



ALUMNI  
NEWSLETTER  
2018



**Taking  
the  
Pulse of  
Nursing  
Today:**

**A look at what  
makes this  
generation  
of nursing  
students  
*passionate***

Basic BSN graduate Toluwanimi Olajuyigbe grew up in Nigeria. She believes nursing education will put her in a unique position to care for people, to create change, and eventually to give back to her home country. [See back cover for more.]

# LETTER FROM THE DEAN



Mary Burman, Dean

## Having doubts about the ability of the next generation to take on the world

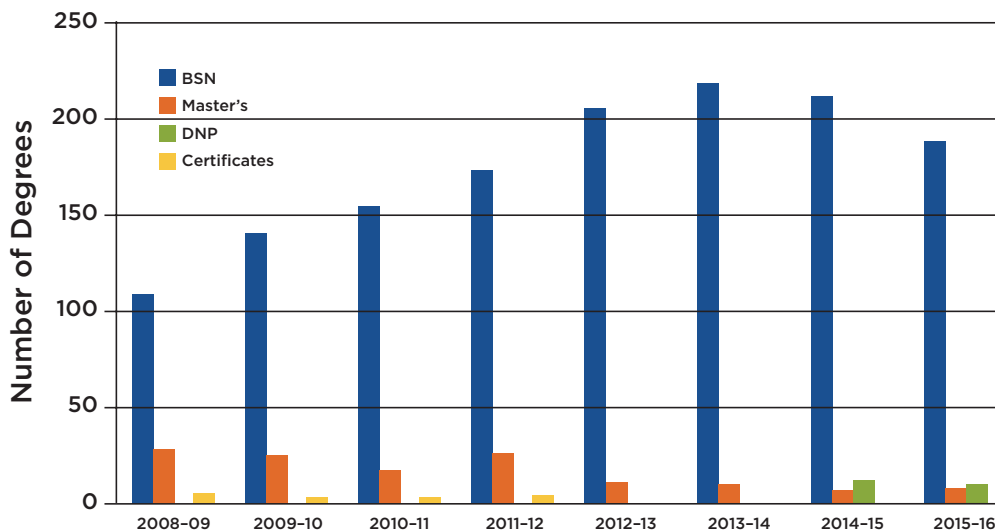
... is not new. Indeed, Anthony Ashley Cooper (the 7th Earl of Shaftesbury in England), in a speech to the House of Commons on February 28, 1843, ranted, "... a fearful multitude of untutored savages. . . [boys] with dogs at their heels and other evidence of dissolute habits. . . [girls who] drive coal-carts, ride astride upon horses, drink, swear, fight, smoke, whistle, and care for nobody. . . the morals of children are tenfold worse than formerly."

## Laying fears aside

For those of us who have been in nursing for a while, if we are honest, we have to admit that we occasionally wonder about the next generation of nurses as well. But we can lay any fears aside! Students still come into nursing to truly make a difference for individuals, families, and communities. Read the following 18 heartwarming and reassuring stories about what motivates our current students to become nurses.

These stories are just a sampling of our students' stories. We graduate a number of BSN, MS, and DNP students each year from the Fay W. Whitney School of Nursing (see graph). It boggles the mind to consider what these

### Nursing Degrees Awarded by Year



graduates are doing to improve and promote the health of individuals, families, and communities across Wyoming, the United States, and the world.

We hope you are inspired by these students and graduates. Take time to pause and reflect on what led YOU to nursing!

Mary E. Burman  
Dean and Professor

## In this Issue: THE PULSE OF NURSING TODAY

The Pulse of Nursing Today:  
 Student Perspectives.....3-10, 20  
 School Update and Faculty Research..... 11-12  
 Preceptor Recognition/Simpson Award ..... 13

Community Partner Awards ..... 14-15  
 UWAANC Update and Distinguished Alumni Award ..... 16  
 Donors and Scholarship Awards ..... 17-18  
 Making a Difference: One Gift at a Time ..... 19

In a world of constant change, the nursing profession changes too, but in a good way as we progress in promoting health. But what we've found does NOT change is the REASON for individuals coming into nursing. Their motive continues to be, "I want to make a difference."

So read what 18 students across our nursing programs have to say about motives, unique goals, and perspectives. The future of nursing is in wonderful hands!

## **Christina Cook/BRAND (Accelerated BSN: Bachelor of Science in Nursing) then DNP-PMHNP (Doctor of Nursing Practice Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner)**

Originally, I went into nursing because I had a passion for travel and people. From Antarctica, I started corresponding with a wonderful woman at the University of Wyoming who helped me navigate things like transcript checks and get the process started to become a BRAND student eventually!

I chose UW as well for the DNP-PMHNP program for several reasons. First, since I live in Laramie it was an easy decision to continue my education in the town in which I live. Second, I have grown to love the little town of Laramie that I call home. It is fortunate that I can study, live, and then practice in a town that I appreciate and love.

