

# ALUMNI connections

A photograph of Bonnie Johnston, a woman with short brown hair, smiling. She is wearing a black blazer over a pink lace top. She is standing in front of a large, colorful wall decorated with many green and yellow leaf-shaped plaques. Some of the plaques have names and logos, such as "Tom & Debra Mauro", "Alberta Health Services", "ARC Resource & Util", "Keith & Kathy MacPhail", "John & Anna Dewar", "Canadian Natural Resources Limited", and "University of Calgary".

## Bonnie Johnston, BN'75

Hope, help and healing:  
One child at a time

**FALL | WINTER 2015-16**

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# Message from your alumni president

***Tyler Hume, BN '13***

**T**his is an exciting time to be taking over the helm of the Faculty of Nursing Alumni as your incoming president. In 2016, the University of Calgary turns 50 and there are many exciting initiatives on the horizon for both the university and the faculty. Alumni will be invited to join in these events and I hope many of you will take advantage of the opportunities to get reacquainted with the campus even if you haven't been engaged for some time.

In the faculty, we have had our own activities over the past year, including our annual spring luncheon and silent auction which was held at Heritage Park. For the past 23 years, we have celebrated future nurses and our own past with this event, with all proceeds going toward our student bursaries. We have some special things in mind for the 2016 version of the lunch and invite you to get involved. Stay tuned to the website ([nursing.ucalgary.ca/alumni](http://nursing.ucalgary.ca/alumni)) for updates.

I also had the privilege of attending a small gathering of alumni in the early spring, brought together by our dean Dianne Tapp, an alumna herself *MN '93, PhD '97*. Read more about this on page 4. As a young alum, it was interesting to learn the journey others have taken and the role their education in nursing has played.

I invite you to become engaged with the alumni, either on our executive or on our "in development" mentorship initiative. You can email me at [alumninursing@gmail.com](mailto:alumninursing@gmail.com). I hope to see you at an upcoming event. ■



**GET ENGAGED WITH ALUMNI,**  
either on our executive or  
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mentorship initiative.  
[\*\*alumninursing@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:alumninursing@gmail.com)



Alumni president (and CARNA 2015 Rising Star Award recipient) Tyler Hume  
Photo: William Au Photography





From left, UCalgary president Elizabeth Cannon; Schumacher lecturer Bonnie Johnston; and Faculty of Nursing dean Dianne Tapp at October's Marguerite Schumacher Memorial Alumni Lecture. Photo: Jae Im

# Alumna makes a difference

*Bonnie Johnston, BN '75: 2015 Marguerite Schumacher Memorial Alumni Lecturer*

The 2015 Marguerite Schumacher Memorial Alumni Lecturer, **Bonnie Johnston, BN '75**, is an advocate for children. Since beginning her career in an aboriginal community in northern Alberta, Johnston has held increasingly responsible roles in the areas of public health, pediatric inpatient and critical care, and support for vulnerable children, youth and families in the Child Protection system. It has culminated in her current position as the Chief Executive Officer of the Sheldon Kennedy Child Advocacy Centre where she has been since the Centre opened in February 2013.

"The Centre is a powerful example of strong partnerships, willing hearts and committed experts who ensure abused children and their families

receive the coordinated and comprehensive help they require," Johnston says. She is proud of the Centre's mission to provide children and youth, who have experienced abuse and trauma, with the support and treatment they need to heal and grow.

Johnston's Schumacher presentation, "Hope, Help and Healing: One Child at a Time," focused on how her nursing education was the foundation for her leadership as a child advocate and the development and work of the Centre. "I was valedictorian at our graduation in 1975 and the words I wrote and spoke then underscore the passion for the work I do now; set yourself no limitations. Reach out and touch that which is special and meaningful to you. Find your corner of the sky!"

**"There is no greater gift than knowing in some way you have contributed to making a difference in a child's life."**

Johnston also holds a Master's degree in Health Services Administration from the University of Alberta. Her focus is on continuous improvement of outcomes for vulnerable children, youth and families through collaboration, innovation and leading practice.

