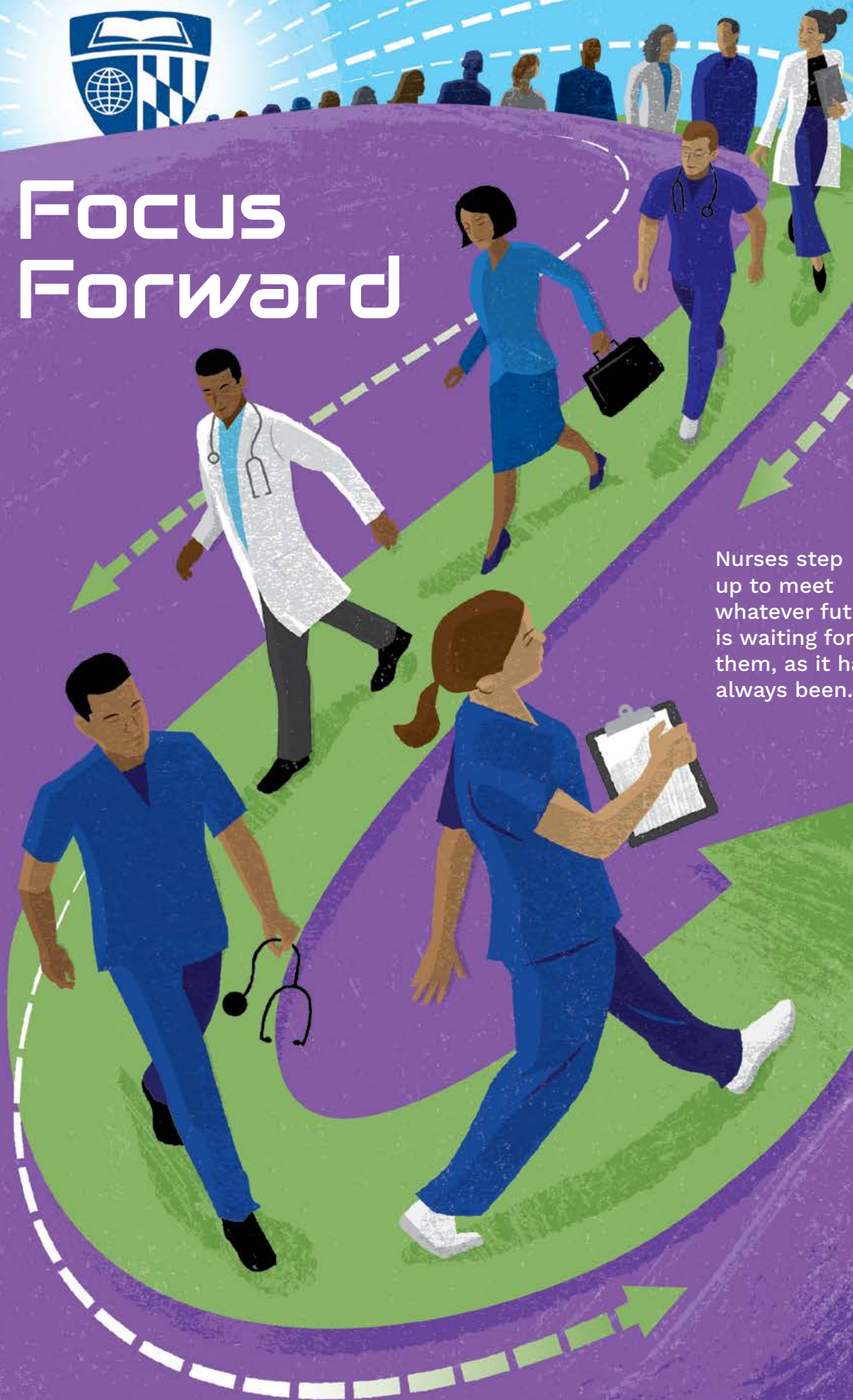


# JOHNS HOPKINS NURSING

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## FROM THE DEAN FOCUS, FORESIGHT, CHANGE, AND IMPACT

Everywhere we look, the demands on health care and higher education feel weightier than ever. Yet I see every day how nurse leaders step forward with clarity and resolve, finding ways to meet those challenges and to move communities forward.

Think of the graduate who built a community-based care model when traditional systems fell short, or the faculty team that reimaged how to use simulation and technology to prepare students for the complexities of modern practice. These moments remind us that progress is not paused by disruption. If anything, it is accelerated by the vision and adaptability of nurse leaders. And often, the ripple effect is bigger than one program or one classroom: Our collective work, as nurses, influences how policies are shaped, how systems adapt, and how health itself is redefined.

At the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, we've been reflecting on how to lead with steadiness and purpose in a world that continues to evolve. For us, it comes down to four ideas: **focus, foresight, change, and impact**. Focus allows us to hold steady when uncertainty surrounds us. Foresight provides the ability to anticipate what's ahead and prepare our students for it. That foresight leads to change, as our faculty and graduates reimagine health from a 360-degree view—whether in classrooms, communities, or systems of care. And change, rooted in vision and deliberate action, creates impact that is real, measurable, and lasting.

This is how we are choosing to “Focus Forward” (Page 22). It's not abstract ambition. It's about preparing nurse leaders who can seize opportunities even in difficult times, translate complexity into clarity, influence systems and policy, and demonstrate progress in real time.

Focus Forward is more than a mindset. It's a commitment to preparing nurse leaders who can navigate uncertainty, translate insight into action, and improve health in real time.

And time and again, our community reminds us that when nursing leads, health moves forward. We evolve, innovate, and continue to shape the future of care.

*Sarah Szanton*

Sarah Szanton  
PhD, RN, FAAN  
Dean, Johns Hopkins School of Nursing  
Patricia M. Davidson Professor for  
Health Equity & Social Justice





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*Gurtler Scholar Tara Taylor's Postcard from Paraguay; 2025 FAAN Inductions include Living Legend and President's awards; Isabel Hampton Robb Lecture, and more.*

A stitch in time: Master's Entry students practice sutures and wound care during simulation clinicals at the school.

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NEWS FROM AROUND THE SCHOOL



# 'A Great Example'

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*Gurtler Scholar Tara Taylor is laboratory-built for leadership.*

Tara Taylor didn't fit the mold of a lab-based researcher. And her mentor, a Johns Hopkins alumnus, didn't mince words: Taylor's personality mandated that she get away from the bench and let her voice and natural leadership capabilities grow. Go back to school.

Her thumbs agreed. "My hands about fell off from pipette-ing too much," she laughs, mimicking the click, click, click of placing samples into test tubes at NIH's National Cancer Institute in Bethesda. (Taylor, from neighboring Rockville, had previously done research at the National Institute of Nursing Research.) So, fine. Taylor enrolled at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (BSPH), earned her MPH in epidemiology and biostatistics, and got a job there as research faculty with the Major Extremity Trauma Research Consortium (METRC) Coordinating Center in the Health Policy and Management Department, writing protocols and instructing teams on clinical studies.

Then, in 2019, came a breast cancer diagnosis. First order of business? "I will beat this. My son was 1 year old at the time. If I pass away, he wouldn't remember me." Next? "I wanted to be a great example to him." This meant, once the chemotherapy haze finally passed, finding exactly why she was put on this earth, and acting on it right now. As it happened, right then, the care and spirit of the oncology nurses treating her at Johns Hopkins Hospital were blowing her mind as well as messing with her career path.

"I should be clear. I LOVED my job [13 years at BSPH]. It was crazy to switch to nursing. I was comfortable. Why would I do this ... uproot everything?"

That's why they call it "a calling." Taylor swallowed hard, researched deeply, "attended every event and open house that the Admissions Department put on until they were, like, 'Oh, you again!'" She learned current students' names and followed up,

7





texting them for insider info and even meeting one for coffee and a grilling.

That was that. Taylor, now officially a member of the MSN (Entry into Nursing) program, was recently awarded the Gurtler Scholarship, presented annually to a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer at JHSON.

Before the Master's Entry program, Taylor figured she already had a pretty good, basic grasp of health science. As a Peace Corps volunteer in Paraguay (2005-07), Taylor had taught elementary school

***“It’s all completely new. I had never stepped foot in a hospital as someone who actually worked there. Now I’m dealing with diseases I didn’t ever know about. Being on the other side is fascinating.”***

kids about hygiene, dental care, sanitation, and avoiding parasites, and helped hook their moms up with similar preventive care (“a human liaison, a connector and advocate for them”).

At the time, the Peace Corps wasn’t offering a specific choice beyond “Central or South America,” yet Taylor jumped, excited to volunteer in a Spanish-speaking nation. She returned to the United States far more bilingual, a skill that she admittedly needed to polish up before volunteering at a recent flu clinic in Highlandtown, which has a significant Hispanic population. She has also gotten to use her Spanish a bit in nursing clinicals, though she lets professional interpreters handle the more intricate communications.

When asked to share the sense memory most often awakened when she thinks of her time in Paraguay, a landlocked nation smack dab in the center of the South American continent, Taylor offers one word: “chipa.” Then, she rhapsodizes on the local

breakfast/snack staple: “There’s really nothing else like it, anywhere. The best way I can describe it is that it’s like a bagel, but corn-based, and it’s amazing.” Some two decades on, the scent lingers in her brain. So does the fondness for host family members with whom Taylor still keeps in touch.