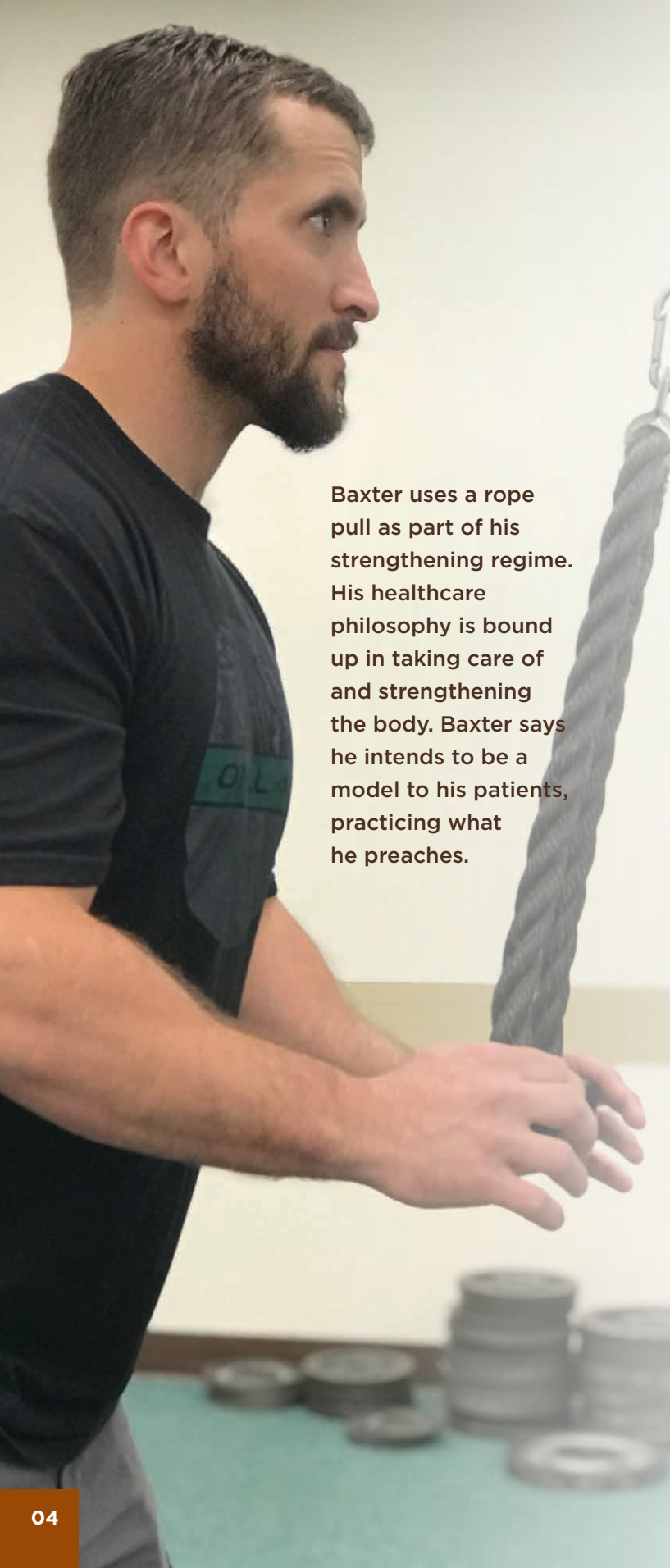
When I finish my DNP-PMHNP degree, I am hopeful that I will be able to practice in Laramie. Along with helping community members struggling with mental illness, I want to help reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and reach out to the community by promoting mental health.

One thing that is unique about me is that I am the wife of a rancher, and therefore spend my weekends fixing fence and driving tractors. I hope I can utilize this unique quality to encourage mental health in a rural population that hesitates to seek help with mental health.

**"One thing that is unique about me is that I am the wife of a rancher, and therefore spend my weekends fixing fence and driving tractors. I hope I can utilize this unique quality to encourage mental health in a rural population that hesitates to seek help with mental health."**

**—Christina Cook**





Baxter uses a rope pull as part of his strengthening regime. His healthcare philosophy is bound up in taking care of and strengthening the body. Baxter says he intends to be a model to his patients, practicing what he preaches.

## **Randy Baxter/DNP-FNP (Family Nurse Practitioner)**

### **Favorably disposed to Nursing**

It had not always been my dream to become a nurse. My motivation for pursuing nursing developed over many years. During my childhood, my mother made some rather poor choices that led to a horrific car accident. After surviving her near death experience, she was determined to turn her life around. She became a licensed practical nurse and has worked in long-term care centers for the past fifteen years. I became favorably disposed to the profession of nursing because it was instrumental in my mother's transformation process into the amazing woman she is today.

### **Finding direction and motivation**

In high school, I was a marginal student who had a serious lack of direction and motivation. At Northwest College, I found both direction and motivation by meeting the woman who would become my wife and by taking a critical reading course from an amazing professor. Over the next two years, my focus switched from mathematics to biology, then from biology to medicine, then from physical therapy to anesthesia, deciding to work towards becoming a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA). At that time, I felt becoming a registered nurse was merely a stepping-stone on my way to anesthesia.

### **Loving being a nurse**

In 2010, I became a registered nurse and worked on a medical-surgical unit for several years. I was surprised by how much I loved being a nurse, and by my ability to establish therapeutic relationships with patients and their families. It was during that time that I met a very influential primary care provider. He believed that the success of primary care practices could partially be measured by the number of empty beds in hospitals and emergency departments. He convinced me to come work with him in the clinic. Through that experience, I developed a vision and passion for primary care. I felt led to apply to the FNP track of the DNP program at the University of Wyoming. It was an exciting proposition that I could bring the best qualities of the nursing profession to bear in my future primary care practice. It was my impression that the DNP program at UW was the most viable option and would best prepare me to provide primary care in rural Wyoming.

## Lauren Hamilton/Track Recruit, Basic BSN grad heading to DNP-FNP

When I was 5 years old, I knew I wanted to be a nurse. My mom was ski patrol, so I was the ‘mini’ ski patroller and was even allowed into the first aid room. I don’t remember all the incidents that happened, but I remember the feeling of it, and I LOVED it. Helping people and trying to figure out the issues is my passion. I really want to work in the ICU, since you have to think at the highest level. You have somebody’s life in the most critical stage possible . . . and you can really make a big difference. That’s just the reason I wanted to become a nurse: to be that person to help in someone’s greatest time of need.



## Susan Brown/DNP-PMHNP

Since I am an older student, I bring a lifetime of enriching and varied experiences to nursing. Although I mostly grew up in the United Kingdom, I also lived in Nigeria, Libya, and Saudi Arabia—so I have a great appreciation for other countries and cultures. I have been a business owner; have worked in the outfitting business; and worked as a nurse on a transitional care unit, surgical unit, PACU, and cancer center. There is such a dire need for mental health care in Wyoming and nationally as well. My plan is to stay in Wyoming to help fill this need. I currently work as an oncology nurse. I have a strong interest in helping those undergoing cancer treatment to achieve the best psychiatric health possible.



