

INDIANA NURSING

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QUARTERLY

Hoosier health heroes in action

CAREERS & TRAINING:

A day in the life of a
School nurse

YOUR WORLD:
stress relief
on the
run

Angie Madden, RN,
cared for the pets involved
in last summer's floods.



Whether volunteering when disaster strikes or responding to unexpected situations, nurses rise to the occasion every time.



Round-the-clock

Photo provided by St. Francis Hospital

People will tell you that anybody would do the same thing in a tough situation. But nurses are better qualified than most to provide decisive leadership, care and compassion to those in need.

Here are several stories about nurses who continue to make a difference and help others while off the clock and even on hiatus.

Caring for companions | In June 2008 Angie Madden, RN, with the Ambulatory Surgery Center at St. Francis Hospital—Mooresville, received a call for help. An American Red Cross unit was setting up an emergency center at Eastview Christian Church to help victims of one of the state's worst floods. She headed out expecting to use her nursing skills, but the greater need was for someone to organize care for the 10 dogs and six cats that had accompanied their owners to the shelter.

"I was more than willing to do that," Madden said. "I had a 10-year-old Husky, so I knew what it would be like as a pet owner — trying to find shelter for the night while not knowing what was going to happen to your pet."

Madden created makeshift pens for the larger animals and gathered dog

crates from friends and organizations for the smaller ones. Fans were provided to make the animals more comfortable on the back of a flatbed truck. Animals and owners alike proved to be model "patients."

"So many people were jovial and appreciative of everyone that was helping out," Madden said. "You take that with you. It made me think about how I would react in a similar situation and how my attitude affects those around me."

The experience gave Madden a better appreciation for the holistic nature of nursing care.

"It helped me to be more compassionate, because you realize [people] have other issues going on



Photos provided by St. Francis Hospital

Above: Angie Madden
Left: Nathan Lowder

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heroes

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besides the health issue you are dealing with at the time," she said.

She also has pledged to complete American Red Cross disaster training so she can become an official volunteer.

"I don't have any children so I can pick up very quickly and go somewhere to help out," Madden said. "I feel that God has blessed me with the ability to do that."

Helping as a lifestyle | "Nursing is an awesome profession because of all the things nurses can go into," said Christian Hanna, RN. "It's not just going to work; it's a lifestyle. And it's pretty cool."

A little more than a year ago Hanna left her job at Portage Hospital in Valparaiso to stay home with her three young children. Yet she found herself using her bedside nursing skills under unusual circumstances.

This past summer she, her kids and her father took a trip to Cumberland Falls in Kentucky. On the way home they took the scenic route — a two-lane winding road through the countryside. Rounding a curve, they spotted a young man lying at the edge of a driveway surrounded by onlookers. Hanna went into action. She grabbed her medical bag and ran to help the man, who'd been shot in the chest.

"My heart started racing," Hanna said. "I had never dealt with a gunshot wound before.

I knew I had to put pressure on his wound to keep him from bleeding out, and I had to help him use his good lung as long as he could until the ambulance arrived."

A plastic bag sufficed for gloves. Hanna's dad, Wayne Flynn, applied pressure to the wound while she supplied guidance until the police arrived. She rode with the victim in the ambulance to meet an emergency helicopter.

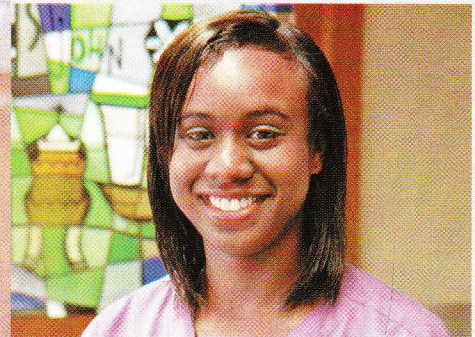
"It took everybody to make sure this guy made it," she said.

The experience energized Hanna and compelled her to keep her skills sharp off the job.

"A lot of people are afraid to help someone," she said. "They either don't know what to do or they're afraid they'll hurt the person. I was so thankful for my training

About our nursing heroes

By Shari Held



Christian Hanna, RN

Formerly employed: Critical Care, Portage Hospital, Valparaiso.

Day job: Provided bedside care for critically ill patients; now an at-home mom.

Community involvement: Volunteers for the American Heart Association and is beginning her second year of chairing "Valpo Goes Red" to promote awareness of heart disease in women. She volunteers at Victory Christian Academy and serves as an "as needed" school nurse. "I keep my foot in the door, so when the time is right I'll be able to go back into the clinical setting," Hanna said.

How she went above and beyond: Orchestrated care for a gunshot victim, keeping him alive until an Air Evac helicopter arrived.

Her definition of a real-world hero: "Selflessness, courage and a willingness to humble yourself to be available to help those in need."

Monique Myles-Washington, RN

Employed: Transitional Care Unit, St. Joseph Hospital, Fort Wayne.

Day job: Provides therapy to prepare post-op patients to leave the hospital. "I love being part of TCU because it is family-oriented," she said. "We provide them a lot of emotional support and create a good environment for the patient. We show them that we know what we're doing as nurses, but at the same time we provide them love."