As for that grasp of health science? Paved over in the deluge of information that greets each new Master’s Entry cohort. It’s intimidating but also, Taylor insists, a thrill. “It’s all completely new. I had never stepped foot in a hospital as someone who actually worked there. Now I’m dealing with diseases I didn’t ever know about. Being on the other side is fascinating.”

The leader’s voice and personality that her mentor had sussed out years ago are in full bloom today. She speaks from experience, as a researcher, as a returned Peace Corps volunteer, as a patient, and now as a nurse. In remission from cancer, Taylor has been given more time. She’s not wasting a second of it. “In clinicals, I’m already seeing in our patients the impact we can have as nurses. It feels good to feel ready.”

After all, she has been that patient on the receiving end of care. “Even as a student, the job is very rewarding—simple things such as adjusting a pillow or providing hot tea or a hot pack can make a world of difference with aiding someone in a lot of pain.”

#### **John R. and Ruth Gurtler Foundation Scholarship**

All admitted or enrolled MSN (Entry into Nursing) students who have served in the Peace Corps will be considered for the John R. and Ruth Gurtler Foundation Scholarship, established in memory of alumna Ruth Ward Gurtler, ’29, and awarded to one student each year. Learn more about financial aid and scholarships at the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing at [nursing.jhu.edu/admissions/financial-aid](https://nursing.jhu.edu/admissions/financial-aid). ■

*2005 Peace Corps Photo from Paraguay is courtesy of Tara Taylor*





# 2025 FAAN Fellows Earn Induction

Eleven Johns Hopkins Nursing faculty and alumni have been selected for 2025 fellowship in the American Academy of Nursing, earning the credentials FAAN for their exceptional careers and impact in advancing health, policy, and nursing education worldwide.

### JHSON Alumni Inductees

Ivy Latoja Pacis, DNP, MSN, MHA, FACHE, CNE, NE-BC, CPHQ, CCRN-CMC, Adjunct Faculty, JHSON; Veterans Affairs Capitol Health Care Network

Balkys Bivins, PhD, PMHNP-BC, Adjunct Faculty, JHSON; Monumental Health Partners

Nakia C. Best, PhD, RN, University of California Irvine Sue & Bill Gross School of Nursing

Sondra Leiggi Brandon, DNP, MBA, MPH, FNP-C, PMHNP-BC, NEA-BC, APRN, Queen's Health Systems

Carolyn Dickens, PhD, MBA, ACNP-BC, CNP-FPA, FAANP, FHFSa, University of Illinois Chicago

Betsy Hassan, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, NPD-BC, University of Vermont Medical Center

Audra Rankin, DNP, APRN, CPNP-PC, University of North Carolina School of Nursing

Amy Sawyer, PhD, RN, University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing

### Living Legend

Phyllis Sharps, PhD, RN, FAAN, professor emerita, has been named a 2025 Living Legend by the American Academy of Nursing. This distinction recognizes fellows who have made extraordinary contributions to nursing and global health.

Sharps is internationally known for groundbreaking research on intimate partner violence (IPV) among pregnant and parenting women. Her Domestic Violence Enhanced Home Visitation (DOVE) intervention, funded by the National Institutes of Health, transformed how public health nurses identify and respond to IPV during pregnancy. Over her four-decade career, Sharps has advanced health equity, supported women of color affected by violence, and mentored hundreds of students and faculty.

Professor Emerita Phyllis Sharps



Dean Emerita Patricia Davidson

### President's Award

The academy presented its highest individual honor, the President's Award, to Patricia Davidson, PhD, MEd, RN, FAAN, dean emerita of JHSON and current vice chancellor's fellow and interim co-director of the International Centre for Future Health Systems at the University of New South Wales, Sydney. Davidson was recognized for her extraordinary, lifelong contributions to improving the health of individuals, families, and communities.

"These recognitions from the American Academy of Nursing honor the remarkable breadth and depth of excellence within the Hopkins Nursing community," said JHSON Dean Sarah L. Szanton, PhD, RN, FAAN. "From our newest fellows to our Living Legend and President's Award honoree, each represents the spirit of innovation, compassion, and leadership that defines our school and advances the future of health and nursing around the world."

The American Academy of Nursing officially inducted the FAAN class and honored award recipients during its Health Policy Conference in Washington DC on October 18. ■

### JHSON Faculty Inductees



Laura Lucas, DNP, APRN-CNS, RNC-OB, C-EFM, Assistant Professor; Director, Master of Science in Nursing Program; Coordinator, Birth Companions Program



Shawna Mudd, DNP, MBA, CPNP-AC, PPCNP-BC, CNE, Associate Professor; Associate Dean for Academic Affairs



Shaquita Starks, PhD, PMHNP-BC, Associate Professor; Track Director, PMHNP/PMHNP Certification



# THE WHITE COAT

*Each Master's Entry cohort is welcomed with a white coat—a gift from donors. The journey begins with a pledge:  
“Be a light of hope for all entrusted to our care.”*



*For Master's Entry students and the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing community, the White Coat Celebration is a family affair.*



# ‘50 Years of Trying to Get It Right’: 2025 Isabel Hampton Robb Lecture

BY SAM DISTEFANO

At the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing’s 2025 Isabel Hampton Robb Lecture, Deborah Gross, the Leonard and Helen R. Stulman Endowed Professor in Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing, traced her decades-long journey to strengthen families through research, innovation, and community partnerships.

Gross began the October event by reflecting on the state of nursing and mental health when she first entered the field in the 1970s, with psychoanalysis dominating psychiatry and parents often blamed for their children’s problems. Over the decades, research on attachment and early brain development transformed that thinking, underscoring the vital role of safe, stable, and nurturing relationships in child development.

This understanding led Gross to develop the Chicago Parent Program, a group- and evidence-based parenting program, launched in Chicago over 20 years ago and now reaching more than 16,000 families across the United States.

“Parenting is a highly modifiable variable,” Gross says. “If we want to support children, we must invest in parents. They are the true change agents for their families.”

Her presentation also highlighted a Baltimore-based partnership with city schools and the Fund

for Educational Excellence that started in 2014. Today, the Chicago Parent Program continues to thrive and grow in Baltimore City and other school districts across Maryland.

Even amid challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic, families remained eager to participate, joining virtual sessions that built social connection and resilience. Gross shared that in one study, more than half of participating parents had experienced significant childhood adversity yet found healing through the group experience:

“As a parent, sometimes you feel like you’re the only one going through it. But when you hear others share their stories, it doesn’t make you feel so alone.”

Looking ahead, Gross described ongoing research that is testing the Chicago Parent Program in urban and rural communities to understand its impact on early school outcomes. The program has also been adapted for individual families using telehealth delivery in child mental health and Head Start programs. Each version maintains a core commitment to flexibility, accessibility, and evidence-based impact. ■

Watch a recording of the 2025 Isabel Hampton Robb Lecture at [nursing.jhu.edu/robb25](https://nursing.jhu.edu/robb25).



# Shining a Light on Caregiving Youth

BY SAM DISTEFANO

More than 5 million children in the United States provide care for family members, often sacrificing their own well-being, reported Connie Siskowski, PhD, RN, founder and president of the American Association of Caregiving Youth (AACY), as part of the September lecture and panel discussion “Caregiving Youth: A Call to Action for Research, Education, and Policy.”

Siskowski, recognized nationally as a CNN Hero and Purpose Prize recipient—and a Johns Hopkins Nursing alumnus—delivered a powerful keynote on the hidden world of youth caregiving.

She emphasized that caregiving youth face unique challenges, such as balancing school work with demanding home responsibilities and navigating health care systems designed by and for adults. Siskowski noted that these young people are not only vulnerable but also resilient, empathetic, and purposeful, often gaining life skills and a sense of meaning from their duties.

A panel featuring Catherine Ling, PhD, RN, FAAN, FAANP, Eliana Perrin, MD, MPH, Deborah Gross, DNSc, RN, FAAN, Katherine Ornstein, PhD, MPH, and Katherine Miller, PhD, expanded on these themes, stressing the long-term economic impacts of early caregiving, the importance of embedding compassion and listening into clinical training, and the dual nature of caregiving as both a burden and a source of pride for many children.

The event, organized by the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing Center for Equity in Aging and Center for Equity in Child and Youth Health and Well-Being, closed with a call to action: to see, support, and stand alongside caregiving youth. From curriculum development and student engagement to national advocacy and research, attendees were challenged to help ensure that no child needs to sacrifice education or well-being to meet caregiving responsibilities. ■

## Key Takeaways:

- Siskowski called for systemic changes to identify and support youth caregivers, including integrating questions about caregiving into school and health assessments.
- Youth caregiving intersects with poverty, race, immigration status, and disability. Siskowski emphasized the importance of culturally responsive approaches and acknowledged the strengths of caregiving youth.
- Caregiving responsibilities can lead to absenteeism, lower academic performance, and even dropping out of school. AACY’s model school-based program demonstrates how support can boost graduation rates and improve long-term outcomes.
- From national prevalence studies to integrating youth caregiver experiences into nursing and medical curricula, researchers and educators were encouraged to push the field forward.