## D’Andrea Laracel/BRAND

I love studying human motivations and behaviors, so my first degree was in psychology. I entered BRAND hoping to be a psychiatric nurse practitioner someday. Nursing’s holistic approach touches on all aspects of the human person, often neglected in other medical field areas. I think people’s psychological aspects are often overlooked in favor of physical ailments. Treating an alcoholic’s liver failure effects on their body doesn’t address effects on the mind. What caused them to drink in the first place? Why are they addicted to alcohol? Those questions should be dealt with, or we are treating a surface condition and not the root problem. If the root is not dealt with, the problem will recur.



## Rebecca Specht/MS (Master of Science) Nurse Leader

Following high school, I enlisted in the World’s Finest Navy, serving as a hospital corpsman. In that role I truly found my passion in medicine. My two nurse practitioner mentors encouraged me to pursue my education. They lived for teaching and caring for patients. They are the example of what I aim to be. I chose to pursue my master’s because I see how rapidly healthcare is changing, and I do not want to become complacent. For me, the building blocks to the care I provide are in education. There is no limit too high when it pertains to education and nursing. Nursing is always evolving, and I do not want to be left behind!



# THE PULSE OF NURSING TODAY



## Colleen Lang/MS Nurse Leader

My mother, a radiology tech for over 30 years and always advocating for her patients, influenced my choice to pursue nursing. Stories she told of how she made a difference in people's lives inspired me to do the same. I began the MS program to be a better nursing leader. Caring deeply about my patients and fellow nurses, I want to make sure I am giving only my best to both groups. As a practice manager for a large multispecialty group, I have opportunity to shape health care policy. Undoubtedly, nurses and primary care providers are poised to play a very important role in improving health care delivery for patients. I am excited to find new ways to ensure patients receive the care they need.



## Donald James ("DJ") Hayden/Basic BSN

At first I decided to become a fire fighter and EMT (Emergency Medical Technician). When I went through EMT training, I fell in love with medicine. As I approached the completion of my fire degree, I realized that my passion was really in medicine and not fire. Long term, I want to become a flight nurse and work in transport or emergent care. . . . My capstone experience in the Cheyenne Regional Medical Center Emergency Department was absolutely amazing, developing my skills, refining assessments of patients, and collaborating with a multidisciplinary team to best care for patients. I met people from all walks of life, heard their stories, and comforted them in their time of need.



## Sherra StClair/DNP-PMHNP

Due to an early fascination with how the human body works, I became a medical illustrator. In 2003, my first son was born premature. We were on the receiving end of tremendous grace and expertise from NICU nurses at Poudre Valley Hospital. I realized nursing is not just about caring for bodies, but for patients' minds and hearts as well. Through a calamity of life experiences, I became a psychiatric nurse at Ivinson Memorial Hospital. My dream is to work in an integrated clinic, providing outpatient mental health care for underserved populations, working to de-stigmatize mental illness, providing access to vulnerable populations, and educating about mental health as part of holistic self-care.



Tamara Mason (right) enjoying time with her daughter Morgan at a favorite Laramie hangout. Both are students at UW.

## Tamara Mason/DNP-FNP

I wanted to help people, so looked at nursing. I had doubts about performing painful procedures, but from my first patient I knew nursing was for me. Caring for patients, creating important connections with them has been one of the great joys of my life! DNP grads have and will continue to have impact by providing direct patient care and creating policy change as quality improvement coordinators/advocates. I hope to provide unique, evidence-based care while creating strong personal connections with patients/family. I look forward to making a difference with my patients and community.

## Danielle Johnson/ Basic BSN to MS Nurse Leader

I am a pediatric traveling nurse currently doing a contract in Fairbanks, Alaska! I am in the Master's Program for Nursing Leadership because I want to teach and ultimately lead in the nursing profession. Healthcare is ever changing right now, and we critically need nurses in all areas to start stepping up and making changes for what will best work for patient populations and nurses alike.

It is crucial to be educating newer nurses to think outside the box, to advocate for their patients, and to become leaders early on. All too often, we see nurses burned out from being overworked and experiencing compassion fatigue. It is my mission to spread love, light, and the knowledge I have gleaned from my nursing experiences so far. I strongly believe that in a profession where you are caring for others, you must be pouring from a full cup.



**“In a profession where you are caring for others, you must be pouring from a full cup. . . . So I strive to live a life full of passion and adventure, always challenging myself to try something new. This is my why and my how, and I will always strive to pass this on!”**

**—Danielle Johnson**

## Morgan Lu/Basic BSN

### Why did I choose Nursing?

The short answer is that God showed me nursing was the plan He had for my life. But that revelation didn't come easy. When I initially came to college, I declared nursing for the first three months and absolutely HATED it. I quickly dropped my anatomy and physiology classes and decided that I was better off being a teacher. But I remember sitting in my freshman chemistry class thinking about nurses—nurses I've met, nurses I've heard stories about, and the change nurses have made for so many people. So I prayed, "Lord, if you REALLY want me to be a nurse, you HAVE to make me passionate about this, because otherwise there is no way I am going to make it through college."

I prayed it half-heartedly, and as God always does, He responded full-heartedly. I became ENAMORED by the human body. I loved my classes, felt empowered by what I was studying, knowing that one day I was going to get the chance to touch someone else's life.

### Hopes for the Future?

For the past three years, I have volunteered at a clinic here in town that is free for those whose income is less than \$30,000 annually for a family of four and who do not have health insurance. This clinic has changed how I view healthcare and has definitely shaped where I want to take my career in nursing. One patient at the clinic told me that the Downtown Clinic is her family, and that because of the adequate health care she has received she was able to get a job and turn her life around. Her life changed because of the access to healthcare.

I hope to one day open another clinic like this one, so that more of the underserved people groups in our world can receive adequate care. As people always say, I may not be able to change the world, but I can change the world for one person; and through the lens of nursing, this is tangibly possible.



**"As people say, I may not be able to change the world, but I can change the world for one person; and through the lens of nursing, this is tangibly possible."**

**—Morgan Lu**



## Jeffrey Shideman/BRAND to DNP-FNP

Caring for patients as individuals with unique stories is what impressed me most about the nurse-patient relationship. I saw nurses working in ER and on the hospital floor taking time to truly listen to patients, ensuring care plans were appropriate to personal circumstance. I watched nurse colleagues come together as a health care team dedicated to high-quality patient care. Seeing respect for individual patients, resulting relationships, and the power of teamwork drove me to become a nurse. I want to be a primary care provider capable of delivering comprehensive, innovative primary care targeted toward wellness promotion and illness prevention. Strong teamwork will define my future nursing practice.



