

SUSIE JENSVOLD: A Nurse Trainer With A Passion For Helping People

Nursing seems to be in the blood of Susie Jenvold, president of the Florida Association Directors of Nursing Administration. Not only were her grandmother and aunt nurses, but her mother also entered nursing school, though given the times – it was 1951 – she was forced to leave nursing school when she married.

"I always had the compassion and the passion for caring for other people," says Jenvold, who started looking after cats and dogs when she was a child. She began her 45-year nursing career at age 13 as a volunteer candy striper at the nursing home where her grandmother worked. Three years later she found employment there as a CNA, and after nursing school, she worked in the hospital system before returning to long-term care. As a regional nurse and an educational specialist,

she discovered a love for teaching and for helping people to become the best they can be.

Helping nurses develop compassion

Jenvold particularly enjoys helping CNAs in training develop into caring, compassionate professionals. "I'm not sure if you can teach people compassion, but you can help them to identify and develop their own compassion," she says. "With the caring part of it, you can tell when people are just doing it because it's a job and to make money." In her training sessions, Jenvold often reminds students "that [a resident] could be your mother, they could be your grandma, they could be your grandpa – and you need to provide the care that you would want them to receive." Currently, Jenvold, who is clinical education coordinator for Consulate Health Care, trains people for the role of patient care assistants (PCAs), a new position developed to free up CNAs to provide more skilled care during the pandemic.

Jenvold, who worked as a director of nursing for 12 years, has also trained DONS and nurse managers on policies, procedures and clinical programs. "What really excites me is being able to mentor a new DON," she says, noting that participants generally have a great time networking with and supporting each other during these DON orientations.

She loved being a director of nursing even though it was a 24/7 job. "I felt a lot of job satisfaction being there for the residents and providing quality care." Her advice to new nursing staff is to learn as much as you can about the life history of residents and to keep your clinical skills sharp because patients are more medically

complex than in the past. "I always used to tell my hospital friends... you need to come walk a day in the shoes of a nurse in long-term care. The hospital nurses think if they have six, seven, eight patients, that's a lot – well, in long-term care you may have up to 20."

Thoughts on training

Although Jenvold is comfortable with virtual training, at heart she is a people person, someone who is known for planning parties and get-togethers. Not surprisingly, online is not her favorite teaching method. "I feel that to communicate and to really support people you [have] to be there in person so that you know what they're learning and what they're not," she says. One challenge with online learning is keeping students engaged, especially when you can't see them and don't know whether they have left the session, she says. Generating group discussions is also difficult because the audio is usually turned off for students and some of them seem hesitant to ask questions in a virtual environment, adds Jenvold, who encourages interaction by posing questions in the chat box. In her opinion, most education and training will stay online even when the pandemic is over. "Most trainers don't want that – but that's the way it's going to go," she says.

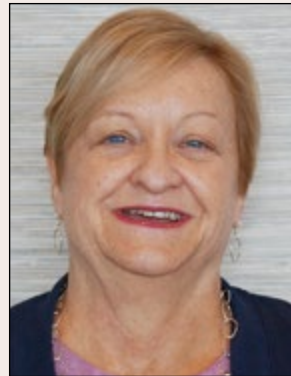
This summer, Jenvold put her online skills to use at the FADONA virtual conference where she emceed the awards ceremony and acted as moderator for several presentations. Although members could see one another at the conference, "it was not the same," she acknowledges. "The most frequent comment was, 'I wish we were in person.'" Still, members came up

with great ideas of how to meet and greet people, she says, adding that the most enjoyable part of the conference was the welcome reception. "About 30 or 40 of us sat back with a glass of wine or a cocktail, visiting and networking – everybody really enjoyed it."

Giving and receiving support

Jenvold, who is 67, has no plans to retire. "I don't know what I do if I didn't work – I've worked all my life since I was 16." She has cut back her hours to part time, though, as her husband of 37 years, Tom, is living with a terminal illness. Although Jenvold finds some days challenging, she has a strong faith and a good support system that includes FADONA members, who are just as supportive on a personal level as they are in the professional world. "I'm taking each day as it is," she says. "You always know that you can pick up the phone and call somebody for help."

Jenvold, who has three daughters and four grandchildren, enjoys camping, especially in the Smoky Mountains in North Carolina. At home, when she needs time to wind down, she walks the beach on Anna Maria Island on Florida's gulf coast, where she used to live for a couple of years before moving back to nearby Bradenton, FL. "It's good to go out and walk the beach, watch the sun set, it's relaxing – I could just sit there and watch the waves." 🍷



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BONNIE BEULLA: Grandmother, Gardener & Hunter

It's an understatement to say that Michigan chapter president Bonnie Beulla has packed a lot into her life. In fact, she took multi-tasking to a whole new level back in the late 80s and early 90s, when she was studying for her bachelor's degree in healthcare administration. As a full-time health care professional and mother, she knew she'd need to be creative if she wanted to fit in an annual trip to a motorcycle campground in Interlochen, Michigan with her husband Leonard. So, to make sure she got her homework done, she'd take her textbooks along – but not to study while camping; instead, she'd read the books, marking salient passages with a yellow highlighter, on the back of Leonard's Harley Davidson. Beulla thinks she probably got looks from strangers as they drove through country roads – but she's not sure, she was so engrossed in her books.