***“We’re empowering future nurses to think beyond hospital walls—to design interventions, lead community initiatives, and advocate for policies that make health possible for everyone.”***

## JHSON Again Earns Men in Nursing, HEED Awards



The Johns Hopkins School of Nursing (JHSON) has once again been honored among the nation’s most forward-thinking institutions, earning the INSIGHT into Academia Health Professions Higher Education Excellence in Distinction (HEED) Award for the eighth consecutive year and the American Association for Men in Nursing (AAMN) “Best School for Men in Nursing” designation for the seventh year in a row.

This dual recognition celebrates JHSON’s enduring commitment to cultivating a community grounded in inclusive excellence and preparing a future-ready nursing workforce. A spirit of belonging and inclusive practice is evident across every level of the school—from its leadership and curriculum to the students and faculty who reflect the communities they serve. Currently, 35 percent of faculty and 52.2 percent of students represent non-traditional experiences and perspectives that contribute to the foundation of our community’s strength. The school also continues to advance representation, with 168 male students enrolled in 2024, up from 151 the previous year.

“When nurses bring lived experience to their practice, research, and policy work, it leads to care that is more effective, compassionate, and just,” says Dean Sarah Szanton, PhD, RN, FAAN. “We are building a nursing workforce that reflects our world and advances health through vision, leadership, and action.”

Worldwide, nurses make up the largest segment of the health care workforce and often serve as primary providers of care in rural and underserved communities. Research consistently shows that

patients experience better health outcomes and greater trust when their providers share their cultural or community background. These realities underscore why inclusive excellence in nursing education and practice is essential to achieving health equity.

“Belonging begins with action,” says Jermaine Monk, PhD, MSW, MA, associate dean for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging. “We’re empowering future nurses to think beyond hospital walls—to design interventions, lead community initiatives, and advocate for policies that make health possible for everyone.”

As the largest health care workforce, nurses are uniquely positioned to address the social and structural factors that shape health. While clinical care accounts for only about 20 percent of a person’s overall health, social determinants such as housing, education, and employment make up the other 80 percent. JHSON integrates these factors across its education, research, and practice—preparing nurses to drive systemic change and close care gaps.

Looking ahead, JHSON continues to prepare nurses as strategic experts, innovators, and policy influencers who can lead at every level of health care. Through its investment in inclusive mentorship, faculty development, and interdisciplinary collaboration, the school is shaping a future in which every person, in every community, has the opportunity to live a healthier, more fulfilling life. ■

*At left: Jermaine Monk, associate dean of DEIB, with graduates of the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, which has again earned the Men In Nursing and HEED awards.*





## BEHIND EVERY GREAT NURSE IS A GREAT PRECEPTOR!

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- Pathway to adjunct faculty status



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## A New Hypertension Guideline for Stronger Hearts

BY SYDNEE LOGAN

High blood pressure has long been called the “silent killer,” but new national guidelines from the American Heart Association are raising the volume on prevention and partnership. The message is clear: Stop hypertension early, bring more people into the care team, and meet patients where they are.

At the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, Professor Yvonne Commodore-Mensah, PhD, MHS, RN, FAAN, associate dean for research, contributed her expertise to shaping this roadmap:

“Controlling hypertension isn’t just about prescribing medication—it’s about prevention, team-based care, and meeting patients where they are. By expanding home and remote monitoring, we can close gaps in care and improve heart health for communities everywhere.”

For too many people, especially in under-resourced or historically marginalized communities, high blood pressure is not just a medical diagnosis—it’s a reflection of inequities in access, education, and trust. The updated guidelines call for care that reaches into neighborhoods, homes, and daily routines. ■

### What’s New

**Brain health:** Controlling blood pressure reduces the risk of dementia and cognitive decline.

**Blood pressure during pregnancy:** Hypertension in pregnancy is defined as 140/90 or higher. Monitoring before, during, and after pregnancy lowers risk of short- and long-term complications.

**PREVENT calculator:** A new tool to estimate one’s risk of heart disease in 10 and 30 years to support decisions on blood pressure treatment.

**Prevention first:** Lifestyle changes like diet, movement, and stress reduction take center stage.

**Care is a team effort:** Nurses, pharmacists, and community health workers are recognized as key partners to control blood pressure.

**Technology is standard:** Home and remote blood pressure checks are no longer optional extras but tools to improve blood pressure.

**Act early:** Detecting and treating high blood pressure sooner helps prevent heart attack, stroke, and kidney disease.



# Around the SON:



Events filling the school with colorful sights and sounds included, above and below, Hispanic Heritage Month and, at right, Diwali—the Hindu “Festival of Lights” symbolizing the victory of light over darkness and good over evil.

A photo roundup of the people and events enriching the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing experience.

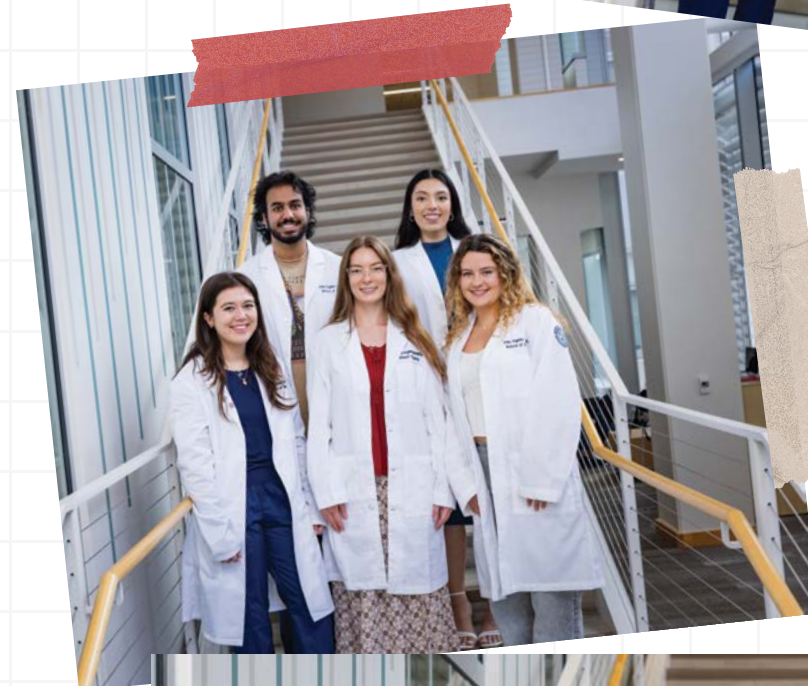


Two thumbs way up for the Critical Care Interest Group as student organizations across the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing gathered in and around the Pinkard Building for team photos.



Left, the Student Ambassadors serve as JHSON representatives by providing campus tours, assisting with recruitment events, and acting as liaisons between students and the school administration. Below, the Fellowship of Christian Nurses creates outlets for students to deepen their understanding of faith and nursing while encouraging involvement in the local Baltimore community, including local churches.

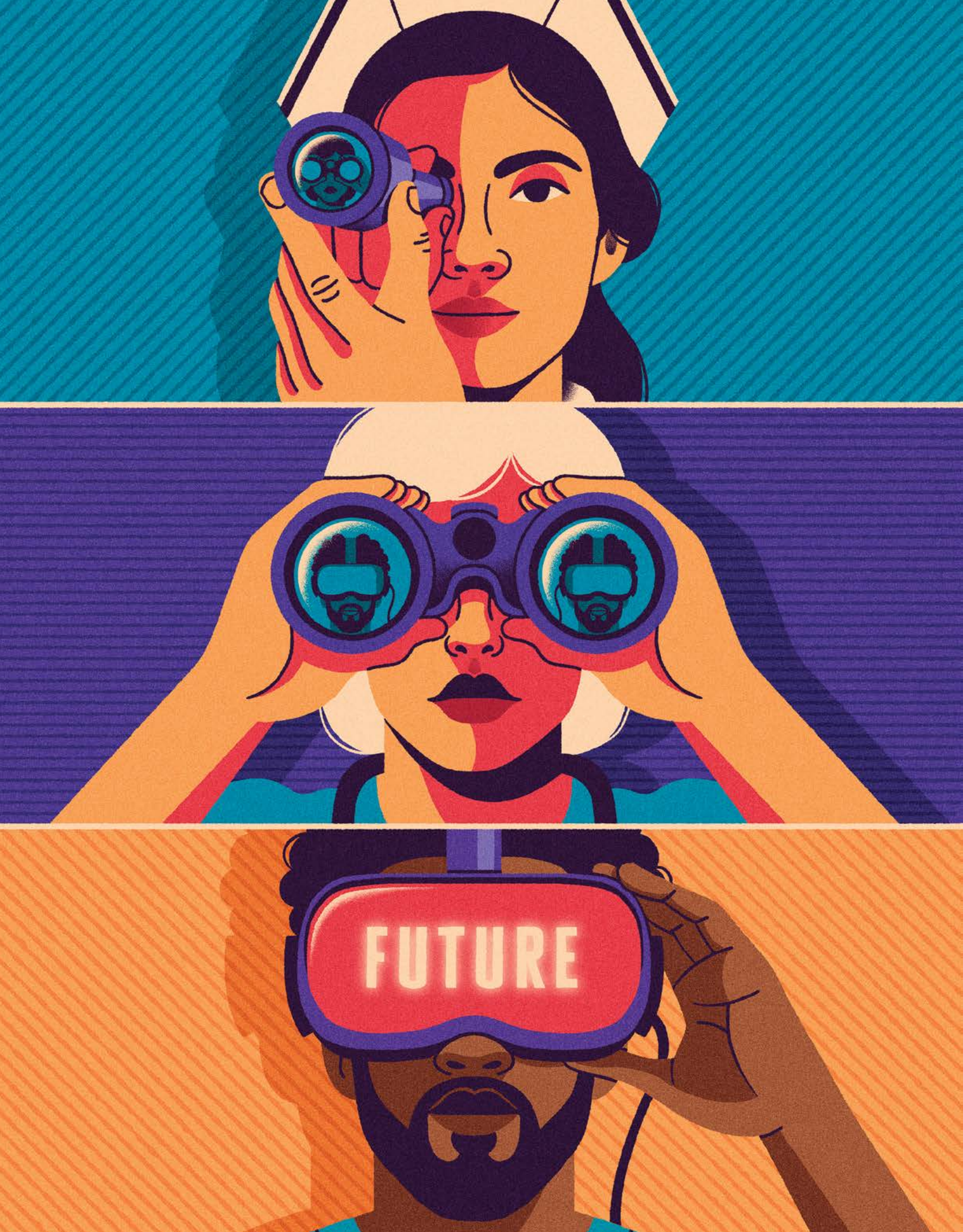
Learn more and find a group to match your interests at [nursing.jhu.edu/studentorgs](https://nursing.jhu.edu/studentorgs).