## Kiah Leonard/Track Recruit, Basic BSN

I was drawn to nursing because of the one-on-one interaction and relationships nurses have with patients. Nurses care for all aspects of a human being, and I value getting to know more about patients than just their disease process. I want to impact lives for the better on a daily basis, to be part of a profession that embodies compassion, hard work, and servitude. I am currently in the Navy Nurse Candidate Program and will commission to active duty as an officer in the Navy Nurse Corps upon graduation. I would like to become a pediatric or trauma nurse and travel the world. My long-term goal is to get my psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner degree in order to help veterans who have PTSD.



## Lindsey Morrell/BRAND

My first bachelor's degree was in integrative physiology from the University of Colorado at Boulder. Growing up in Colorado, I had friends who attended UW, who enjoyed the experience they got, who raved about the education they received. So I was intrigued by BRAND. The program presented a unique opportunity to have rural health experience through the clinical rotations. I feel I was prepped for BRAND's rigorous nursing courses with my background in human anatomy and physiology, since it gave me a deep understanding of how the body works. I want to be able to use that knowledge to educate my patients so that they will better understand their bodies and their health.



## Nichole Taylor/RN-BSN then DNP-FNP

My journey with UW started with a BS in geology. I realized rocks and people are very similar: Both are created with special elements; both are altered from exposure to various environments. The difference is that rocks don't talk; and I thrive better working with people. Returning to UW for RN-BSN then DNP-PMHNP, I had opportunity to work with a great mental health team caring for populations across Wyoming. I see a lack of resources for mental health in rural Wyoming, so hope to continue advocacy, become involved with health care policy, and work toward advancing preventative mental health in this state.



## Scott Griffith/RN-BSN Completion

**“My uniqueness?** Hmmmm . . . well let me think. I guess my background is a little different.” Griffith first graduated from University of Utah with a degree in business and took a job as marketing director. He then became a police officer. He went through the EMT training program, after which he joined EMS service and volunteered for 18 years. After the police academy, Griffith became an EMT-Intermediate. He continued through other healthcare jobs, as surgical technician and CNA, as nationally certified surgical assistant, in consulting work with an OB/GYN associate; in a managerial position at the Powell hospital, and then, says Griffith, “I decided to go to nursing school. This was something I had in the

back of my mind for several years. I wish I would have done it much sooner!”

**Nursing Education.** Griffith completed his nursing program at Western Wyoming Community College, then his BSN online through UW. But he doesn’t intend that to be the end of the story, noting, “I also plan to continue my education with a Master’s degree in nursing. My end goal is to become a Family Nurse Practitioner.”

**“My EMT training was my first exposure to health care. I soon learned that I had not only a great interest in, but a passion for helping others in the health care capacity.”**

—Scott Griffith



**Left:** Griffith says he enjoys competing in endurance events and has completed several Ironman Triathlon events. This past spring he completed his 130th marathon/ultra marathon.

**Right:** Griffith works in both ER and Medical/Surgical areas. “Being in a small hospital, we do a little bit of everything, including post-surgical, pediatrics, geriatrics, ICU, and postpartum care for moms and new babies,” says Griffith. In the picture Griffith holds his newborn son, Spencer. “I had the privilege to be there for the delivery,” says Griffith.



# SCHOOL UPDATE

## 2018 Faculty and Staff Awards

**LeAnn Carpenter:** UW Staff Incentive Award Recipient

**Denise Gable:** Wald Award to attend AACN Business Officers of Nursing Schools conference in Seattle, Washington

**Shelly Fischer:** Sharron S. Humenick Award for development of the Safety-Specific Transformational Leader Behavioral Assessment Instrument; and Wald Award to attend the Institute for Healthcare Improvement Forum in Orlando, Florida

**Marilyn Hall:** CHS Outstanding Teaching in Geriatrics Award

**Sherrie Rubio-Wallace:** Communication of Wisdom Award for sharing her time, knowledge, and expertise with faculty developing ReNEW curriculum/courses

**Holly Miller:** CHS Outstanding Career Achievement Award

**Jenifer Thomas:** Wald Award to attend the Motivational Interviewing Intensive Workshop in San Francisco, California

## Student Convocation Awards

On May 11, 2018, 156 graduates were honored: 47 Basic BSN, 19 BRAND, 109 RN-BSN Completion, 10 DNP-FNP, and four DNP-PMHNP. Awards were presented as follows:

### 2018 Basic BSN And Brand Awards

**Sarah Boyer and Hayley Wasserburger:** Rudolph “Rudy” and Louise Anselmi and Jeri Kirk Family Trust Nursing Scholarship, *leadership, responsibility*

**Jeremy Franklin:** Lina Kennedy White Memorial Award, *interest in and aptitude for geriatric nursing*

**Morgan Jacobs:** Gertrude Gould Memorial Award, *excellence in public health nursing practice*

**Sonia Klein and Nicole McConnell:** Dorothy Tupper Memorial Award, *caring, compassion, interpersonal communication*

**Lauren Mochowski:** Amelia Leino Memorial Award, *academic excellence, strong aptitude for family nursing*

**Sara Pepper:** Beverly McDermott Award, *leadership, public activism*

**Ryan Russi:** School of Nursing Spirit Award, *exceptional spirit and enthusiasm*

**Rebecca Thiel:** Carol Macnee Scholarship Award, *excellence in scholarship/research*



## Holly Miller Honored with 2018 CHS Outstanding Career Achievement Award

College of Health Sciences Outstanding Career Achievement Award was presented to nursing faculty member Holly Miller by Shelly Fischer, nursing faculty/CHS awards committee member. Miller was director of both Basic BSN and BRAND nursing programs at UWFWSO, also holding the position of Clinical Simulation Center Coordinator. Miller retired in May.

