

Mini-Nursing School for Girl Scouts

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Nearly 50 girls swarmed the Peralta hallways at Samuel Merritt University (SMU) dressed in green and brown uniforms with patch-work badges sashed across their outfits. Scouting for Nursing is an annual event led by nursing students in the Bachelors of Science in Nursing (BSN) program. This is the second year Girl Scouts from around the Bay Area spent a Saturday exploring the field of nursing during a half-day of labs, tours and hands-on work on the Oakland campus.

Guides for the day were two dozen SMU nursing students and faculty from the School of Nursing (SoN). The groups ranged from the six year-old groups known as Daisy and Brownies to 14 year old Girl Scouts. The annual Scouting for

Nursing workshop is an effective way for SoN students to gain clinical experience while meeting a learning objective. It is also an opportunity for the Scouts to think about a career in nursing.

Debbie McBride, RN, MSN, CPON, Assistant Professor, SoN, facilitated the program in the Health Science Simulation Center (HSSC). “We are trying to familiarize the Scouts about the variety of career opportunities available in the nursing profession and the many different roles

of nurses, education requirements, and resources available for those pursuing careers in nursing,” said McBride. “After the Scouts completed the session they were given a participation badge.”

With the goal of improving young people’s positive awareness of nursing, SMU alum, Andrea Sitchon, created the two-hour course with fellow BSN students from the California Student Nurses Association (CSNA) in May 2010. “Kids often have misperceptions about nursing, such as “nurses don’t make independent decisions” or “only women can be nurses.” The mini-nursing workshops are intended to clear some of the misconceptions.”

Hosted by HSSC educators, the Scouts were guided through several activities including simulation demonstrations, how to assess equipment, as well as a discussion about the history of nursing. One of the stations was



BSN students Todd Yee and Raymond Ng with a girl scout

a 'hand washing unit' where the young scouts were asked to wash their hands under a black light. "The goal was to show the students that bacteria are still there," said Sitchon, "This way we're able to discuss germs and the importance of staying healthy."

The nursing students took turns teaching the Scouts about first-aid, bandaging, what to do when someone is choking, how to check a pulse or take blood pressure, and nutrition. The simulation mannequins were used so the Scouts can listen to heart and lung sounds for discussing the harmful effects of smoking.

"The idea behind the event is also to teach the scouts about basic health and first aid knowledge to use at

home," said Pamela Klein, BSN student and Co-President of the California Nursing Student's Association SMU chapter. "Feedback from scouts who have attended a previous workshop said they wash their hands regularly now, and one scout knew what to do to help stop her brother's nose bleed."

The mini-nursing workshop gave BSN students the opportunity to take what they are learning in the classroom, and apply it in an actual teaching setting. "We cover a variety of health issues for general health information and preventative health issues," explains McBride.

"It's really a good way to give back to the community. It reminds you why you're in nursing school, to

help people and that's what we're doing," said Klein.

Samuel Merritt University, located in Oakland, California, has been educating health science practitioners who are committed to making a positive difference in diverse communities since 1909. Nearly 1,400 students are enrolled at SMU, with campuses in Oakland, Sacramento, San Francisco and San Mateo. The University offers an undergraduate degree in nursing; master's degrees in nursing, occupational therapy, and physician assistant; and doctoral degrees in nursing, physical therapy and podiatric medicine. For more information visit www.samuelmerritt.edu.

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