They graduated from Luther ... so where are they now?

Megan Hatfield graduated in May 2013 and now works at Duke University Medical Center in North Carolina on a General Medicine floor. Megan took the NCLEX on June 29 and says that she primarily used Kaplan to study by going through all of the practice questions, remediating, and watching lectures on the areas she felt weakest in. As for the job search, Megan says that she worked with the career center in January for cover letter and resume help, and began applying for jobs in February. Knowing that she wanted to work somewhere similar to the Mayo Clinic, Megan used the internet search “magnet teaching hospitals” to look for new graduate positions. She began work at Duke on July 15.

Megan had twelve weeks of hospital orientation, which included several courses such as EKG interpretation, insulin therapy, evacuation protocols, and chemical spills. She started orientation taking care of one patient, and finished off orientation by taking care of four to five patients! She had four different preceptors during orientation. With regards to her first job, she was most nervous about making mistakes. She acknowledges “As a new grad, you are going to make some mistakes, but the best thing you can do is ask your fellow nurses questions to prevent the mistakes from happening, learn from the mistakes you make, and be confident in the skills you are performing.” Megan feels that Luther prepared her really well, but says that it takes time to adjust being in a new hospital with the letters “RN” after your name. She admits that she’s had to stop herself from saying “My name is Megan and I’m a Luther College Nursing Student” to patients on several occasions!

In terms of advice for current students, Megan says to dream big when it comes to job searching! She loves talking with her patients about the transition from Minnesota to North Carolina for her first job. When they ask her why she did it, she says: “for adventure!” Feel free to email Megan at hatfme01@luther.edu with further questions, and check out her blog on being a new RN at http://biggirlunderwearnc.blogspot.com/.

Sydney Cook also graduated in May 2013 and is currently working on an oncology/BMT unit at the University of Colorado Hospital in Aurora, CO. She studied for the NCLEX by using the Kaplan online resources and taking the four-day Kaplan course a few days after graduation. She says that she referred to her textbooks when she needed to brush up on content, but is a firm believer that if you put in the effort to learn what you need to learn during school, you don’t need to kill yourself studying after graduation! Sydney started applying for jobs in March. She searched for “new grad nurse residency programs,” and narrowed down the search by states she was most interested in. Sydney says that Professor Nelson was able to put her in contact with a Luther grad who actually works on her unit, which was incredibly helpful when it came to hearing an insider’s perspective. Sydney took the NCLEX at the beginning of July and was also hired later that month for the New Graduate Nurse Residency Program.

Sydney’s orientation was twelve weeks long, and the residency program itself is a year long. She had many basic classes such as hemodynamics, diabetes, EKG reading, and emergency response at first—and at the six month mark will take more classes to become chemo-certified. Every month she attends a new grad seminar, where all the new grads throughout the hospital get together and debrief by talking about any learning experiences or issues they’ve had. Sydney says that “one of the biggest struggles for me as a new nurse is learning time management and accepting that I can’t get to know my patients as well as I could during clinicals. Delegation is also hard—as nursing students we get used to doing everything for a patient, and now I’m responsible for overseeing the work of others ... weird!”

Sydney was most nervous about not being competent in her new job, which she says she learned later “was kind of silly ... Luther prepares us so well!” She has learned that the studying doesn’t end after school, it just gets less formal! Sydney’s advice to other students comes from a quote from one of her favorite movies: “When you are learning something new you must be polite with yourself.” She says “You are going to feel lost and dumb through the whole process of job searching and starting the new job. It’s unfortunate. But go easy on yourself! You don’t have to know everything all at once, and no one expects you to. Just take it day by day.” Feel free to contact Sydney at cook-sy01@luther.edu with further questions!
The seniors recently had a debate in their Management class on the Affordable Care Act. There were five teams: Romney/Ryan, Obama/Biden, Congressional Budget Office, Moderators, and Supreme Court. Each group researched the ACA from the perspective of Medicare patients, veterans, families/women/children, the uninsured, Medicaid patients, and the elderly.

How the Affordable Care Act affects Nurses ...

1. Advanced practice nurses are in demand.  
   “The Advanced Nursing Education Program is an ACA component that allocates $30 million to support academic training programs for nurse practitioner’s and certified nurse midwives.”

2. More nurses will work outside hospitals.  
   “The ACA’s medical home pilot program is aimed at cutting costs by moving healthcare out of hospitals and into communities.”

3. Nurses will be in short supply.  
   “The insurance mandate will bring more patients into the U.S. health care system. A shortage of 1.2 million nurses is projected by 2020.”

4. Providers are welcoming older patients.  
   “Primary care providers will receive financial incentives for treating Medicare patients, increasing the demand for geriatric nurses.”

5. New standards mean a new specialty.  
   “Pay-for-performance programs (compensation based on patient outcomes) will require a new specialty, as this paperwork will take nurses away from the bedside.”

... how the Affordable Care Act affects patients!

1. Do you have health insurance?
   - Yes
   - No
     2. The Health Insurance Marketplace is a new way to find a health plan that fits your needs.
     - Do you have Medicare?
       - Yes
       - No
         3. You still receive new protections such as ...  
         - You can’t be dropped from your plan if you get sick.
         - More preventative care is covered—like flu shots and diabetes, cholesterol, and cancer screenings.
         - Crack downs on waste and fraud
         - Yearly wellness visits
         - More preventative care
         - The gap will close in 2020.
         4. And there are new benefits and protections such as ...  
         - You’re covered and your benefits are protected.
   - No
     5. Through the Marketplace, there’s financial help available. Depending on your income, you may have access to low-cost or free plans.

References available on request: lsna@luther.edu

THANK YOU to everyone who made the 2013 Homecoming Parade a success!

Contact LSNA at: lsna@luther.edu

A Look Ahead
November 12: LSNA Meeting

We’ve updated! Check out LSNA online: www.luther.edu/lsna