**Nichole Valloric:** Passion for Nursing Award, *passion, a spirit of eagerness, devotion for nursing*

### 2018 RN-BSN Completion Award

**Joleen Watson:** Professional Nurse Award, *excellent practice, community, and professional service*

### 2018 DNP Awards

**Tamara Mason:** Dr. Patsy Heslen Haslam Leadership Award, *leadership and grace in the DNP program*

**Nichole Taylor:** Susan McCabe Psychiatric/Mental Health Graduate Award, *academic excellence, passion for knowledge, superior clinical practice in the PMHNP program*

**Monica Teichert:** Alpha Pi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau Award, *demonstrating exemplary rural practice in nursing*

**Laura VanBrocklin:** Change Agent Award, *commitment to improving and changing health*

# FACULTY RESEARCH/PUBLICATIONS

Diane Boyle  
PhD, RN, FAAN



**Research Focus:** Improvement of the nursing work environment, nursing workforce, and patient safety through expertise in developing and evaluating standardized, value-driven metrics; and sustained investigation of relationships between nursing and patient outcomes. **Key Publications:** Loan, L.A., Parnell, T.A., Stichler, J.F., Boyle, D.K., Allen, P., VanFosson, C.A., & Barton, A.J. (2018) Call to action: Nurses must play a critical role to enhance health literacy. *Nursing Outlook*, 66, 97-100./Barton, A.J., Allen, P.A., Boyle, D.K., Loan, L.A., Stichler, J.F., & Parnell, T.A. (2018) Health literacy: Essential for a culture of health. *Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, 49(2), 73-78./Boyle, D.K. (2017) Nursing specialty certification and patient outcomes: What we know in acute care hospitals and future directions. *The Journal of the Association for Vascular Access*, 22(3), 137-142.

Rebecca Carron  
PhD, RN, NP-C



**Research Focus:** Coping strategies and symptom management in American Indian and non-American Indian women with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). Other faculty members working with Carron include Diane Boyle, Sarah Kooienga, and Esther Gilman-Kehrer. **Key Publications:** Carron, R. (2019) Spirituality. In P. D. Larsen's (Ed.) *Lubkin's Chronic Illness: Impact and Intervention* (10th ed., pp. 81-105). Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning./Carron, R., Simon, N., Gilman-Kehrer, E., & Boyle, D. K. (2018) Improving rural health care for women with polycystic ovary syndrome through continuing education. *Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, 49 (4), 164-170.

Pamela Clarke  
RN, MPH, PhD, FAAN



**Research Focus:** Nursing theory and innovations in nursing science; curriculum issues related to nursing knowledge and transformation; leadership in public health/health disparities. **Key Publications:** Turkel, M., Fawcett, J., Amankwaa, L., Clarke, P., Dee, V., Eustace, R., Hansell, P.S., Jones, D., Smith, M., & Zahourek, R. (2018) Thoughts about nursing curricula: Dark clouds and bright lights. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 31(2), 185-189./Clarke, P. & Bleich, M. (2018) Holistic leadership-nursing's unique contribution to healthcare./*Nursing Science Quarterly*, 31(2), 134-138. Clarke, P. & Shattell, M. (2018) Public dialogue in nursing and healthcare. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 30(1) 29-30.

Shelly Fischer  
PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FACHE



**Research Focus:** Improving patient safety through leadership at the point of care. Program of research aims to improve patient safety in the acute care setting by improving leadership decision-making and teaching all nurses transformational leadership skills. Fischer partners with rural hospitals to assure her research is current and relevant to nurses caring for patients. **Key Publications:** Fischer, SA., Jones, J., & Verran, JA. (2017) Consensus achievement of leadership, organizational and individual factors that influence safety climate: Implications for nursing management. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 00:1-9./Fischer, SA. (2017) Developing nurses' transformational leadership skills. *Nursing Standard*. 31, 51, 54-61.

Ann Marie Hart  
PhD, FNP-BC, FAANP



**Research Focus:** Nurse practitioner (NP) transition into practice. **Key Publications/Presentations:** Hart, A.M. (2019) The Advanced Practice Registered Nurse in Chronic Illness Care. In P.D. Larsen (ed.). *Lubkin's Chronic Illness: Impact and Intervention* (10th ed., pp. 391-422). Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett./Hart, A.M., Bowen, A., & Dolbeck, E. (2018) New NPs' preparedness for and transition into clinical practice: 2012-2016. Juried podium presentation at the 44th annual meeting of the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF), Indianapolis, IN./Hart, A.M. (2018) State of NP Residency Programs. American Association of Colleges of Nursing Doctoral Conference, Invited presentation at Faculty Practice Pre-conference. Naples, FL.

Sarah Anne Kooienga  
PhD, FNP, ARNP



**Research Focus:** Promoting excellence in primary care, specifically EHR/Patient Portal Implementation in rural primary care practice & RN roles in primary care practice. **Key Publications:** Carryer, J. & Kooienga, S. (2017) Patients' experience and understanding of E-portals in rural General Practice. *The Journal of Primary Health Care*, 9(4), 262-268./Kooienga, S. (2018) Rural patients' and primary care clinic staffs' perceptions of EHR implementation: an ethnographic exploration. *Journal of Ambulatory Care Management*, 41(1), 71-79./Kooienga, S., Wilkinson, J. (2017) RN Prescribing: an expanded role for nursing. *Nursing Forum*, 52(1), 3-11./Kooienga, S., Singh, R. (2017) Pharmacy and primary care perspectives on e-prescribing: a focused ethnography. *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy*, 13(4), 820-830.

Mary Anne Purtzer  
PhD, RN FNP, ARNP



**Research Focus:** Exploring and fostering personal and collective growth through transformative learning. This focus is operationalized within the academic and clinical contexts with faculty, staff, students, nurses, and clients/patients. **Key Publications:** Hermansen-Kobulnicky, C. J., & Purtzer, M. A., Singh, R. L., Ross, C. L., McTigue, K. M., & Overstreet, L. (in press) Examining change in confidence: A unique approach to interprofessional education evaluation. *Health and Interprofessional Practice*./Purtzer, M. A., & Hermansen-Kobulnicky, C. J. (2016) Optimizing the benefits of self-monitoring among patients with cancer. *Oncology Nursing Forum*, 43(6).