At right, hands-on education with the personal touch of an instructor makes clinical simulations at JHSON a safe space for learning.







# Focus Forward

*At a time when the nation's health and the future of higher education feel tested, JHSON holds steady, anticipating what tomorrow will demand and preparing leaders ready to meet it.*

*Focus Forward* is a storytelling campaign that captures how the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing (JHSON) community leads through challenge—with focus, foresight, change, and impact. It reflects a simple but powerful truth: Leadership in nursing is defined by vision, innovation, and purpose.

Across research labs, classrooms, hospitals, and communities, our faculty, students, and alumni are driving progress that redefines what health can be. They are clinicians and scientists, educators and advocates, each bringing a 360-degree view to the complex realities of modern health care. Whether developing new models of care, influencing policy, or advancing research that crosses disciplines and borders, they share one belief, that when nurses lead, health moves forward.

Through *Focus Forward*, JHSON shares stories that show how vision becomes innovation and how innovation becomes measurable change toward a healthier, more equitable world.

You'll see how we are preparing nurse leaders fluent in policy and systems thinking through groundbreaking educational models that elevate

nursing's influence on the future of health. You'll explore programs that unite experts across disciplines to design evidence-based solutions addressing the social and structural determinants of health.

Over the next several pages, and more fully through the new website [nursing.jhu.edu/focus-forward](https://nursing.jhu.edu/focus-forward), you will learn how Johns Hopkins researchers are helping to build sustainable global health systems led by the communities they serve, and how innovative care models are reshaping international standards. You'll see unwavering commitment, like students who persist in challenging times and scientists who advance inclusion and accessibility in health research worldwide.

At JHSON, we are not waiting for the future. We are actively shaping it. Our community understands that the health challenges of today demand leaders who think critically, act compassionately, and move decisively. *Focus Forward* captures that mindset, highlighting how our people navigate uncertainty with resolve, transforming complexity into opportunity and vision into results.

## Share Your Story

We want to see *Focus Forward* through your eyes. Share a photo or short video that shows how you're living one of the four pillars—whether you're learning something new, mentoring a classmate, innovating in a lab, or volunteering in the community.

Learn more about the campaign and watch and read more stories of focus and foresight at the campaign website, [nursing.jhu.edu/focus-forward](https://nursing.jhu.edu/focus-forward).



Illustration: Daniel Diosdado



# Leadership Fills the Gap

*Focus: With or without federal funding, Laura Mata López has earned the trust of her community.*

When her NIH F31-Diversity Predoctoral Fellowship was suddenly terminated by the federal government this past April, the community-based research Laura Mata López had spent more than two years co-developing with Latina immigrant women was threatened.

She wasn't surprised by what followed. Political decisions that harm immigrant communities are not new to her, and seeing her life's work pulled into a legal and political fight that reached the Supreme Court carried a weight that was both predictable and painful. "It all felt so personal, and so hopeless," she says.

Her study, the first NIH-funded project focused specifically on suicide prevention and suicide survivorship among Latina immigrants, is grounded in experiences she knows too personally. As a psychiatric nurse, she carries the stories of patients she has lost to suicide. As a Latina immigrant who immigrated to the United States from Costa Rica at age 12, she also brings her own experience as a suicide survivor to this work. Together, these experiences shape the way she moves through her science, with a steady respect for the depth, complexity, and often-unseen realities of Latina immigrant women.

When she learned that her award had been terminated, her mind went immediately to the

women who had shaped the project with her. The Community Advisory Board (CAB), a group of local Latina immigrant women who have co-developed all aspects of the study from the start, deserved transparency, even if the news felt difficult to share.

The first CAB member simply asked, "What can we do to make the research still happen?" Others responded the same way. They had spent two years building this project alongside her; it was as much theirs as hers. Federal funding or not, they were committed to keeping it alive.

Their next step is to launch a community-based survey shaped by and for Latina immigrant women, designed to identify the risk and protective factors for suicide in their community. It will be the first dataset of its kind.

Johns Hopkins University, for its part, has pledged to support Mata López's research, despite ongoing federal cuts, allowing the project to move forward. In the meantime, she has continued working alongside the community to build on the momentum they had already created, while helping strengthen the work in ways that can grow into a sustainable, community-led effort.

And so, the project continues, guided by the steady co-leadership of the women at its center. ■







# Starting Something

*Foresight: In the U.S. and Ghana, Yvonne Commodore-Mensah beats back any doubt that nurses are key to hypertension control.*

Hypertension during pregnancy is a leading cause of maternal mortality in Ghana. In the United States, as in Ghana and many other nations, it's a leading killer, period. That is not a news flash. What is news is how nurses are leading innovation to not just treat hypertension but change the who and the how of this health care dynamic.

As usual, Professor Yvonne Commodore-Mensah, PhD, MHS, RN, FAAN, is front and center, using her status as a top researcher at the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing and in Africa to both innovate ways to address hypertension and then scale them inexpensively for wide reach.

In the United States, she has helped put nursing's stamp on the latest hypertension guidelines from the American Heart Association. (Read more about that effort on Page 19.)

In Ghana, it's a program called MAMA CVD, short for midwife assisted monitoring and assessment of cardiovascular disease. This involves purchasing portable, smartphone-linked ultrasound devices and training nurses and midwives to carry the relatively affordable machines to rural areas to detect hypertension early in pregnancy. It's part of a larger effort to close the gap in care in rural and underserved areas in Ghana, then elsewhere.

