

Expanding the YSN Community — Paying It Forward

LUC R. PELLETIER '82

This is the first of a series of articles that will explore alumnae/i collaboration with YSN students and graduates to help them reach their career goals.

Sisters Lisa and Christina Tangredi are 2006 YSN graduates who returned as mentors for the YUSNAA-sponsored Speed Mentoring program in April 2007. Based on the popular “speed dating,” students are given an opportunity to mingle with alumnae/i to discuss a range of topics related to career transitions.

By chance, Christina met Dr. Judy Beal, current President of YUSNAA, during Speed Mentoring and found her to be “bright and engaging as she spoke about the evolution of her career...from clinical nurse practitioner, then graduate student, and finally her current position at Simmons College.” Christina introduced herself and told Dr. Beal about her own job and career goals. Lisa was interested in learning about a path towards a PhD and how Dr. Beal viewed nursing academia.

At the time, Christina was very eager to pursue doctoral studies. She had many questions: How do you choose a doctoral program? How do you choose a research focus? What is doctoral study like? How do you shift roles from clinician to researcher? How do you know if academia is a career path that should be pursued? At what point in your career do you go back to school?

As a new graduate, Christina was concerned about obtaining enough clinical experience prior to pursuing doctoral studies. “I wanted to know how Dr. Beal was able to balance career and family life, especially with a demanding position,” said Christina.

Dr. Beal was quite capable at providing guidance, support, and candid advice to both of the Tangredis, since mentoring students and faculty is a huge part of her role as the Chair of the Nursing Program at Simmons. Dr. Beal found mentoring the profession’s newest members very rewarding. “YSN graduates are so bright and have many evocative questions that will challenge the alumnae/i in great ways. It is always good for us as alumnae/i to give back to our alma mater—and to stretch ourselves in new directions,” says Dr. Beal.

Having been both mentor and mentee, Christina absolutely recommends this type of interaction to her YSN colleagues. She believes it not only fosters professional growth, but also facilitates connectedness within the YSN community. She continues, “At YSN, students learn to become leaders in the profession. It is vital to provide guidance to other nursing graduates, especially in the YSN community. This type of collaboration has been invaluable in the start of my career and ongoing growth as a nurse practitioner.” Lisa adds, “It is a nice way to meet up with nursing colleagues to network and share personal experiences.”

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Top: Barbara McCloskey '00, DNSc '03 (left) talks with current YSN students as part of the 2008 Speed Mentoring event. Middle: Janet Spinner '88 (right) mentors a future nurse-midwife. Bottom: Vanessa Jefferson '98 (left) speaks with students about merging research and practice.

Interact with YSN students and graduates

There are several options for you, as YSN alumnae/i with expertise in many areas of nursing, to interact with YSN students and graduates. These include:

- Participate in YUSNAA Board-sponsored Speed Mentoring held during YSN's Alumnae/i Reunion Weekend
- Attend the annual Alumnae/i Reunion Weekend
- Become a member of the Board of Directors of the YSN Alumnae/i Association
- Access Yale's On-Line Career Network
- Read and contribute to *Yale Nursing Matters* magazine (including *Yale Nurse*)
- Get involved in the Association of Yale Alumni (AYA)
- Access the Yale Alumni On-Line Directory
- Sign up for life-long Yale e-mail

Want to get more involved? Have a story of a successful collaboration with a YSN graduate? Send it to us at elizabeth.roscher@yale.edu!