Tending an abundant garden

Although she retired in 2017, after 25 years as the Director of Nursing at Marwood Nursing and Rehab in Port Huron, Michigan, Beulla is still multi-tasking. Now, when she watches TV, for instance, she will snap green beans, or she'll toss in a load of laundry, then head out to pull weeds in her immense garden. She plants eight 75-foot rows with almost every vegetable you would find in a large supermarket: zucchini, lettuce, broccoli, cauliflower, celery, swiss chard, cucumbers, carrots, beets, green beans, corn, eggplant, onions, tomatoes, not to mention 32 hills of potatoes.

Last year, her harvest included 107 winter squashes (she grows four varieties) and seven crates of apples and pears – the Beullas have three pear and five apple trees as well as a large row of raspberry and blackberry bushes. She freezes many of her vegetables and cans tomatoes, dilly beans (which taste like dill pickles), pickles, relish and salsa plus a variety of jams. She also turns some of her apples into apple crisps and apple bars, using recipes from an Amish cookbook, and bakes friendship cakes and banana bread, which she often gives to Marwood staff. (One of the amazing things about Beulla is that she managed to tend to this huge garden even while working full-time as a DON!)

Sharing food is a big part of Beulla and Leonard's life. "We can feed a lot of people on short notice," she says, adding that they sometimes host wedding receptions for children of friends. On Labor Day they usually put on a cookout for a crowd that may number more than one hundred people.

Wild turkeys and other critters

Along with gardening and spending time with her four grandchildren, hunting is one of her passions. Although Beulla's father was a hunter, it was her husband, whom she's been married to for 46 years, who encouraged her to take up the sport nearly 40 years ago. After taking her out trap shooting and watching her shoot clay pigeons "like crazy" with his gun, Leonard knew it was time to

buy his wife her own gun.

Although Beulla enjoys the social element of hunting, she also appreciates the peace and quiet of being alone in her deer shack. (When she was a DON, she'd take her phone with her when she was hunting but usually didn't get called "unless it was life or death.") Typically, she will set herself up in her shack with a cup of tea or hot cocoa and watch for deer and other critters. "You have an adrenaline surge when you see something, but mostly it's just quiet.... It's very tranquil in the woods. I've got squirrels running around, there are turkeys and birds – [it's] very relaxing until you see the deer – then you get a little accelerated," she says, adding that the first deer she shot was a four-point buck.

A nice mix of duties

Beulla began her 45-year nursing career in high school, where she worked as a nurse's aide in long-term care. After nursing school, she worked as a hospital nurse, before joining Marwood in 1991, where she reviewed and updated care plans for the 252-bed facility. "I would go in and hang up my coat and jump into it and have a quick lunch in my office and work as I ate and go into it until the afternoon until I got what I needed to get done that day," she says. A year later she was promoted to DON. "It was a nice opportunity for me," says Beulla, who enjoyed the mix of managerial duties and direct patient care as well as the chance to participate in healthy activity programs like a country fair, where she would bring in baskets of

home-grown veggies.

"You always have your headache days, and I think that is the same in any business, whether it's healthcare or IT... But in healthcare, you have a bad day when a resident dies and their family sobs in your arms. I think the fact that you can wrap your arms around them, hold them and tell them that it's going to be okay is a blessing," she says, acknowledging that this type of human contact has been made difficult since the pandemic. "You see the snippets on the television ... [about] how the respiratory therapist or nurse held the patient's hand while they passed, and they could hear the family sobbing over the phone because they couldn't be there. It's very difficult for any healthcare worker – it doesn't matter if you're the doc, the respiratory therapist, the nurse, the housekeeper, the dietary staff, the maintenance guy – in long-term care, everybody is part of the team that strives to... bring a little sunshine into their existence."

Beulla, who has been a member of MI-NADONA for 27 years, expects she will retire from the association when her term as president ends. "They're an A+ group of people to work with, and when I finally do retire I'm going to miss each and every one of them," she says. Her advice to new DONS is to join the Michigan chapter of NADONA and network with others in the profession. "New DONS are a gift from heaven," she says. "They're brave, they're courageous, and, sometimes, they don't know enough to be afraid, but they're always willing to jump in and work hard." 🍷