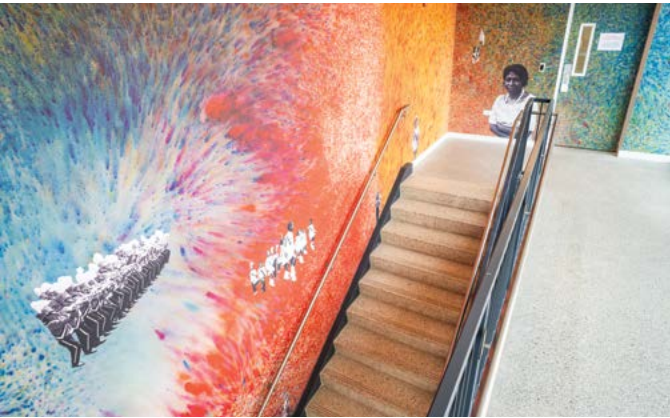
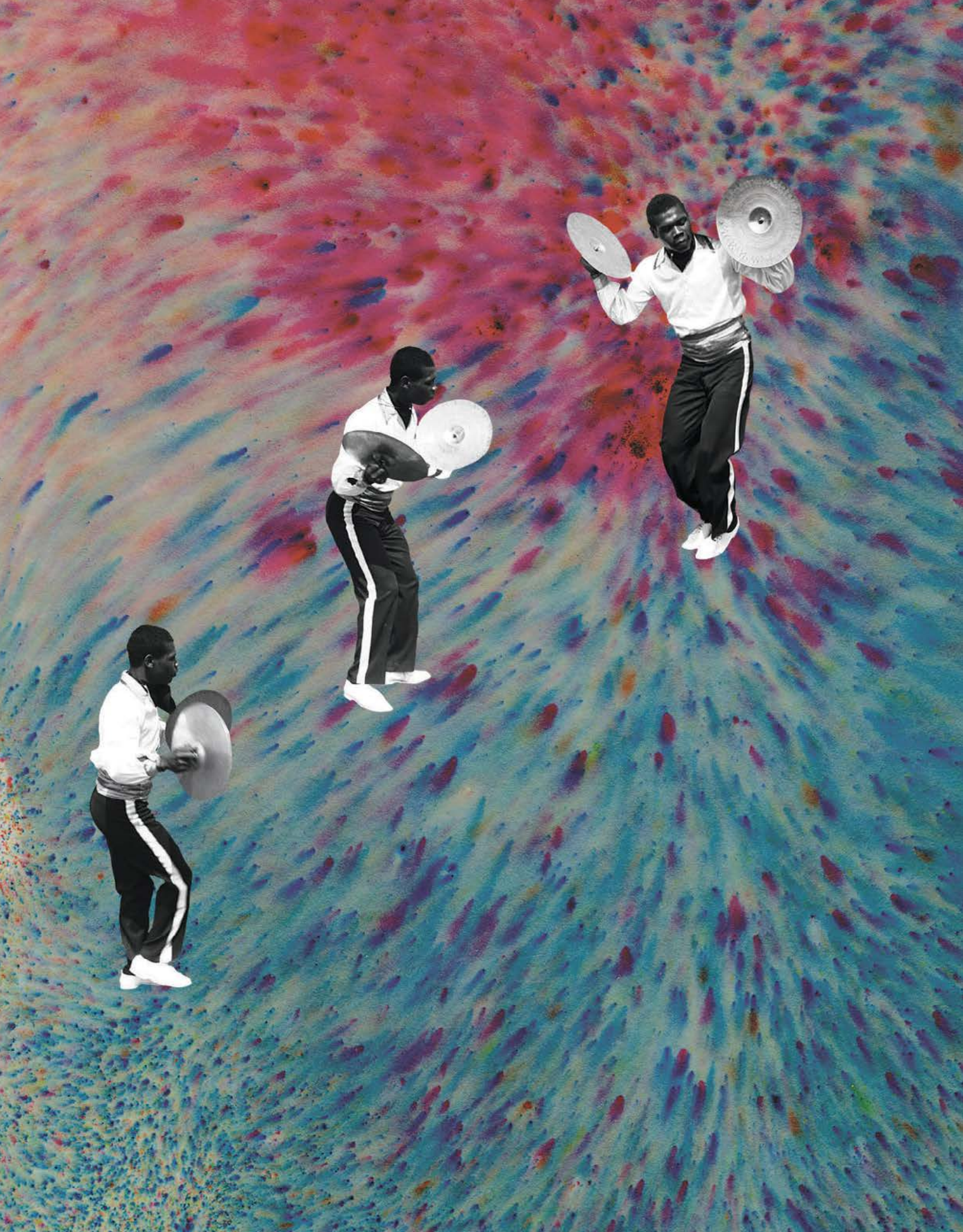
MAMA CVD earned first place and a \$150,000 grant in a recent Johnson & Johnson-funded NurseHack4Health Pitch-A-Thon. Commodore-Mensah and the Ghanaian-Diaspora Nursing Alliance (G-DNA), of which she is president and co-founder, believe they can use it to cut the maternal mortality rate in Ghana by half.

Essential to this effort is the G-DNA's persuasive work, in a nation where physicians are in short supply, to build acceptance for nurse leadership. "We are not replacing cardiologists," explains Commodore-Mensah of initial pushback. Rather, "Midwives can send ultrasound photos to cardiologists by text for further diagnosis."

The aim for now is to begin with 57 of the ultrasound devices—at about \$6,000 per unit—and dispatch them to serve not just pregnant women but all adults across the poorer, rural areas surrounding Accra, Ghana's capital city.

And the program, "owned and led by the folks on the ground," according to Commodore-Mensah, isn't simply improving the lot of Ghanaians long denied access to health care. It is also showing the full worth of nurses and midwives in improving that care into the future. ■





# Research as an Art Form

*Public housing wallpaper inspired by Baltimore interviews and archival images salutes urban caregivers as it celebrates the resilience of those who came before.*

There is beauty in public housing, particularly as represented by low-income women who historically have emerged from a backdrop of poverty and disenfranchisement to push for what's right, right where they are. An exhibit filling the Public Housing Museum in Chicago celebrates what these leaders have always meant to their communities through bold wallpaper featuring scenes of joy and life from the inner-city Baltimore of the 1960s and 1970s.

*Re/Creation*, by artist Marisa Morán Jahn, was inspired by the work of Dean Sarah Szanton, PhD, RN, FAAN, and her team of nurse practitioners, who fanned out with community developer Micah Campbell-Smith and Morán Jahn to find and interview such leaders about their own resilience and efforts to undermine structural discrimination in that era.

Szanton's team aims to recapture that community spirit as part of improving dementia care among impoverished Baltimoreans and expanding the Johns Hopkins' Neighborhood Nursing program, a free, door-to-door, block-by-block effort to keep residents well and prevent issues that might previously have led to unnecessary emergency room visits.

The exhibit name is a play on recreation, as well as on how these women helped reimagine, or re-create, their communities' reality. The Baltimore images, courtesy of the Robert Breck Chapman Archive at the University of Baltimore, are of dancers, marching bands, and ballplayers. These move and sway against brilliant swaths of color as wallpaper for the halls and stairwells of the Public Housing Museum. Snippets of the wallpaper currently hang in the lobby of the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing. ■

Learn more about the grant that inspired *Re/Creation* at [nursing.jhu.edu/recreation](https://nursing.jhu.edu/recreation). Or listen to a podcast on the program at [nursing.jhu.edu/recreationpod](https://nursing.jhu.edu/recreationpod).

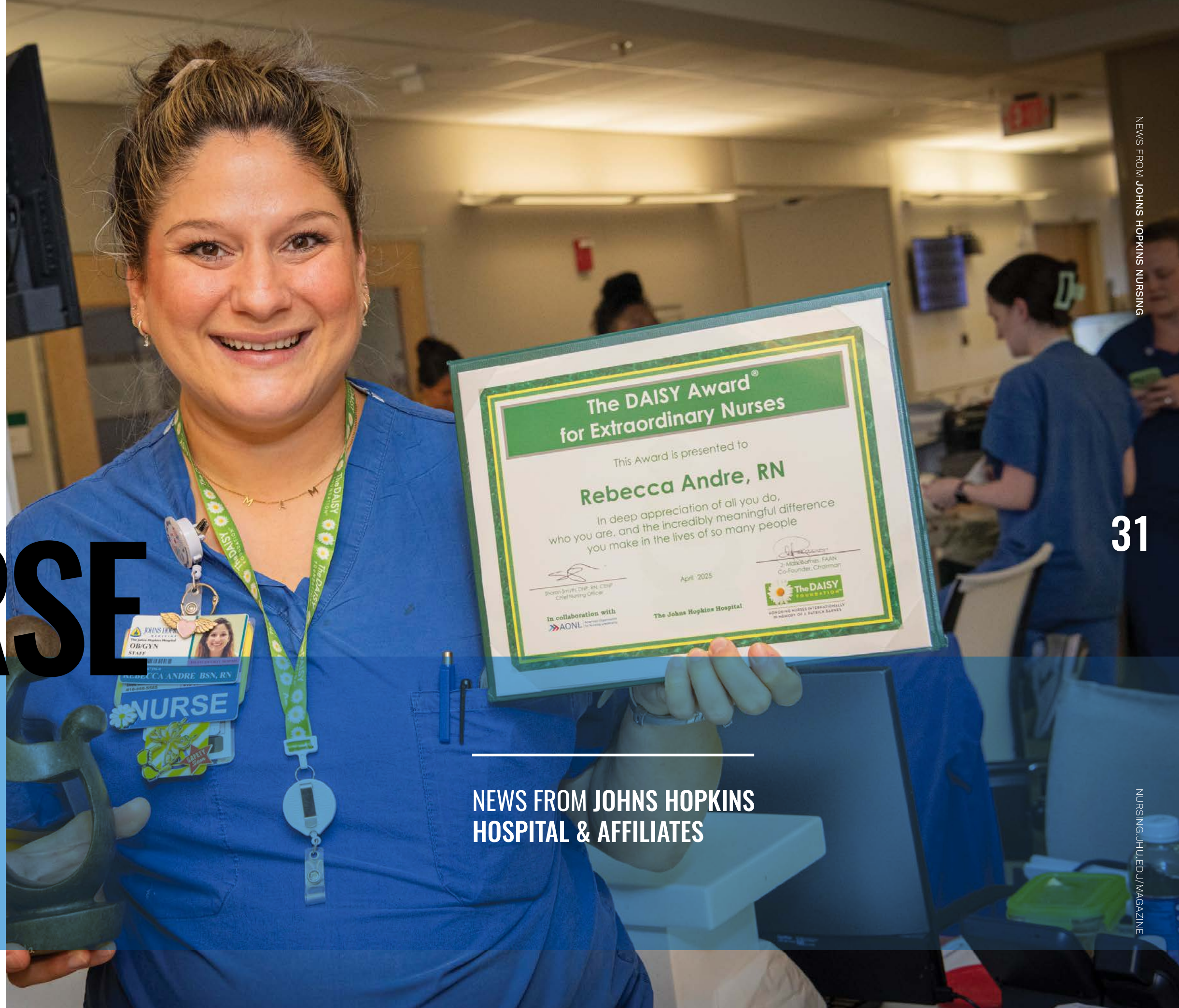


*Suburban CNO Courtney Cornell on her latest peak; DAISY winners from across the Johns Hopkins Health System, and a letter from Deborah Baker.*

Johns Hopkins Hospital RN Rebecca Andre earned the DAISY Award for April 2025. Meet more DAISY winners on Page 34.