Jennifer Thomas  
PhD



**Research Focus:** Promote health behavior change by examining psycho-social and cultural factors. Special interest in the assessment of risk and the maintenance of health behavior change as related to type 2 diabetes prevention. Particular interest in addressing health disparities associated with type 2 diabetes risk among Hispanic individuals in rural areas. **Key Publications:** Thomas, J., Moring, J., Nagel, M., Lee, M., Linford, C., Woods, T., & Clinckenbeard, S. (in press) Demands of multiple behavior change in type 2 diabetes risk reduction. *The Journal for Nurse Practitioners*./Thomas, J., Moring, J. Baker, S., Walker, M., Warino, T., Hobbs, T., Lindt, A. & Emerson, T. (2017) Do words matter? Health care providers' use of the term prediabetes. *Health, Risk & Society*, 19(5/6), 301-315.

## PRECEPTOR RECOGNITION

### 2018 Basic BSN Preceptor Award: Audra Draper, RN

*Sage West Riverton • Riverton, Wyoming • Medical-Surgical Nursing*

“I could not ask for a better preceptor. Audra is a natural leader, teacher, and advocate. She always did her best to ensure that I learn at the highest level. She empowered her patients as well as her fellow coworkers and student nurses. She saw my strengths and developed my skills. She sent me to other nurses with different approaches or patients necessitating more skills. She let me increase my patient load and gave me difficult patients to help me grow in time management, education, and therapeutic communication. She quizzed me about advocating for patients with doctors and pharmacists to more succinctly and accurately master SBAR with professionals during the shift and with fellow nurses on shift change. She created admission and discharge cheat sheets so I could troubleshoot the process by myself. These are just a few ways Audra helped me increase my independence as a nurse during capstone. —Marisa Silva, Basic BSN Student



## EXCELLENCE IN ADVANCED PRACTICE NURSING AWARD

### 2016 Award: Elizabeth DePrince Smith, MSN, CPNP

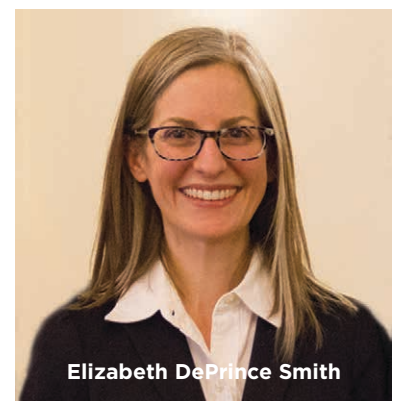
*Laramie Physicians for Women and Children • Laramie, Wyoming*

Elizabeth DePrince Smith is a board certified pediatric nurse practitioner with a Master's degree in nursing from Yale School of Nursing. She worked in a pediatric practice in Massachusetts before coming to Wyoming.

From 2012–2014, DePrince Smith began serving as the Women and Infant Health Coordinator for Wyoming Department of Health, providing consultation/leadership regarding maternal and child health state priorities, national and state performance measures, and both health status and health systems capacity indicators for infants and women of child-bearing age. She also served as state coordinator for the Office of Women's Health, assisted in oversight of a cleft palate clinic, reviewed pediatric guidelines for public health nursing, and implemented evidence-based services for mothers and infants.

In 2012 DePrince Smith also began practicing as a PNP at her current clinical practice, Laramie Physicians for Women and Children. In 2014 the DNP program began partnering with her to teach well infant and child assessments to UW FNP students and to precept local students.

DNP Program Director Ann Marie Hart says DePrince Smith “is the epitome of an evidence-based, child-focused, family-centered provider. Although humble, she exudes warmth, confidence, expertise, and genuine interest in/dedication to improving children/family health and helping future primary care providers.”



## PETER K. SIMPSON ADVANCED PRACTICE NURSING FAN AWARD

### 2018 Award: Joseph Schaaf, M.D.

*Iverson Memorial Hospital Behavioral Health Service • Laramie, Wyoming*

Joseph Schaaf, M.D., physician at Iverson Memorial Hospital's Behavioral Health Service, is “truly a champion for our DNP students,” says DNP Program Director Ann Marie Hart. Schaaf was selected for the Simpson award for many reasons, according to the Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner faculty, Nancy McGee and J'Laine Proctor: “Dr. Schaaf is a natural educator, always willing and eager to support the students in the program. He has gone above and beyond in his preceptor roles. He is passionate about psychiatry and truly cares about the clients he serves. He has taken time to individualize unique educational opportunities for each student. Feedback from time spent with Dr. Schaaf reflects the extraordinary learning environment fostered on the unit. The PMHNP program will be forever grateful for Dr. Schaaf's service to the university and to each student he has molded throughout his partnership with our program.”

# COMMUNITY PARTNERS OF THE YEAR

Memorial Hospital of Carbon County, Basic BSN 2018  
Community Partner of the Year



## Basic BSN: Memorial Hospital of Carbon County

Memorial Hospital of Carbon County (MHCC) provides a rich learning experience for our program's capstone students, ensuring that the students see a wide variety of patients. Even when asked to accommodate a student at a moment's notice, MHCC has never hesitated to take our students. The preceptors are professional and eager to help students as they transition into the role of the Registered Nurse. Preceptors carefully push students out of their comfort zone, but are always there to support them, helping each student to grow confident in their abilities as a nurse. Staff across the facility encourage and ask students to be involved with situations they might not see anywhere else, which greatly multiplies their learning opportunities. We are very thankful for the part MHCC plays in the education of our nursing students.

## BRAND: Goshen County School District #1

Goshen County School District #1 has been involved with BRAND students for the past several years. The FWWSON is grateful for the clinical experiences provided for UW students. All staff within the school system have consistently supported UW students in their pediatric growth and development clinical rotation. Staff across the facility encourage and ask students to be involved with situations they might not see anywhere else. Students are exposed to the many aspects of school nursing, including anything from recess accidents to illness to kids with chronic medical conditions such as diabetes, asthma, and seizures.