"There is no greater gift than knowing in some way you have contributed to making a difference in a child's life. It fuels the passion, the accountability and the commitment to always do better," she says. ■



# Across Canada in 80 Days

*We have been reconnecting with small groups of alumni across the country in 2015. See where we've been and the great messages they have shared with us!*

## CALGARY - MARCH 26 9 ALUMNI

**Karen Mills, BN '77**, has worked in Public Health her entire career and recently transferred to the Influenza and Rapid Response Team, vaccinating during influenza season and during outbreaks.



Dianne Tapp, Karen Mills, Kate Wong, Sandra Golding, Sheila Cook and Tyler Hume

CALGARY



Maria Martens, Shannon Murray, Kaye Coholan, Dianne Tapp, Farzana Premji, Lindsay Manning, Anne Zebarth, Marian Fennessy and Yuka Okada

TORONTO

## TORONTO - APRIL 16 9 ALUMNI

**The following recap of the Toronto event is written by Kay Coholan, BN '12, who is back in Toronto and working in the Emergency department at Mount Sinai Hospital.**

The alumni met around a large table in the side room of a cozy restaurant, a stone's throw from hospital row in downtown Toronto. Most attendees had never met but common threads kept the conversation lively. From graduation rings to cherished instructors and profs, eight nurses found themselves reminiscing about their days spent learning the trade under a prairie sky. Some had more in common than just their alma mater. Yuka Okada and Marian Fennessy were classmates who had never met, both having completed their post-diploma BN online in 2009 in the former distance program. They would have been connected via their online Blackboard posts only.

**Farzana Premji, BN '12** and **Shannon Murray, BN '14**, both profited from the opportunity to learn abroad at the University of Calgary campus in Qatar in the final semester of their degree. They shared their impressions of the cultural differences of living and working in the Middle East. Though they had never previously met, Murray discovered that she and **Aliya Tharani, BN '11**, work under the same roof, though on different units, at Sick Kids Hospital.

Diners savoured a delicious meal while dean Dianne Tapp updated the group on happenings at the campus, including the growth of the Faculty of Nursing and the work toward the goal of being one of Canada's top five research universities by UC's 50th anniversary in 2016.

Dean Tapp also talked about the significance of engaging alumni. "Since we continue to be wholly committed to the success of our current and future students, we appreciate hearing your personal story so that we may better understand the many paths alumni travel after they graduate from nursing."

This was the second alumni dinner in Toronto and Premji's was one of two familiar faces. **Lindsay Manning, BN '12**, who attended the alumni event a second time to hear about her peers' working roles, recently moved to Toronto and is seeking a job that will rival her former position at Foothills Hospital on the Medical Teaching Unit.

**Anne Zebarth, BN '89**, shared her impression: "When I listened to the newer graduates talking about their jobs and where they wanted to move their careers, I saw that the UC nursing program continues to do a great job preparing nurses to lead and use evidence to inform their practice."





Jananee Rasiah, Kate Wong, Laura Cuff, Dianne Tapp, Anne Dmytryshyn and Aurang Khan

EDMONTON

## EDMONTON - MAY 8

6 ALUMNI

### Aurang Khan, BN '11:

"Nursing is so much more than I ever thought it would be. I am challenged every day to lead people, to make decisions that impact patients and their families, and to be a better person as well as a better nurse each day." He is currently is a Unit Manager (Hemodialysis Unit, Social workers, OT & PT) in Edmonton and is an advocate for more men in nursing.

### Anne Dmytryshyn, BN '04,

is a Clinical Nurse Specialist at the Stollery PICU & PCICU and a Pediatric Advanced Life Support instructor; she is currently enrolled at the University of Toronto and will be part of the Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Class of 2016.

## HALIFAX - 19 MAY

5 ALUMNI

### Colette Sullivan, MN '94:

"It was great to reconnect with U of C nursing colleagues and see how each of us, despite the broad directions we have taken, are still passionate about nursing and are working to advance the science, scope and practice of nursing in the roles we are in."