# JH NURSE

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NEWS FROM JOHNS HOPKINS  
HOSPITAL & AFFILIATES



# Ski Slopes to the C-Suite

## Courtney Cornell's Climb to Suburban CNO

BY JENNIFER FINK

Courtney Cornell, MSN, RN, OCN, didn't plan to be a nurse.

In fact, she probably wouldn't be a nurse today—much less vice president of nursing and chief nursing officer of Suburban Hospital—if not for the example of a few special nurses. And an anaphylactic reaction on the side of a Colorado mountain.

Cornell, a Chicago native, was on ski patrol that fateful day. She'd recently dropped out of college, moved to Colorado to work as a ski instructor, and was picking up patrol shifts to make ends meet. She and her patrol partner were called to the resort's restaurant to care for a man in the throes of a severe allergic reaction. Cornell's partner, a nurse, quickly administered epinephrine. Within minutes, the man's breathing stabilized.

"I thought that was the coolest thing I'd ever seen," Cornell recalls. "The next fall, I enrolled in nursing school."

### An Uncommon Path

But although Cornell loved her nursing theory and science courses, she struggled in clinicals.

"Some of the stuff that was being asked just wasn't realistic in my mind," she says. After two semesters, she told her clinical instructor she was quitting. His answer: *No, you're not.*

Cornell's instructor recognized that she was an independent thinker who thrived in fast-paced settings. So, he created a critical care clinical path for her, allowing her to gain experience in PICU, ICU, and ED settings. Cornell thrived—and *still* nearly didn't become a nurse. After a missed

flight home from an adventure in Nicaragua cost her the first two days of her senior practicum and triggered consequences she felt were unreasonable, Cornell told her parents she wasn't going to take her board certification exam.

Her dad, a hospital consultant, talked her into sitting for her boards and, after she passed, one of his clients encouraged Cornell to follow her interests and apply for an ICU position, even though new grads in those days typically weren't considered for intensive care positions. To her surprise, Cornell landed an ICU job and started her nursing career at Hospital Center in Washington DC.

"That's when I fell in love with nursing," Cornell says.

### Finding Her Home

Cornell moved to Suburban Hospital in 1996, shortly after her oldest child was born. It was a move intended to ease family logistics. "I was driving past a bunch of hospitals on my way to Hospital Center," Cornell explains. "My goal was to never drive by another hospital on my way to work again."

What she found at Suburban was far more than convenience, however. Suburban Hospital became her professional home.



***"My dad taught me that sometimes you should walk through open doors, even though you're not sure what's on the other side."***

Cornell started as a staff nurse in the ICU. When a nursing supervisor asked if she'd consider working in supervision, Cornell seized the opportunity.

"My dad taught me that sometimes you should walk through open doors, even though you're not sure what's on the other side," she says. "I thought that if I said no to that opportunity, I might not get it again."

Cornell quickly saw that leadership allowed her to effect change on a larger scale. "I realized I could have a much greater impact by not caring for patients directly but by taking care of staff," she says.

Her experience had taught her that good things happen when you put the right nurses in the right environment, with the right resources. And her time in critical care and emergency settings prepared her well for a career in management. She was adept at pivoting and multi-tasking, a pro at remaining cool, collected, and focused, even in high-stress situations.

Cornell gradually assumed more responsibility. Over the years, she directed several inpatient units, including adult and acute medical surgical, adult surgery, orthopedics, and oncology. She oversaw nursing operations at Suburban before stepping into the role of vice president of nursing and chief nursing officer in September 2024—a role she never envisioned for herself when she walked into the ICU three decades earlier.

"When people ask me why I've stayed at Suburban so long, I always tell them, 'I've never had a reason to leave,'" Cornell says.

### Leading Through Change

It's taken time for Cornell to adjust to her new role.

"I thought I knew what I was getting into, but I very quickly realized I had no idea what this job was," Cornell says. Learning the ins and outs of hospital finance has been a challenge. A year in, she has a better understanding of the capital budget, business acronyms, and the fiscal impact of nursing.

She is proud of the way she and Suburban's staff worked together to manage "unprecedented volume" over the past year.

"We created a discharge lounge—something we've tried to do multiple times before but weren't successful at—to free up space in our ED," Cornell says. "Instead of waiting in an ED bed for a ride home, 80 to 95 percent of our eligible discharges now go through that lounge."

Cornell stays in close touch with frontline nurses because she knows they have the clearest view of day-to-day challenges.

"Bedside nurses are like MacGyver," she says, referencing the '80s/'90s TV character who improvised impressive, innovative solutions to sticky problems on a weekly basis. "They'll find a workaround until they can't find a workaround." And while Cornell appreciates the passion, persistence, and ingenuity that underly nurses' creative problem-solving, she knows it's almost always better (and safer) to tackle root causes than to rely on stopgap solutions that conceal issues instead of resolving them.

"If you find out about a problem after the fifth workaround, you're already in deep," Cornell says. Best to learn about problems early on and solicit nurses' input to create cohesive, cost-effective, evidence-based solutions that alleviate the issue and improve care.

Cornell's enthusiasm for nursing hasn't flagged a bit. "I'm as excited in my role today as I was as a new grad in the ICU," she says. "It's an exciting time for the organization and for nursing." ■

Photo of Suburban Hospital by G. Edward Johnson



# A FIELD OF DAISY

## AWARD WINNERS

Johns Hopkins Hospital and its affiliates within the Johns Hopkins Health System—All Children’s in Florida, Bayview Medical Center, Howard County General, Sibley Memorial, Suburban, plus Johns Hopkins Care at Home—are proud to honor its outstanding nurses with the DAISY Award—an international recognition program that celebrates the skillful, compassionate care nurses provide to patients and families every day.

The DAISY (Diseases Attacking the Immune System) Award was established in memory of J. Patrick Barnes, who died at 33 of an autoimmune disease. The Barnes family was awestruck by the clinical skills and compassion of the nurses who cared for Patrick, so it created this award to say thank you to nurses everywhere. ■

A sampling of winners fills these pages.  
More images are at [nursing.jhu.edu/falldaisy](https://nursing.jhu.edu/falldaisy).



Burn Unit | May 2025  
Bayview Medical Center



Debra Tildsley | July/August 2025  
Howard County General Hospital



Abigail Atkins-Bennage | August 2025  
Sibley Memorial Hospital





A LETTER FROM DEBORAH BAKER:

# Empowering the Nursing Voice Across Johns Hopkins



NEWS FROM JOHNS HOPKINS NURSING

At Johns Hopkins, we know the future of nursing is shaped by the nurses on the front lines of care every day. Every patient interaction, every care decision, every moment at the bedside carries the potential to improve outcomes—and it is our nurses who make that difference. That’s why we have built a robust, interconnected nursing council structure across the Johns Hopkins Health System, a professional practice model that puts nurses at the center of decision-making, innovation, and systemwide improvement.

These councils are more than committees; they are spaces where nurses from every level—front-line staff to executives—come together to lead, collaborate, and create meaningful change. Representatives from across our hospitals and care settings share insights, raise concerns, and champion initiatives that strengthen patient care, enhance safety and advance career development. Through this professional governance, nurses don’t just have a seat at the table—they have a voice in shaping how it is set.

Each council has a distinct focus that aligns with our collective mission. The Informatics Council focuses on the use of technology to streamline workflows, improve communication, and simplify documentation. The Inquiry Council fosters engagement in research, evidence-based practice, and quality improvement, expanding opportunities for nursing scholarship and innovation. The Practice Council maintains high standards of care through policy oversight, workplace safety initiatives, and product evaluation. The Professional Development Council supports lifelong learning, mentorship, and leadership growth. The Quality Council drives

efforts to reduce harm, focusing on infections, falls, and pressure injuries, ensuring nurses lead initiatives that make care safer for every patient. Additionally, we have specialty councils that tackle the specific concerns of perioperative, pediatric, and ambulatory care.

What makes this model so powerful is its multidirectional flow of ideas. System-level councils are mirrored at hospital and department levels, creating a network where innovations and best practices move from bedside to boardroom, and solutions are adapted to meet local needs. Our councils invite experts from all disciplines to take part in innovation and improvement efforts to support the mission of Johns Hopkins Medicine. And the impact is real: nurse-driven informatics improvements, systemwide mentorship and transition programs, quality initiatives that reduce harm, and the broader reach of nurse-led research and publication. Beyond measurable results, this work fosters ownership, pride, and a shared sense of purpose.