**Cathy Vasko, the school nurse**, has graciously dedicated her time and shared her expertise with each BRAND student throughout the rotation. She encourages each child to speak the truth, to be honest with themselves as they express their needs, and to be independent in caring for themselves. Vasko is not only a great role model and advocate for children, but for new nurses. Her love for pediatric nursing is contagious and provides students with a refreshing respect for the challenges that face our youth, and how we—as nurses—can make a positive impact. UW greatly appreciates the efforts of everyone involved in the Goshen County School System who assist in the education of nursing students.



Cathy Vasko, school nurse  
with Goshen County School District #1

Peak Wellness offices in the background. Foreground picture (l-r): DNP Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner faculty member, J'Laine Proctor, and Peak Wellness Executive Officer, Karl Cline.



### DNP: Peak Wellness Center

The DNP Program is honored to present the 2018 DNP Community Partner Award to Peak Wellness Center, Southeast Wyoming's leading organization in the provision of outpatient mental health and substance abuse services to residents of Albany, Goshen, Laramie, and Platte Counties. For almost 60 years, Peak has grown and adapted to different models of mental health care and substance abuse treatment, new scientific developments in psychiatry and addiction recovery, cultural trends in our country, changes in funding, new Healthcare Information Technology, and the evolving needs of its target communities.

Since the origin of UW Nursing's Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) program in 2005, Peak Wellness has provided valuable clinical experiences for UW DNP students, including counseling experiences, diagnostic and medication management experiences, and telepsychiatry services.

"Through the years," says DNP-PMHNP faculty J'Laine Proctor, "Peak Wellness' staff have not only welcomed and educated our students, but have provided much needed encouragement and support in students' professional pursuit to promote wellness and alleviate suffering. In addition, they have hired a number of UW PMHNP graduates. This partnership is critical to the PMHNP program. We are incredibly grateful for Peak's interest and support."

### BSN Completion: Central Wyoming Community College (CWC)

The nursing faculty and administration at CWC have been full partners in the statewide ReNEW collaborative and consistently demonstrated an "all-in" attitude about developing and implementing the ReNEW curriculum. They have participated in the hard work "behind the curtain" and the harder work of preparing students for their ADN Benchmark, RN Licensure, and completion

of the ReNEW BSN. This level of participation has been an inspiration for ReNEW Completion efforts at the FWWSO. UW's delivery of ReNEW coursework and the experience of learners will be better due to sharing of ideas and expertise with the personnel at CWC.

We are also better because of the RN-BSN nursing students at CWC. They have been contributing learners before and during CWC's transition to ReNEW. Students in the first CWC cohort have been willing pioneers, actively shaping our advising efforts. They have helped us focus and prioritize. We look forward to their continued engagement as we begin delivering ReNEW Completion coursework.

The BSN Completion Program is a "notch above" thanks to our partnership with the CWC. We are grateful for the opportunity to recognize their contribution not only to our program, but ultimately to the health of Wyoming. We treasure CWC as our 2018 Partner!



Pictured are the nursing faculty from Central Wyoming Community College (CWC). (l-r): Amy Hernandez, Terry Wilson, Stacey Stanek, Marie Bohrer, Anne Nez, Jennifer McCartney, Cathy Beck, and Elizabeth Oliver.

# UW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION: From the President



Danielle Johnson  
UWAANC President

A handwritten signature of Danielle Johnson in black ink, written in a cursive style.

UWAANC officers are checking in to let you know what we are currently working on. This last year has been a lot of trying new things, getting feedback, and working on bringing members together. As we move forward, we are going to continue to build on these things and hope to help more people connect and benefit from the events we are offering! Here's what we have planned so far:

- ▶ **Homecoming 2018 Nursing Alumni Meet and Greet:** Friday, October 19, 2018. Location: Health Sciences 1st Floor Atrium. Time: 4–6 p.m.
- ▶ **Mentoring Award:** Submit nomination for most inspiring nursing mentor: [www.uwyo.edu/nursing/student-forms/memorable-mentor-nomination-form.html](http://www.uwyo.edu/nursing/student-forms/memorable-mentor-nomination-form.html). Deadline September 15, 2018. Award presented at Homecoming Meet and Greet (above).
- ▶ **Resume Blitz:** October 24–30, 2018. We review resumes for graduating students. Do you have experience with hiring or reviewing resumes? We are always open for more involvement. You can do it online!
- ▶ **Speed Mentoring:** Super fun event Wednesday, October 10, 2018! Interested in sharing about your nursing specialty? Or looking to be mentored in a nursing area new to you? Email us with suggestions/interest/news as well—we would love to hear from you!—[uwnursingalumni@uwyo.edu](mailto:uwnursingalumni@uwyo.edu)

**Become a member of UWAANC: [wyoalumni.uwyo.edu/uwaanurse](http://wyoalumni.uwyo.edu/uwaanurse)**

## 2018 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD



Susan Polston Mills  
PhD, MSN, RN ('96)

Susan Poston Mills has been named 2018 Distinguished Alumna for her outstanding contributions to the nursing profession and her excellence in administration. Mills will receive the 2018 award during Homecoming week this fall on Friday, October 19, 2018.

Mills is a 1996 BSN graduate from the University of Wyoming. In 2001 she earned her Master of Science in nursing at the University of Texas at Austin with a focus in public health. Ten years later, Mills completed her Doctor of Philosophy in nursing at Austin, with a portfolio in women and gender studies.

Mills has filled the position of vice-president of quality improvement with Superior HealthPlans of Texas since 2008. “In that position,” states a nominator, “she demonstrates great integrity, accountability, and leadership to all that work with and for her. Mills is a wonderful contributor to her profession, community, and team. She always leads by example, volunteers for several community organizations, and is not afraid to fight for what she believes is right, especially if it impacts her team or patients.”

Supporting remarks from another colleague: “I have witnessed Susan’s commitment to nursing leadership, her demonstration of professionalism, her passion for improving the health of the community; and I have been personally inspired by her championing nursing practice excellence in our organization. Dr. Mills encourages others to grow in their professional practice in a manner of mutual respect and empowerment.”