**Amie Liddle, MN '05,** is the Administration Director of Foothills Medical Centre and is completing a PhD focusing on patient concerns in the health care system.

## VICTORIA - JUNE 12

6 ALUMNI

## VANCOUVER - JUNE 13

6 ALUMNI

**Lucia Chu, BN '09,** works in an emergency department and on travel assignments throughout B.C.; she has volunteered in Nigeria, the Philippines and Nepal.

### Shannon Rooney, BN '13,

works in Dermatologic Surgery and started the Family Nurse Practitioner program at UBC this fall.

### Jessica Bottiglieri, BN '08:

"While in nursing school I knew that by completing this degree program that it would open up many opportunities, but I didn't know it could open up this many. My degree transferred to a different province and I was able to complete a specialty program paid by my employer and work my dream job as an emergency room nurse. I have also had the opportunity to work with film and TV crews as a consultant as well as a special abilities extra on set."

## KELOWNA - JUNE 22

8 ALUMNI



Alison Beaty, Shannon Rooney, Jaclyn Sing, Jessica Bottiglieri, Lucia Chu and Dianne Tapp

VANCOUVER



Miriam Kiwilsza, Janice Thiessen, Coby Tschanz, Maria Martens, Sebastien Pisterzi, Dianne Tapp and Bruce Tufford

VICTORIA



Our Kelowna alumni are camera shy, but it was a great evening in a beautiful city!

KELOWNA





# Reconnecting after 10 Years

Partner Medicine Hat College's Class of 2004



In December 2004, 42 students from the University of Calgary Bachelor of Nursing program, Medicine Hat College (MHC) site, celebrated their graduation. On the weekend of June 19-21, 2015, 14 of those UCalgary alumni gathered at Medicine Hat Lodge for a 10-year reunion planned by Jenna Watson, Valerie Mutchler and Melissa Egan. Spouses and kids joined in as alumni got reacquainted. Activities included a casual Friday evening followed by Saturday's semi-formal party, emceed by Thomas Hamilton (who also emceed the 2004 grad), and a tour of MHC by Leana Forsyth who now instructs there.

## NURSING GRADUATES IN ATTENDANCE

**Jenna Watson** *"After 10 years, my heart is still completely in the profession of nursing and I love my job."*

- Seminar Instructor, Lab Instructor, Simulation Lead, Lab Coordinator and course lead for the community health course at UAlberta's BScN After Degree Program in Camrose.

**Val Mutchler**

- Since 2008, CARNA Regional Coordinator, South Zone.

**Melissa Egan**

- Acute care at Medicine Hat Regional Hospital.

**Shelley Storozuk** *"Nursing is a career that has been adaptable to my evolving life and gives me great joy."*

- Casual RN at Urgent Care in Calgary; completing the Master of Science in Nursing program at the University of Northern BC, focusing on sepsis in emergency nursing.

**Sherry Jans** *"I am constantly amazed at the diverse routes nursing can take us."*

- Was second nurse hired in the Medicine Hat Primary Care Network with a focus on diabetes, COPD, hypertension, obesity and dyslipidemia; an educator of chronic pain for new employees.

**Leslie Jackson**

- Currently taking the nurse refresher program.

**Lucille Grandy**

- Current manager, WeCare in Medicine Hat.

**Lincoln Taylor** *"It's been quite a ride so far!"*

- A nurse practitioner employed by a family physician and working to full scope in primary care.

**Dawn Durksen**

- Manager at St Joseph's Hospice Care in Medicine Hat.

**Madeleine & Thomas Hamilton**

*"Between the two of us, we have the wonder of birth covered, intensive*

*care down pat, a background in oncology and now, in-depth knowledge of pediatric nursing. Give us 40 years and we will start working on geriatric nursing."*

- Married their last year of nursing school, Thomas is at ICU at Foothills Medical Centre in Calgary and Madeleine has not left the Peter Lougheed Centre since her final preceptorship on labour and delivery.

**Bev Rhodes** *"I am proud of the opportunities to support advanced nursing practice through my profession."*

- Program Director, Informatics Competency and Practice Standards within the Chief Medical Information Office.

