



News Release

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Media Contact –Danielle Rush

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Communications Specialist
2300 S. Washington Street
Kokomo, IN 46904-9003
(765) 455-9414
darush@iuk.edu

Lynda Narwold provides community service, leadership example during 30 years of teaching

KOKOMO, Ind. — Lynda Narwold doesn't just tell nursing students how they can give back to the community – she shows them.

"I have a passion for service, and by preparing nurses to serve, I can impact many, many, more people," she said. "I believe nurses must use our skills to give back to the community. That's the role model I want to be to my students, to walk the walk. We're all busy, but if it's something you want to do, you can make time for it."

Narwold, 62, assistant dean for the Indiana University Kokomo School of Nursing, has served as an example during her nearly 30 years teaching. Her greatest impact on the campus and community has been with Camp Eeze-the-Wheeze/KIDDsCamp/Fit Camp.

She, along with Assistant Dean Bridget Whitmore, founded the camps in 1997, after the son of a close friend died from an asthma attack. They started with Camp Eeze-the Wheeze, for children with asthma. The second year, they added KIDDs Camp, for children with diabetes. They began to address childhood obesity with Fit Camp, for children interested in healthy lifestyles, in 2011.

"We give the kids a chance to learn to manage their diseases, but in a fun environment," she said. "At the same time, our student nurse counselors are learning how to treat children with these chronic conditions, and how to teach them the skills they need."

Narwold realized the impact the camps have when approached by a mother of a former camper who called her by name and said her daughter attended the first camp.

“She said we saved her daughter’s life, by offering the camp,” Narwold said. “If we impacted just one child’s life, and made it better, then we’ve done our job.”

Dean Linda Wallace said Narwold is “absolutely essential to the School of Nursing,” because of her desire to serve and her love of teaching.

“She is the go-to person for getting things done, whether I need an extra course taught, someone to chair a committee, or lead a student trip to Guatemala or South Korea, she is there and willing to take the challenge.”

She noted that Narwold’s service has been rewarded, as she’s received IU Kokomo’s Virgil Hunt Service Award, IU’s Pinnel award, and the IU School of Nursing’s Lillian Yeager Public Service Award.

Narwold, who leads the R.N. to B.S.N. program, has witnessed great change at IU Kokomo since joining the faculty in 1984. At the time the East Building, which houses the School of Nursing, was almost new, and was one of two buildings on campus. While it has grown in size, Narwold said the biggest changes are not physical.

“It’s the student population that has changed the most,” she said. “The average age in our Associate of Science in Nursing (A.S.N.) program was 30. Now we have a lot of our students coming here straight from high school. It’s been fun to see the campus grow in that way.”

That change has meant evolution in teaching, to incorporate more technology, and more focus on student learning, rather than faculty just lecturing.

“We’ve given a lot more responsibility for learning on the students,” she said. “The licensing test is harder than it used to be, and you have to be a strong student in order to pass. We’re developing their problem solving skills, along with nursing skills, so they know what to do in critical situations. Nursing is not an easy profession.”

The School of Nursing has also changed, eliminating its associate degree programs and focusing on the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.) degrees.

“More and more health care providers wanted B.S.N. trained nurses, and research showed better outcomes for patients with B.S.N. nurses,” she said. “It was the right thing to do, both for our students and for our region.”

Narwold led the associate degree program until its last class graduated, in 2008, before becoming assistant dean for the R.N. to B.S.N. program, which provides a way for registered nurses to earn a bachelor’s degree.

The R.N. to B.S.N. program has grown from about 15 students in its first year, to more than 100 being accepted for the 2013-2014 school year.

“I really enjoy these students,” she said. “They are practicing nurses, so they already have the basic skills. They need the leadership skills and concepts that will help them advance their careers beyond being a bedside nurse.”

Narwold also serves on the Indiana State Board of Nursing, after being appointed by Gov. Mitch Daniels in 2007. The board oversees licensing of nurses, so she can share the latest requirements with her students. In addition, she is a member of the Board of Trustees at Community Howard Regional Health.

Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.

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