As we face new challenges and opportunities in health care, this council structure positions Johns Hopkins nurses to lead with clarity, confidence, and unity. Professional governance is more than a framework; it is a commitment to the collective power of our profession. When nurses lead, systems improve—and patients thrive. To every nurse who has served on a council or contributed to this work, thank you. Your voice makes Johns Hopkins stronger. ■

*Deborah Baker, DNP, AG-ACNP, NEA-BC, FAAN, is senior vice president for nursing for the Johns Hopkins Health System.*



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*For four 2013 alumni,  
goodbye was just the  
beginning; Alumni Update;  
Class News; Church Notes,  
and more.*

All together now: Brand-new JHSON alumni  
read the Nursing Pledge before beginning—or  
continuing—their journeys in caregiving.



# VIGILANDO

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NEWS FROM JOHNS HOPKINS  
NURSES' ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



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## ALUMNI UPDATE

### TO MY FELLOW COLLEAGUES:

I am thrilled to introduce myself as the new president of the Johns Hopkins Nurses' Alumni Association (JHNAA) and honored to serve this incredible community of nursing professionals.

My journey with the JHNAA began as a member of the board of directors, where I had the privilege of assisting with the planning of alumni events and programming that brought our Johns Hopkins community together across the country. I recently completed my second term on the JHU Alumni Council, most recently serving as co-chair of the Awards and Grants Committee, which deepened my commitment to recognizing excellence and supporting our alumni network.

As I step into this leadership role, I'm excited to build on the strong foundation we've established and to create meaningful opportunities for connection, celebration, and professional growth. Please save the date for Alumni Weekend, taking place April 16-18, 2026, and I look forward to seeing you there and celebrating all that makes our Johns Hopkins Nursing community so special!

Lou Bartolo, DNP, MSN, RN  
President, JHNAA



## Alumni Community Week Recap

This September, the Johns Hopkins Nurses' Alumni Association (JHNAA) hosted its fourth annual Alumni Community Week. The aim of Alumni Community Week is to bring together the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing Community.

The week included both in-person and virtual events, beginning with the second-annual Class of 1973 History Lectureship, an engaging presentation by Dr. Dominique Tobbell. Alumni and students also gathered for a DC-area meet-up where they reconnected with friends and met new members of the Johns Hopkins Community. The

virtual Mentoring Meet Up for Men in Nursing connected alumni with student mentees, fostering supportive conversations and guidance. The JHNAA also proudly supported an AI seminar hosted by the School of Nursing and partnered with the central Johns Hopkins Alumni team for its annual Alumni Crab Feast in Annapolis.

We are grateful to all who participated in Alumni Community Week! ■





From left, Matt Lindsley, Teresa Pfaff, Soohyun Kim, and Pawla Wenga

# You Had Me at Goodbye

*Class of 2013 grads keep joys of friendship, learning, nursing, and leadership flowing through regular meet-ups.*

When picking the Baltimore restaurant to host the next of their mostly annual and occasionally more frequent get-togethers, the question for Johns Hopkins School of Nursing alumni Matt Lindsley, Teresa Pfaff, Soohyun Kim, and Pawla Wenga might as well come down to: Is there a brick wall?

Such a background is essential for re-creating a group image taken way back at a post-graduation going-away party for Kim, who had earned the “ultimate public health nursing job,” according to Pfaff—as a public health nurse in Alaska. “Riding the planes, dealing with botulism. Botulism! Home visits in remote Alaskan communities,” Pfaff says. “Wow!” That photo, and the snapshots taken each time the four meet up, present visual evidence of a moment when—as fresh grads of the Public Health Nursing program in December 2013—Wenga, Pfaff, Kim, and Lindsley realized that a bond forged just as school was ending didn’t have to break at commencement. In fact, it couldn’t.

***“Making a difference ... impacting families and communities every day ... keeps me motivated.”***

The bricks behind them could just as easily stand for walls each has hit—barriers surmounted in no small part through the support, guidance, and love flowing from this friendship born of a farewell.

Put their career experiences, public health perspectives, and personalities together, and what you’ve got is an evening of joshing, jawing, irreverence, encouragement, and affection as time and space between the four melts completely away. Hellos, hugs, a cocktails-and-appetizers order, and once again they’re just a group of caregivers who really, really care—about the world, about public

health nursing, and about each other.

A decade-plus on, Lindsley, Pfaff, and Wenga have stayed mostly local, with Kim at least regional these days.

## ‘Making a Difference’

Wenga is the research nurse manager and assistant program manager for the Upper Aerodigestive Cancer Department at the Johns Hopkins Skip Viragh Cancer Center. A 2020 winner of an Excellence in Nursing Award from *Baltimore* magazine, she specializes in thoracic and head and neck malignancies. “Making a difference—the fact that I am playing a vital role in shaping the future of cancer treatment while impacting families and communities every day through my work—keeps me motivated,” Wenga explains.

She’s passionate about possibilities for nurses in research—particularly in clinical trials. Her crusade “to expand our scope” leads back to education and, as she regularly looks to hire, to building job candidates better prepared to make the most of the gig. (Pfaff, a JHSON part-time clinical instructor in addition to her day job as a public health nurse supervisor in Baltimore County, quickly attempts to entice Wenga in for an upcoming class to proselytize.)

Lindsley credits Wenga, in fact, with arranging his first job post MSN and MPH degree completion, doing research with her after he’d admittedly waited a bit too long for the ideal job to find him. “Oncology research nursing ... that was not on my radar.” He has split much of the decade-plus since graduation between Ellicott City MD and a plot of fertile land he owns with his partner in Pennsylvania. (“Gentleman farmer” is way too generous a description, he demurs. He has maintained a strong belief in sustainable agriculture and local food system resilience as one



answer to public health challenges of pervasive high-calorie and low-nutrient food procurement in nursing homes and other health care facilities.)

As he works toward a doctorate at the Bloomberg School of Public Health, Lindsley serves as an officer with the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. That can mean weeks at a time at Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention centers across the South, providing direct care to detainees, and filling critical staffing shortages. “There’s such a need for nurses in this environment, especially given the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic,” he explains.

Kim, who had a head start on them all with the Alaska gig (and who confirms that it was, indeed, a dream first job—“Alaska was amazing!”), works for the federal government through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), since 2019 with the Maternal and Child Health Bureau in Rockville MD. Kim was among the first cohort of fellows of the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments, a global nursing organization focused on the intersection of human and planetary health—from air quality to safe water and chemicals, including soil health. (Kim recruited Lindsley for the second cohort. It was not a hard sell for “Farmer Matt.”)

As a public health nurse supervisor in Baltimore County, Pfaff is responsible for the implementation, development, and management of some of the Department of Health’s Maternal and Child Health programs including the Babies Born Healthy Care Coordination Program, and the Administrative

Care Coordination Unit. She’s also an unapologetic tech and data enthusiast. So much so that during recent heart tests, when her halter monitor’s sensors suddenly lit up, she wasn’t freaking out, “I was so impressed by the level of data that was in the readout! It was amazing.”

The heart issue is under control. “We’re all becoming patients ourselves now,” Pfaff jokes. The data nerdiness is incurable. During an annual Maryland Department of Health meeting on reporting for her maternal and child health programs, she recently noticed an opportunity to work with the state to enhance data requirements. She has helpfully suggested some tweaks that can be used in other jurisdictions. Her next quarterly report—capturing the new data—should persuade them to adopt it, Pfaff figures. Either way, “It does feel nice to be at that point where, we’ve been out in the field now for more than 10 years, leading with a leadership/growth lens.”

#### Until Next Time

At this table, nothing is forbidden, or sacred. Soon, a fly on the wall is just that, a listener straining to take in the knowledge, honesty, experience, and good-natured snark filling the air on an open patio in Baltimore. Wenga, Kim, Pfaff, and Lindsley have a lot to catch up, debate, and dish on. And the appetizers are here.

Time to buzz off. But not before exacting a winking promise to at least consider that one of these catch-ups might soon happen at a sanctioned JHSON alumni event. Can’t let Wenga, Lindsley, Kim, and Pfaff keep all this love to themselves, can we? ■

# CLASS NEWS

## JOHNS HOPKINS IN MEMORIAM

Patricia Peterson Colt, ’56

### Spotlight of 2025 JHNAA Awardees

**Distinguished Alumna Award: Marni Sommer** exemplifies excellence and humanitarian service, advancing global health, education, and gender equity. After earning a master’s in public health and nursing from Johns Hopkins in 2001 and a doctorate in public health from Columbia University in 2008, she dedicated her career to addressing disparities affecting adolescents worldwide. Inspired by her Peace Corps experience in Eritrea, she focused on how menstruation and puberty disrupt girls’ education, leading to her doctoral research in Tanzania and the creation of the Girls’ Puberty Book Project. This project became Grow and Know, which has distributed over 2 million culturally tailored puberty books across seven countries, reaching both girls and boys. Dr. Sommer’s impact extends through global partnerships with organizations like UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund, as well as her leadership of the GATE Program at Columbia. There, she develops interventions, trains future public health leaders, and provides critical resources such as a menstrual hygiene management toolkit for humanitarian settings.

