion fatigue and burnout was recognized in our members. The Central Oregon Chapter has demonstrated Courageous Care by taking the time to renew and recharge. As a group we work at inspiring each other, reminding ourselves why we are at the bedside. Every so often, a patient revives our inner fire and reminds us why we do what we do. We remind each other to take care of ourselves; many go to yoga sessions together or ski together, while others have joined a cross-fit gym owned by one of our team members. Recently, after a very stressful situation, the chapter had a paint night where 18 members expressed their right-brain tendencies. We have been pushed beyond the previous norm, and we have demonstrated courage, risen to the challenge and excelled.

November 2015 was the first time the Central Oregon Chapter sponsored a CCRN/PCCN review class. Attendance was greater than anticipated, and a renewed interest in our chapter and certification was sparked. Courageous Care artwork was on every table, and each day the words of Karen McQuillan were stated, with added encouragement for those attending to take on the new challenge of certification. The Central Oregon Chapter gained 13 new members and five newly certified nurses. March will bring our second annual Certification Celebration, where we will celebrate those nurses who have demonstrated courage and earned certification.

Each year, the Central Oregon Chapter donates to a local nonprofit group and a local shelter. This year, rather than just a monetary donation, we established two collections in our hospital and in the community. Themed artwork was placed on collection boxes and in storefront windows. The Central Oregon Chapter collaborated with a local business and held a two-day toy drive that resulted in filling the collection van. Both of these endeavors took effort, time and courage, but the rewards were well worth it, and the Central Oregon Chapter gained community exposure. Another community group is already collaborating with us for a larger toy drive next year.

Future goals of the Central Oregon Chapter will focus on building our community presence, updating and maintaining our website, and working toward increasing member enrollment and involvement. This year, the chapter awarded three NTI scholarships. The recipients will bring back the new theme to inspire our new year.

Demonstrating Courageous Care, by reaching out to our community and to each other, the Central Oregon Chapter is working to reshape our healthcare culture and change the way healthcare is delivered to our patients and their families. We strive to tend to the needs of our community, one individual, one family at a time.
The American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN) President’s Award recognizes the chapters that best exemplify the association’s annual theme. The Piedmont Carolinas Chapter (PC-AACN) makes a difference in the healthcare profession and in the Charlotte, North Carolina, metro area. PC-AACN continues making great strides attracting new members and vendors to support and advance the profession of nursing. The chapter currently has 86 active local members and averages approximately 40 members at each monthly meeting. Corporations and vendors are eager to sponsor our events and meetings.

The chapter serves as the hands that raise nurses to the highest level of professionalism, allowing them to focus on their passion for the nursing profession. Our chapter incorporates the theme “Courageous Care” in all our activities and includes the logo and theme on all our monthly correspondences, meetings and events. We have been resilient in implementing new ways for members to be better informed about ongoing initiatives and future presentations.

Throughout the year, the chapter effectively uses the theme during chapter meetings, on our AACN chapter and Facebook pages, and in emails.

We are better using the power of nursing informatics through social media resources to keep our members updated on all chapter and national functions. During our monthly meetings, we invite members to have the courage to speak up about what they would like from their local chapter. This builds upon the past theme of being fearless to rise above being a nurse and becoming an exceptional nurse. Relevant and pertinent topics for this year’s presentations included alarm fatigue, advances in hemodynamic monitoring, preventing peripheral intravenous site infections, pressure ulcer prevention and advances in postoperative pain management. In February, we collaborated and conducted a joint meeting with the North Carolina Nurses Association and Emergency Nurses Association. The topic was “Nursing Advocacy 101: How Can I Contribute?”

PC-AACN strives to provide high-value educational opportunities that support the mission of
AACN. To that effect, our chapter will conduct a leadership development summit in March, with the theme “Do You Have the Courage? Relight Your Fire.” One of our speakers is nationally recognized for excellence in nursing, Vicki Good, AACN past-president. She will speak on “Stepping Forward to Provide Courageous Care.” We have three other speakers for the event who have been instrumental in mentoring and leading nurses. Their topics include “Transformation Through Caring Science,” “Words of Wisdom From The Lady Who Bumped The Lamp” and “Discover the Leader in You; Leadership in the 21st Century.”

We continue to explore ways to improve and encourage “engagement” of our members. We impress upon our members to go back to their place of employment and share their experiences from our monthly meetings. During our meetings, the chapter recognizes members who are certified or newly certified with the goal of providing courageous care. In December, we had a sponsored event dedicated to our certified nurses. Our certification celebration was held at a premier restaurant in Charlotte, and our 32 attendees were individually recognized for their accomplishment of achieving certification.

We encourage members to be involved at the national level, and we have members serving on the following committees: • Cardiac Medicine Item Writing Committee • Cardiac Surgery/Cardiac Medicine Certification Practice Analysis Task Force • Beacon Review • Nominating Committee • Critical Care Registered Nurse Development Committee • Evidence-Based Practice Abstract Review Committee.

