

Making the grade

FELLOWS GRADUATE FROM NYSNA LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

by Erin Silk

Leadership can be defined as “the art of motivating a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal.” This fall, two NYSNA nurses graduated from the NYSNA Leadership Academy Fellows Program with the skills to motivate their peers for the advancement of their association, profession, and communities.

Vicky Smith, a public health nurse and now chair of her bargaining unit at Cortland County Health Department, and Roxanna Raffa, project development and education coordinator for the Catskill Hudson Area Health Education Center in Highland, N.Y., have completed the intensive, year-long study designed to cultivate tomorrow’s leaders.

VICKY SMITH, RN, PHN

When Smith decided to apply to the Leadership Fellows Program, she wanted to enhance her role as a bargaining unit leader, but did not necessarily have a desire to be promoted to management. Instead, Smith sought to improve her leadership skills while capitalizing on her passion for providing direct patient care. She participated in the program’s “Legislative & Political” track.

Since participating in the program, Smith has been elected chair of her local bargaining unit and says that she has used much of what she has learned to “stretch her skills as a leader and work outside her normal boundaries.” She feels that the program has a lot of great concepts to offer would-be leaders and recommends that future Fellows strive to make the most of the opportunity by serving on NYSNA committees and attending lobby days.

ROXANNA RAFFA, MSN, RN

For Raffa, the legislative track of the Leadership Fellows Program afforded her the opportunity to gain knowledge of current and historic legislative issues relevant to health care and nursing. No stranger to leadership roles, she was already an active member of her facility’s Nursing Workforce Development Committee and on NYSNA’s Continuing Education Review Team in 2008. As secretary for the Upstate New York Nursing Staff Development Organization (UNYNSDO), Raffa developed an interest in legislative affairs and wanted to become more involved in NYSNA committees and lobbying events. “It is imperative that we continue to mentor and develop creative, envisioned and organized leadership with which to effectively plan for our professional challenges and future healthcare needs of our communities,” she said. Particularly concerned with the well-being of rural communities, Raffa’s goal is to continue to unite healthcare professionals, community organizers, and legislators to positively impact the healthcare landscape.

For more than a decade, the Leadership Academy Fellows Program has prepared NYSNA members to assume positions of influence within their professional association. Viewed as the “passageway into

distinction of nursing leadership," many graduates of the program have served on the NYSNA Board of Directors, the ANA House of Delegates, executive committees of local bargaining units, the Delegate Assembly, council offices, and district nurses associations' boards and committees.

To graduate, Fellows must successfully complete two tiers of the program, "Basic Studies," and "Leadership Fellows," choosing to concentrate in one of four tracks: General, Labor Relations, Legislative & Political, or Peer Assistance. A key factor in the success of the program is its mentoring component. Fellows are assigned a mentor throughout their studies to guide them as they assume a leadership role. Academy graduates are then expected to mentor future Fellows.

CLASS OF 2010 INDUCTEES

New inductees to the Leadership Academy Fellows Program will begin their studies in the "Labor Relations" track this fall. They are:

Ingred Boyce, Senior Staff Nurse, The Brooklyn Hospital Center, Brooklyn, N.Y.

An original member of NYSNA's Council on Nursing Practice and currently grievance co-chair of her LBU, Boyce hopes to learn more about the internal functions of NYSNA. Her goal is to provide LBU members with the best representation possible and she looks forward to gaining more in-depth knowledge of the bargaining process.

Kimberly Honeywell, Staff Nurse, Samaritan Medical Center, Watertown, N.Y.

Honeywell hopes to apply knowledge from the Leadership Academy to influence her fellow NYSNA members to build a stronger association. As a member of the Council on Nursing Practice and grievance co-chair for Samaritan, she enjoys being a voice for her co-workers and is interested in opportunities within the association for leadership growth.

Laura Houppert, Staff Nurse, Samaritan Medical Center, Watertown, N.Y.

Houppert has served on her facility's Labor Management Committee for six years. She hopes to become an elected member of the Delegate Assembly and participate on association committees. She believes that the Leadership Academy will help her gain the confidence necessary to obtain her BSN.

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