**Nicole Kruithof**

- Now living in Houston and preparing for the NCLEX.

**Leana Forsyth**

- A member of Faculty of Nursing at MHC.

**Jacqueline Lester**

- Clinical educator for Public Health for AHS South Zone- East. ■





From left: Teigen Welker, Alpha House outreach worker; Jonathon Paterson; Krystle Lawson; and Trish Dribnenki

## ALUMNI HELP CALGARY HOMELESS

Alumnae **Krystle Lawson, BN '13** and **Amanda Loates, BN '10**, are asking Calgarians to donate new or used backpacks so the homeless have a safe place to store and carry their belongings. As mental health nurses with Alberta Health Services, the two, together with psychiatric outreach nurse Trish

Dribnenki, connect this population with resources they need. They have become familiar and trusted faces to some of the 3,500 people estimated to be homeless in the city.

"I was homeless for about two-and-a-half years. Without my backpack I would have nothing because my things would get stolen or lost," says Jonathon Paterson, a former homeless client. "It gave me a great sense of security to know that everything I had was safely tucked away in one place."

"It's especially important for our clients to have a safe place to store their medications, job applications, identification and other personal items including their memories and mementos," says Lawson, a forensic outreach nurse. "Having a backpack makes it easier for them to keep track of their things and gives them a sense of security that their belongings are safe."

Nursing Instructor Kara Sealock, who taught Lawson in the undergraduate program, is not surprised by both nurses' community work and the difference alumni are making in the city and beyond. "Krystle was an exemplary student and is a phenomenal nurse," she says. "I am moved by her and Amanda's passion to help others." ■

Original story: Alberta Health Services Features story, 25 August 2015

## ARE YOU INTERESTED IN MENTORING A STUDENT OR FELLOW ALUM?

While crisscrossing the country this year, we marvelled at our alumni: where you have been and what you are doing. Your experiences, whether as a new practitioner or a seasoned pro, is valuable and could make all the difference to another up-and-coming RN. If you are interested in participating in a mentoring program, please contact Karen Cook at [kcCook@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kcCook@ucalgary.ca) and we will share our initial ideas with you.





## Food for Thought: The Faculty of Nursing Breakfast Series 2015 - 2016

Learn how nursing research makes a difference to our quality of life! The Faculty of Nursing Breakfast Series is made up of four annual lectures, meant to inform the community about innovations in nursing research and nursing knowledge around a variety of topics. Everyone is welcome to come for breakfast and enjoy an informative talk, followed by a Q & A. For more information, visit [nursing.ucalgary.ca/breakfast-series](http://nursing.ucalgary.ca/breakfast-series)

Thursday, Nov. 26, 2015  
7 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.

Senate Room, Hotel Alma

### Reinventing the Modern Family

Speaker: **Nicole Letourneau**



Nicole Letourneau is a full professor in the Faculty of Nursing and holds the Palix/ACHF Chair in Parent-Infant Mental Health. Her community-based program of research explores parenting, attachment and child development in the context of family violence, maternal depression and substance abuse and seeks to develop evidence to guide best practices in parent-child support and intervention. She is the first UCalgary nursing faculty member to be named a fellow of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences. In 2015, she received the College of Registered Nurses of Alberta's award for Excellence in Nursing Research.



**UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY**

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**energizing  
communities**  
**congress 2016**  
OF THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Sunday, May 29, 2016  
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

University of Calgary

## Compassion Under Contemporary Conditions: A dialogue with leading scholars and community leaders



Photo: Jean Malek

**10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.**

**Margaret Atwood**

Keynote Speaker and Q & A

**11:00 a.m. - 11:50 a.m.**

Intermission followed by book signing

**Noon - 4 p.m.**

Breakout Sessions and Panel Discussions:

- Compassion in Health Care
- Compassion in the Classroom
- Compassion in the Community

Visit [nursing.ucalgary.ca](http://nursing.ucalgary.ca) for more details, coming early in 2016!

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