Nicholas Leary and Ruth Pierce are also AACN ambassadors.

PC-AACN is financially stable with funds available for three $750 scholarships to the National Teaching Institute (NTI) for 2016, which we have done for the past three years. We encourage our members to apply for the scholarships and attend NTI. We use the Kirkland Merit System as part of our objective determination of scholarship awards. Once the national team releases the information on NTI, we distribute information on NTI events, including the Leadership Development Workshop, at our monthly meetings. In 2015, we had more than 15 members attend NTI.

PC-AACN chose to provide courageous care to others in need. This year, our community service focused on partnering with Habitat for Humanity on a local build project. We had 15 members help frame a home for a single mother of two. That day the temperature did not exceed 40 degrees, and there was a steady mist with sleet.

We are also working with Ronald McDonald House to provide aluminum can tabs to collect money for needy families of critically ill children. Through our community benefit efforts, we have also helped our local food bank.

By incorporating the theme “Courageous Care,” we have made great strides to help our chapter stand above and lead the way to increased professionalism, education and activism in nursing. I am proud to be part of AACN and very fortunate to have found such a well-organized group of local members committed to driving excellence and lighting a fire that reenergizes nurses.
What does courageous care look like to the San Fernando Valley Chapter of AACN? It started with a large contingent of board and chapter members who traveled to hear the message firsthand from President Karen McQuillan. The chapter awarded scholarships to board members and any chapter member who applied and wanted to learn more about chapter leadership and experience the National Teaching Institute in person.

The theme of Courageous Care resonated with our members, and we immediately started planning how we would embody the theme. We celebrated our annual chapter officer transition in June and congratulated all new board members on having the courage to step into a new role and contribute to the continued success of our award-winning chapter. Our chapter handbooks displayed the Courageous Care logo prominently on the cover and contained useful information for new and returning board members.

Our new chapter president began all board meetings with inspirational quotes that embraced the themes of courage, caring and leadership. All board members received a bookmark containing motivational passages on leadership and courage. In planning our October educational symposium, the board asked each speaker to start their presentation by reflecting on what courageous care means to them. The Courageous Care artwork and theme were used on our promotional fliers and symposium brochures. The chapter website underwent a significant upgrade, enabling the use of the theme and artwork in our communications and to promote the symposium.

All symposium attendees were encouraged to write about a courageous care experience on a banner displayed in the venue. One nurse wrote about “supporting a new graduate nurse in her first code blue.” A new nurse responded with “being a new grad in your first code blue!” All enjoyed reading and empathizing with the
comments and reminding ourselves, as Karen McQuillan stated, about the “strength that is in each of us.”

Our outreach to students in local nursing programs allows them to attend the symposium gratis. By inviting students we hope to support and strengthen their ability to deliver courageous care to their patients, since we all know that being a student and successfully completing nursing school is not for the faint of heart! We also added a student liaison to our board. We are appreciative of her perspective on how we can support professional development in our students and cultivate their courage as they face the challenges of providing care in today’s healthcare environment.

A new endeavor the chapter has embarked upon is a quarterly evening educational offering to encourage our critical care colleagues to come together if they cannot attend an all-day symposium. Our first event will feature a nurse ethicist presenting on moral distress in everyday practice. The goal is to inspire nurses to act with courage and promote change within their organizations, not just to identify the existence of moral distress. “Action breeds confidence and courage” is the theme on our flier, along with the Courageous Care logo.

Our chapter newsletter highlighted many quotes and pictures of our members and participants sharing their experiences of courage and caring. The president’s theme and artwork were featured prominently on the pages and included quotes from our presenters and pictures of our members writing their own thoughts on the meaning of courageous care. The quarterly newsletter continues to incorporate the Courageous Care theme and artwork on an ongoing basis.

Sponsoring an annual certification review course is something the chapter has done in the past and plans to continue. We feel strongly that it is our duty to support nurses in their efforts to meet the challenge of certification, while providing tools that will give them the courage to take their knowledge and proudly showcase it. In April, our chapter will co-sponsor a CCRN-PCCN two-day review course to support nurses on the courageous journey to certification. The Courageous Care logo is displayed on the brochure along with our AACN chapter logo and co-sponsor branding.

The San Fernando Valley Chapter is currently planning our spring educational symposium and once again will feature the Courageous Care logo and theme on all promotional materials. The Courageous Care banner will make another appearance, as we encourage all our members and attendees to voice their thoughts on the meaning of courageous care. Planning continues for additional quarterly evening education programs using the theme. Our newsletter editor continues to weave the Courageous Care theme and artwork into the chapter newsletter, as does our webmaster for the chapter website. We are anticipating May 2016 NTI in New Orleans, as our chapter will again award scholarships to offset the cost of attendance. We want to encourage our members to experience in person the energy and passion of thousands of critical nurses coming together in celebration of courageous caring.