**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS  
2019 DISTINGUISHED  
ALUMNI AWARD**

Submit nominations for the 2019 award online:  
[www.uwyo.edu/nursing/alumni](http://www.uwyo.edu/nursing/alumni)  
Choose “Distinguished Alumni Nomination Form”  
Deadline: February 15, 2019



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A HUGE thank you to the following donors, who together contributed over \$300,000 in gifts as noted below.

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## APN Healthcare Solutions Fund

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Babson and Associates Primary Care PC  
John Babson  
Douglas Edgren

## Blue Cross Blue Shield of Wyoming Caring Foundation: Meeting the Needs of Wyoming through Nursing Scholarship

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Wyoming

## Gaurdie and Barbara Shannon Banister Scholarship for Doctor of Nurse Practice Students

Gaurdia Banister and Paul Smith

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Patricia Bennett

## Nursing Alumni Scholarship

Carol Aamold  
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# Thank you!

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Please accept my/our gift to UW Fay W. Whitney School of Nursing in the amount of:

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**Yes**, please send me information about planned giving (wills, trusts, etc.)

**Yes**, UW is named in my will.

**Yes**, my company matches my gifts. I have included a form from my company.

N19NU

# 2018–2019 SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

The school awarded **\$185,483** in scholarships and **\$100,000** in BRAND state-funded loan repayment funds for the 2018–2019 academic year. The following donors make nursing education more *manageable* financially for some students, and make nursing education actually *possible* for others. A big **THANK YOU** for encouraging hard-working students with your gift of support.

## Rudolph “Rudy” and Louise Anselmi and Jeri Kirk Family Trust Scholarship

Caitlyn Nitsch

## Marcia Dale Aspire Scholars Program Scholarships

Sarah Clinkenbeard  
Shaelynne Heitsch  
Danielle Pantoya  
Emily Stanton

## Babson and Associates Primary Care Nursing Scholarship

Recipient yet to be determined

## Gaurdie and Barbara Shannon Banister Scholarship for Doctor of Nurse Practice Students

Christina Cook

## Blue Cross Blue Shield of Wyoming Caring Foundation: Meeting the Needs of Wyoming through Nursing Scholarship

Susan Brown  
Jesse Morse-Brady  
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## DNP Innovative Practice Scholarship

Abigail Arross  
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Sara Gardner (Parsons)  
Jeffrey Shideman

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Sherra St. Clair  
Susan Wolff

## Rosalie Fields Nursing Scholarship

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## Frances E. Gasdek-Eaglehouse and Barry D. Gasdek Scholarship

Maranda Windsor

## Frank R. and Dorothy M. Gruden Scholarship in Nursing

For Junior: Jaclynn A. Barnes  
For Senior: Selena Kriebel

## Elizabeth Holland Scholarship in Nursing

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Jeffrey C. Morris

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## The Larsen Family Scholarship

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\* CHS = College of Health Sciences



Stacey Young



C. Ann Zaring

### Non-traditional role from the outset

As Ann (Zaring) Strenger (BSN '79 , MS '88) graduated from nursing school, she excitedly anticipated what the future had in store. Originally from Basin, Strenger knew her BSN education had prepared her not only to serve in traditional nursing roles in hospitals and clinics, but also to work in non-traditional roles that addressed complex community needs. Immediately after graduation, Strenger accepted a one-year appointment with the Wyoming Human Services Project, a program that placed an interdisciplinary team in Rawlins to address service disparities for a rapidly-growing population due to a current energy boom.

### Accessible Master's Program inspires gift

Following that appointment, Strenger accepted a position at the Rawlins hospital. The early years of her career included meeting her husband Steve and starting their family in addition to being a nurse. Like many young alumni, balancing obligations of work, family, and pursuing a master's degree were first priorities before considering giving to the school or other organizations. But Strenger made it a priority to start giving as soon as they were able. "I was so grateful to UW for providing an accessible master's degree program, allowing me to stay in my job and with my family," says Strenger about what inspired her first gift. "This was my way of saying thank you."

### Supporting development of nursing leaders

Giving back to the FWWSO on an annual basis since 1991, Strenger has made it a priority to support the

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE . . . ONE GIFT AT A TIME

"Ann Zaring Strenger's giving serves as an amazing example of how starting with small, annual gifts can have extraordinary impact over time."

—Angela Ver Ploeg  
UW Director of Development

institution that gave her the tools for a successful career. "My first gifts were a token of my gratitude to UW and an opportunity to give back," says Strenger. "Today, I recognize the important role nurses have in the ever-changing health care landscape. I firmly believe strong, dedicated nursing leaders are well positioned to positively shape health care now and in the future. I want to support FWWSO in the development of those nursing leaders."

### Monthly deductions and matching gift program

Today the Strengers live and work in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Strenger works at UnitedHealthcare as Director of Clinical Programs. Her full career includes nursing roles at a major academic hospital, hospice and in insurance. Through her employer, she opted to give through monthly payroll deductions to FWWSO. "Setting up gifts through payroll deductions was an easy decision. With my busy schedule, I didn't have to remember to write a check or mail a gift. Now automatically with each paycheck, a gift is sent to the school."

Paired with a match through UnitedHealth's matching gift program, Strenger's monthly gift is doubled—providing an even greater impact to support the Marcia Dale Aspire Scholars Program. "Marcia was my medical/surgical professor during my BSN program and my thesis chair during my MS. Her patience, kindness, and leadership while mentoring students and me personally will always be remembered. She set a high standard I will always strive to attain."

## INTERESTED OR CURIOUS?


. . . in giving back to the FWWSO or to see if you are eligible for a match through your employer?

## PLEASE CONTACT:

Angela Ver Ploeg, Director of Development  
(307) 766-1939/Angela.VerPloeg@uwyo.edu

### Toluwanimi Olajuyigbe/Basic BSN Graduate 2018

“Caring for others and making a difference has always been very important to me. And fortunately, nursing gives me the opportunity to do both. My desire to be a nurse was greatly influenced by my experience growing up in a disadvantaged community. Growing up in Nigeria, I witnessed many factors contributing to negative health outcomes among people with various health conditions. I also grew up watching people suffer due to poverty and limited access to adequate healthcare services. So I have come to realize that getting a nursing degree would put me in a unique position to care for people, create change, and eventually give back to my home country.”



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