Community involvement: Works with Sisters Traveling in a New Direction, which provides college scholarships to young women; as a Hope Center volunteer, speaks to girls in juvenile centers.

How she went above and beyond: Rescued and resuscitated an unconscious child from an apartment swimming pool.

Her definition of a real-world hero: "It takes a passion and a love for people. For me, it is being a blessing for God."

because I had the comfort level and the skills to go out and actually help someone."

High waters, high heroics | A former emergency flight nurse and ER nurse, Nathan Lowder, BSN, RN, CEN, is accustomed to screaming sirens and desperate situations. But the scariest moment in his life occurred last June while he was volunteering with the Morgantown Volunteer Fire Department the day a

massive flood shut down the county.

Lowder, now interim manager of the emergency department at St. Francis Hospital—Mooresville, struggled to reach the fire department, where he was to help rescue a woman suffering chest pains. The woman's husband had waded through the high waters covering SR 37 to get help. He and Lowder jumped onboard a rescue vehicle and headed out, accompanied by another rescue vehicle.

"The water was raging over the highway



Nathan K. Lowder, BSN, RN, CEN

Employed: Emergency Department, St. Francis Hospital-Mooresville.

Day job: As interim manager, Lowder concentrates on improving productivity, hiring nurses, managing budgets, serving on the emergency response team and hazmat disaster committees, and ensuring the department runs smoothly.

Community involvement: Volunteers with the Morgantown and Washington Township fire departments and helps the Morgan County Emergency Medical Services Association and local emergency preparedness committee of Morgan County. He is a clinical instructor for the Indiana University School of Nursing at IUPUI.

How he went above and beyond: Braved floodwaters to rescue a woman experiencing heart-attack symptoms.

His definition of a real-world hero: "A person who drops what he is doing and helps someone because it's the right thing to do."

higher than we had anticipated," Lowder said. "Luckily I had my four-wheeler on the back of the truck to give us some weight, and that kept us from floating away. I asked the husband if he could swim, and he said 'no.' I thought, I'm really hosed. For the first time in my life, I was actually scared I wouldn't make it home that day."

Braving water that gushed from huge culverts, they reached the woman. They then repeated the process to get her across the



Angie Madden, RN

Employed: Ambulatory Surgery Center, St. Francis Hospital-Mooresville.

Day job: As an OR nurse in an outpatient surgery center, Madden assists with surgeries as well as pre-op and recovery — a very different environment from disasters. "We have to be on our toes in case an emergency situation would arise during surgery," she said. "We can still use those skills."

Community/volunteer involvement: Volunteers at First United Methodist in Mooresville, performing blood pressure screenings and providing health-related information for the church's bulletin board; spent a week caring for survivors in a hospital camp after Hurricane Katrina; plans to take the American Red Cross disaster relief training so she can help during future disasters.

How she went above and beyond: Organized shelter and care for pets of June 2008 flood victims.

Her definition of a real-world hero: "A real-world hero is someone who gives of themselves to others without thinking of personal gain."

road and to the hospital. The good news is that they all made it, and Lowder did get home safely that evening. But he took a personal financial hit from the flood. The 500 acres on which he farms and raises cattle sustained thousands of dollars of damage in ruined hay and fencing.

Still, he volunteered to help others in danger of losing far more.

"Working in a hospital environment, you don't know what happens on the street side

of a disaster," Lowder said. "It has made me appreciate what's going on with the ambulance crews and fire departments. I can actually see both sides of the coin now."

He noted that the fire department has added more life jackets on the rescue trucks, and he now keeps a float in his personal truck — just in case.

"I put my own life in danger because I would hope someone would do that for me if something happened to me or my family," he said.

Divine intervention | Monique Myles-Washington, RN, didn't want to go to the pool in her apartment complex one day late last summer, but she gave in to pleas from her four children. Looking back, she considers the decision a blessing.

While Myles-Washington played with her youngest children, her stepson noticed a little girl lying at the bottom of the pool. She immediately dove in to the rescue. The unconscious 5-year-old had a faint pulse and was blue, so Myles-Washington started CPR, coordinated a 911 call and led the attempt to locate the girl's mother.

"I was praying the whole time I was giving compression and thinking about my own kids," said Myles-Washington, a nurse in the transitional care unit at St. Joseph Hospital in Fort Wayne. "I feared I would fracture her ribs."

The child was revived, and Myles-Washington comforted the girl and her older sister until the fire department arrived. It was a good ending: That same night the girl was back home and playing marbles.

The emergency took Myles-Washington out of her comfort zone.

"But after the incident I realized that even when you are in fear you can still react the way you are supposed to react," she said. "It boosted my confidence when I was on the floor with my patients to know that. Other people may not know I'm a nurse, but I know, and I feel it's a ministry. No matter where I am, I have to be proactive."

Myles-Washington received a Citizen Action Meritorious Award from the Fort Wayne Fire Department for her quick response in saving the child's life. ●