**Community Champion Award: Alicia Wilson** is a member of the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing Advisory Board and serves as vice president for civic engagement and opportunity at Johns Hopkins University and Health System. In this role, she leads strategies to strengthen partnerships with local, national, and global communities, advancing economic development, education, health equity, and community investment. Previously, as managing director and global head of philanthropy for JPMorgan Chase in North America, she oversaw local strategies across more than 40 markets and guided the firm’s \$2 billion Racial Equity Commitment. Before that, Alicia served as vice president for economic

development and community partnerships at Johns Hopkins, leading programs in neighborhood revitalization, education, and health care. Her achievements have earned national recognition in *Forbes* and the *National Business Journal* for her leadership in creating economic opportunity. She also serves as board chair of the CollegeBound Foundation, helping numerous Baltimore City students pursue higher education.

**Global Achievement Award: Jacqueline Brysacz** is a nurse practitioner and public health specialist. Since 2014, Jacqueline has worked in primary care with Federally Qualified Health Centers. Jacqueline got her start in international work when she served as an agriculture volunteer in the Chaco region of Bolivia with the Peace Corps from 2007-08. Her experience led her to a career focused on well-being and reducing barriers to health for low-resource populations. She currently works as a family nurse practitioner in a community health center. Jacqueline embodies what it means to be a global contributor through her work with the Chaco Fund. With colleagues she met in the Peace Corps, Jacqueline started the Chaco Fund which, in addition to financial support, provides the scholarship awardees with mentorship as well as technological and emotional support to provide a holistic support system for these pioneers.

**Heritage Award: Alison Smith** served as a member of the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing Advisory Board from 2014-24, providing insight to Deans Patricia Davidson and Sarah Szanton. Alison has provided invaluable guidance on key initiatives at the School of Nursing, including the development of Neighborhood Nursing, the Institute for Policy Solutions, and launching the first cohort to complete all clinicals in community settings. Her thoughtful advisement has been instrumental in shaping the future of nursing and connecting resources to sustain the Neighborhood Nursing program. Following her







Student representative Miguel Bustos Bismonte (top) and Alicia Wilson, VP for civic engagement and opportunity at JHU, offered words of encouragement at August's Degree Completion Ceremony. Facing page: PhD grad Arum Lim's family snapshot.



tenure on the board, Alison joined the Education to Practice Dean's Working Group, where she contributed critical feedback and advice on school initiatives. Alison serves in a jointly held position with the American Heart Association and the American Medical Association as program director for the AHA-AMA Initiative to Control Blood Pressure. She has 25 years of experience in the health care industry, ranging from the bedside to the boardroom. For the last decade, she has worked as a vice president of strategic initiatives and a consultant to C-Change, a national not-for-profit focused on research, practice, and policy issues in cancer.

**Outstanding Recent Graduate: Molly Cook** has consistently leveraged her education to serve her community in innovative and impactful ways. As an emergency department nurse, Molly dedicated herself to providing compassionate care to patients during some of their most vulnerable

moments. Her work in the ED exposed her to the broader social determinants of health, which inspired her to pursue public health advocacy and grassroots organizing. Molly's leadership was instrumental in passing a citizen-driven amendment to the Houston City Charter and she was recognized by the *Houston Chronicle* as one of the city's transportation leaders. Molly's commitment to public service reached new heights when she transitioned into politics. She recently became the first openly bisexual member of the Texas Senate, representing Senate District 15, a position previously held by a single individual for four decades. Her victory in a highly competitive special election was a testament to her grassroots organizing skills and ability to connect with constituents. Molly's leadership extends beyond her professional achievements. She has inspired countless individuals through her advocacy for health equity, reproductive rights, and community-driven solutions. ■







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## CHURCH NOTES

DEB CORTEGGIANO KENNEDY, '73



### CHURCH NOTES IN MEMORIAM

Patricia Baumann, '51  
Elaine Neely Schelle, '59  
Bonnie Summers, '65

#### Freda Creutzburg Scholar

The most recent recipient of the Freda Creutzburg Scholarship is Megan Nicklay. In her letter of thanks and gratitude, Megan shared that she chose nursing because “it is a uniquely powerful position to support patients and connect with communities in a way that can drive innovation for better health outcomes.” Previously Megan worked as a teacher and EMT. Megan also noted that the support of the Freda Creutzburg Scholarship has helped make her dream nursing education come true—she graduated with her MSN in August. Megan was the recipient of the Academic Excellence Award, given to the student who has demonstrated exemplary performance in all aspects including clinical, theory, and professional demeanor in the support of the profession of nursing. Miss Creutzburg would indeed be very proud of Megan!

#### Save the Date

Reunion Weekend will be held on April 16-18, 2026. This is of significant importance, since this will be the LAST time we will celebrate a graduating class 50th Anniversary. More details to come.

Individual invitations are not sent out via U.S. Mail. Please watch the CHH Facebook page for updates or go to the JHSON website for details on

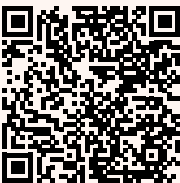
registering for the event. Please try to attend and celebrate the school we all loved so much.

#### Church Home & Hospital School of Nursing

Yes, in 2026, we will honor the final class to graduate from the Church Home & Hospital School of Nursing. From 1894 through 1976, approximately 1,500 graduates proudly wore the “EGO SERVO” Insignia Pin. The school was accredited by the National League for Nursing in 1959.

So much wonderful history ... three men among the 1,500 women graduated; numerous graduates served in World War II and the Vietnam War; Beacon of Hope Award started in 1933 and kept until 1976; one mother-daughter graduate; married students allowed in 1967; college credits received in 1966 and more. I would encourage everyone to visit the Alan Mason Chesney Medical Archives website to see your class photo and much more CHH History that is professionally preserved and accessible. ■

*Deborah Corteggiano Kennedy, '73, is Church Home and Hospital alumni president.*



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Miss Shirley Sweitzer

# A Conscious Effort to Serve All

As a nurse anesthetist, Shirley R. (Sweitzer) Neibert, '57, of York PA, was highly trained in administering anesthesia for surgery. However, it was her vibrant personal life and steadfast commitment to nursing education that truly captured attention.

Shirley, who died on June 18, 2024, at age 89, was a proud Johns Hopkins double alumna who generously supported JHSON through her estate. We fondly remember her as a trailblazing nurse anesthetist, devoted wife, and successful business owner who embraced education and freely shared her time and knowledge.

After graduating from Johns Hopkins in 1957, she joined York Hospital. Her professionalism caught the eye of Dr. F. L. Harris, chairman of the hospital's anesthesiology department, who encouraged her to return to school to earn her certificate as a nurse anesthetist. In 1972, she graduated from what was then the Johns Hopkins School of Nurse Anesthetists—a curriculum that is now part of the Nurse Anesthesia DNP Advanced Practice track.

She then returned to York Hospital as the first nurse anesthetist to hold both an RN and a BS degree, a milestone that paved the way for a long and successful nursing career.

In her personal life, Shirley married Harold Neibert in January 1976. They enjoyed 41 years of marriage until his passing in 2017.

Outside the operating room, she served in the U.S. Army Reserve, retiring as a lieutenant colonel after 27 years of commendable service. In her free time, she owned multiple businesses—including a gourmet shop and an outdoor-cooking supply store—and played a steady hand in her husband's Fox Ridge Winery.

Shirley is survived by her stepdaughter, Cindy Neibert, and her grandson, Ryan Arnold.

We are honored to celebrate Shirley's impactful life and her generosity in supporting the School of Nursing through her estate. Her philanthropy—especially to the Annual and Dean's Discretionary Funds—will continue her legacy at Johns Hopkins through the work of faculty, staff, students, and alumni. ■



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<b>Dina Michels</b> <i>Executive Vice President, COO, Chief Legal Officer</i> American Society of Clinical Oncology	

## THE BACK PAGE

### Excerpt: ‘Crowns You Can’t See but Can’t Ignore’ by Dana Robinson

Years ago, I wore a crown on the campus of Delaware State University. At the time, it seemed like a symbol of pride and visibility, but what I’ve carried with me since is the deeper truth: a crown is never about recognition; it’s about responsibility. It’s about service and the courage to use your voice to lift others.

Nurses wear crowns of responsibility when they design new models of care grounded in evidence. They wear crowns of courage when they push against outdated systems with data, vision, and bold solutions. They wear crowns of brilliance when their discoveries reshape public health, advance science, and influence policy at the highest levels. Their crowns are not jeweled or ceremonial, but they are evident in the lives they change and in the knowledge they create.

Dana Robinson joined the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing in 2024 as associate dean for strategic communications.

Read her full essay at [nursing.jhu.edu/dana](https://nursing.jhu.edu/dana).



## CONTRIBUTOR: DANA ROBINSON

Dana Robinson is a uniter. It’s only appropriate that as associate dean of strategic communications and marketing for the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing (JHSON), she now becomes managing editor of *Johns Hopkins Nursing* magazine, helping to keep the vision—and focus—forward. Robinson is a Baltimore kid who honed her advocacy, team-building, and storytelling skills at nonprofits like the Arthritis Foundation and Planned Parenthood. At JHSON, she’ll work to lift the voices of nurses on campus, on the front lines, and as far as the message needs to go. This magazine becomes part of that effort.

**“I grew up in Baltimore City, in a family that taught me not just to be good, but to do good and to do more good every chance I get. That grounding carried me to the front lines of protests and advocacy spaces, where I learned that voices can demand justice and stories can spark change.”**





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