

Tuning in to nurses on Nurseradio.org

By Susan Trossman, RN

No man is an island, but sometimes Kathy Jones, MSN, APRN, HNC, felt as if she were indeed going it alone when it came to the way she approached nursing.

Throughout her lengthy career — in settings ranging from orthopedic units to coronary ICUs to school districts — she often found herself stepping beyond the traditional medical model to meet the needs of her patients. Jones values the holistic approach to nursing, and she believes that “healing components,” such as nutrition, biofeedback and therapeutic massage, promote health and prevent disease.

But the Illinois Nurses Association member couldn’t help but wonder, was it truly okay to be different?

Today, Jones answers that question with a resounding “yes.” And she hopes that by sharing her story through an Internet-based initiative called “Nurseradio.org,” she can help other nurses feel less isolated in their practice, as well pique their interest in other ways of thinking about their nursing roles.

Tuning in

A joint venture of the New England School of Whole Health Education and the American Holistic Nurses Association, Nurseradio.org features one-hour interviews with nurse leaders and nurse healers that are available around the world 24 hours a day through Internet streaming.

To listen to an interview, nurses can sign on to www.nurseradio.org, click on “select an interview,” and then choose from a list of 27 — and growing — nurses who talk about their backgrounds, roles and experiences. (The interviews can be played using Real Player or Windows Media, and there is no cost to listen.)

The participants’ stories are compelling — whether it’s the nurse who speaks about working with victims of the Chernobyl nuclear accident to the RN who speaks about yoga and healing. Each interview is accompanied by a short biography and photo.

“Nurseradio.org provides really great opportunities for nurses to expand their knowledge of the world of nursing,” said Mary-Anne Benedict, MSN, RN, advisory board chairperson of the New England School of Whole Health Education and for Nurseradio.org. “Nurses who are interviewed are respected leaders in the nursing community, and they talk about global issues and other topics important to nurses.”

Benedict said RNs can gain more than knowledge by tuning into the interviews.

“Hearing these nurses talk about their experiences re-energizes you as a nurse — which is so important now,” said Benedict, a member of the Massachusetts Association of Registered Nurses and the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s

Commission on Accreditation. “Health care is undergoing tremendous strain and stress. It’s a system that’s broken.

“But through these interviews you can see what nurses can accomplish, and maybe those who listen will be inspired to work toward improving the health care system.”

Jones and Pat Iyer, BSN, RN, a Massachusetts Association of Public Health Nurses member, both stated that they worked with host Georgianna Donadio, PhD, to determine the content of their hour-long sessions.

In her interview, Jones talks about her entrée into nursing — volunteering as a candy-striper — as well as why she felt the need to take a break from nursing and pursue a career as an exercise physiologist. She eventually returned to nursing and has spent the past 10 years working as a school nurse.

Although in her previous jobs Jones always took on special projects, such as conducting smoking cessation programs, she now includes several healing modalities to support the health of the student population she serves. Jones specifically uses nutritional and music therapies to improve the health and well-being of students with neurological disorders, such as attention deficit disorder and autism.

“I’ve always felt a certain way, but I didn’t know there was a word for me — holistic,” Jones said. “The Nurseradio interview solidified my holistic view. And I hope nurses who listen to the programming realize the gift we have as a profession. We can incorporate many things into our practice if we allow ourselves to step outside the box.”

Iyer hopes that her interview will spark more interest in nursing and particularly within public health.

“Nursing is a wonderful field, and nurses have

such a range of knowledge and skills — and opportunities,” Iyer said. “It has enabled a lot of women to go up the career ladder and have families. And increasingly, the same is holding true for men.”

Like Jones, she has held a variety of nursing positions and promotes the use of complementary therapies, such as therapeutic touch. In her interview, she addresses everything from her role as a public health nurse to the challenges of working effectively with diverse populations.

One of the issues she and Donadio particularly wanted to cover in the interview was the ongoing threat of communicable diseases, such as tuberculosis.

“TB case management is just a pure example of true holistic nursing,” Iyer said. “It involves, for example, nutritional counseling, being cognizant of the patient’s religious and cultural needs and overseeing lengthy medication regimens, some lasting up to one year. Most of all it involves gaining people’s trust, which takes time. Many of my patients are refugees or immigrants, and their only prior contact with government employees may have been through Immigration and Naturalization Services. I need to help them understand that I will not ‘send them back’ because of their illness but will help them get well.”

By listening to Iyer’s interview, it’s clear she feels strongly about her chosen profession.

“I want to encourage nurses to try to keep that passion for their work,” she said. “And maybe by hearing other nurses talk about what they do (through Nurseradio), it may help those who are not feeling that passion, regain it.”

For more information, visit www.nurseradio.org or call (888) 354-4325. ■

Susan Trossman is the senior reporter for *The American Nurse*.

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