

A Hands-On TOUCH for Patient Care

AT SAINT AGNES MEDICAL CENTER, we believe in the healing power of touch. That's why our nurses play a "hands-on" role in delivering patient care. They appreciate the nuances of personal interaction—the sensations and feelings that touch human lives to make a real difference.

They also appreciate the fact that Saint Agnes is located in Fresno, California, known for its excellent school districts, a warm climate, affordable housing and a reasonable cost-of-living. It is also home to one of the most well respected campuses of the California State University System. We offer flexible relocation assistance for your move to the United States.

OPERATING ROOM OUTPATIENT SURGERY

Our busy Operating Room and Outpatient Surgery areas offer you a challenging and stimulating environment to continue your career. Our Operating Rooms handle 1,000+ surgeries per month, and our state-of-the-art services include Laparoscopic Surgery, Orthopedics, and General and Neurological Surgery.

PACU

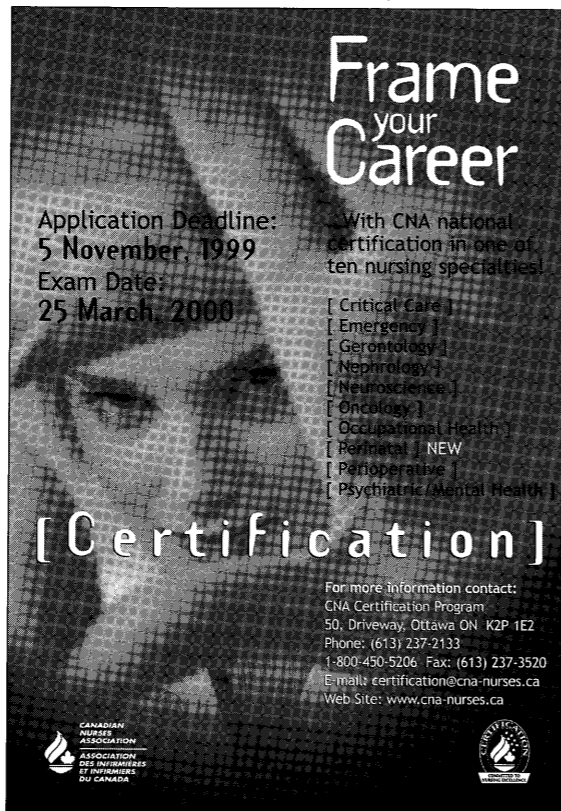
Our PACU features 12 acute care and 6 step-down recliner beds that offer nurses the opportunity to work in a variety of settings. We have full-time, part-time and per diem staff positions available for RNs with 2+ years PACU experience and ACLS.

PACU UNIT COORDINATOR

We are also seeking an RN with 3 years acute recovery room experience and 2 years charge/management experience to act as a PACU Shift Coordinator for the day shift.

Please submit your resume to: Saint Agnes Medical Center, Human Resources, P.O. Box 27590, Fresno, CA 93729-7590, or fax to (559) 449-3735. Find out more about us by visiting our website at www.samc.com. We are an equal opportunity employer.

 **Saint Agnes Medical Center**
A Member of Holy Cross Health System



Frame your Career

Application Deadline: **5 November, 1999**
Exam Date: **25 March, 2000**

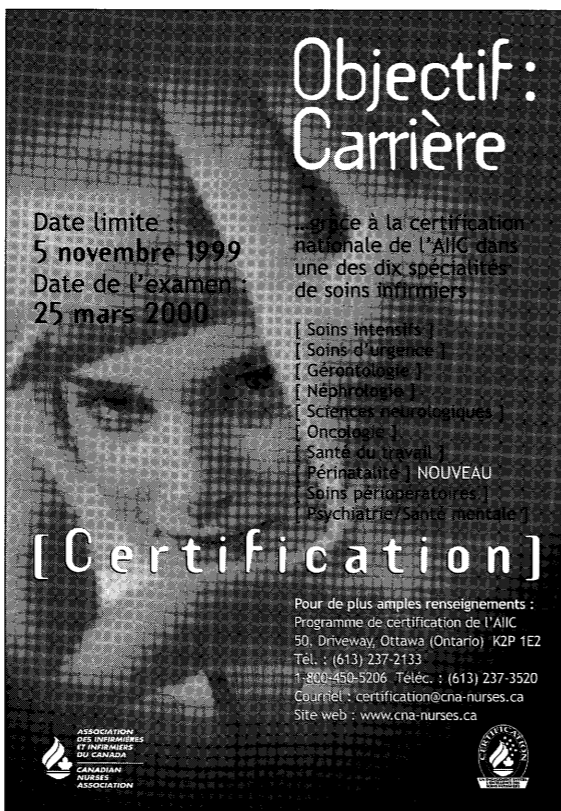
With CNA national certification in one of ten nursing specialties:

- [Critical Care]
- [Emergency]
- [Gerontology]
- [Nephrology]
- [Neuroscience]
- [Oncology]
- [Occupational Health]
- [Perinatal / NEW]
- [Perioperative]
- [Psychiatric / Mental Health]

[Certification]

For more information contact:
CNA Certification Program
50, Driveway, Ottawa ON K2P 1E2
Phone: (613) 237-2133
1-800-450-5206 Fax: (613) 237-3520
E-mail: certification@cna-nurses.ca
Web Site: www.cna-nurses.ca

CANADIAN NURSES ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION DES INFIRMIÈRES ET INFIRMIERS DU CANADA



Objectif: Carrière

Date limite : **5 novembre 1999**
Date de l'examen : **25 mars 2000**

Grâce à la certification nationale de l'AIC dans une des dix spécialités de soins infirmiers:

- [Soins intensifs]
- [Soins d'urgence]
- [Gériatrie]
- [Néphrologie]
- [Sciences neurologiques]
- [Oncologie]
- [Santé du travail]
- [Périnatalité] NOUVEAU
- [Soins périopératoires]
- [Psychiatrie / Santé mentale]

[Certification]

Pour de plus amples renseignements :
Programme de certification de l'AIC
50, Driveway, Ottawa (Ontario) K2P 1E2
Tél. : (613) 237-2133
1-800-450-5206 Téléc. : (613) 237-3520
Courriel : certification@cna-nurses.ca
Site web : www.cna-nurses.ca

ASSOCIATION DES INFIRMIÈRES ET INFIRMIERS DU CANADA
CANADIAN NURSES ASSOCIATION

Poco-A-Poco: An OR Nurse's Experience of a Lifetime

By Kim McLennan-Robbins, RN, CPN(C)

Poco-a-Poco, which in Spanish means little by little, is a registered charity founded by Jill Sampson, a veterinarian from Qualicum Beach, British Columbia. The society was formed in 1995 after she realized the need for surgical services in and around Antigua, Guatemala.

We journeyed to Antigua for the first two weeks in March, 1998 under the direction of Dr. Aingeal Fitzmaurice, an anesthetist from the Misericordia Hospital in Edmonton, Alberta. The team was comprised of surgeons, anesthetists, Operating Room and Post Anaesthetic Recovery Room nurses, social workers, a Physiotherapist, ultra sound technician, and spouses who were always willing to lend a hand. The months preceding the trip were dedicated to collecting donations of surgical supplies. The processing and packing of all that we would need to do surgery for two weeks was done under the direction of Heather Perl our nursing organizer.

The Obras Sociales de Hermano Pedro Hospital in Antigua is a 500-bed chronic care hospital run by the Franciscan order of monks. The residents were mainly geriatric, mentally handicapped, and pediatric patients. Tucked away near one of the courtyards, were three small but modern operating rooms equipped by previous surgical teams who had spent time there. This small operating room was run by Dolores, a very efficient local registered nurse, who kept things running smoothly. Many of the patients who came for surgery had travelled very long distances in hopes of being considered. They arrived very early in the morning and were *npo*. The morning was spent with the surgeons seeing patients in our makeshift Pre-admission clinic. The interpreters provided an invaluable service in making our patients comfortable during this stressful time. The patients were frightened but very grate-

ful to be considered for surgery. Many had heard about our team through church announcements, posters and at their doctor's offices.

Once the surgeon had examined the patient and the patient was found to be acceptable for surgery, the patient was taken to the Social Services Department to negotiate a fee with the hospital for the surgery and post-operative care. The amount was determined by what the patient could afford. No one was ever turned away due to lack of resources. A consent form was then signed, and the patient was taken to the recovery room where they were seen by the anesthetist. They were then prepped, IV's were started and were taken to the Operating Room. Many of our surgeries were performed under spinal anesthesia. The focus of our team was on General Surgery and Gynecology. We performed many hernia repairs, open cholecystectomies, varicose vein stripping and ligations, and hysterectomies.

We had a local Guatemalan surgeon assisting with many of the general surgery cases. The local doctors and nurses were very keen to learn and we were excited to teach. We encouraged them to practice their English while we struggled to perfect our Spanish. At times when we didn't understand each other we discovered that sign language was quite universal.

When the case was over the local orderlies were responsible for clean-up of the room, while we took

Author

Kim McLennan-Robbins is a Staff Nurse, General Surgery, University of Alberta Hospitals, Edmonton, Alberta, and currently President-Elect of the Operating Room Nurses of Alberta Association.



For months preceding the trip we collected donations of surgical supplies. Processing and packing for 2 weeks of surgery was done with the direction of Heather Perl our nursing organizer.

Our team of surgeons, anethetists, Operating Room and Recovery Room Nurses unpack some of the 50-odd suitcases and boxes of surgical supplies upon arrival in
 ◀ Antigua, Guatemala.

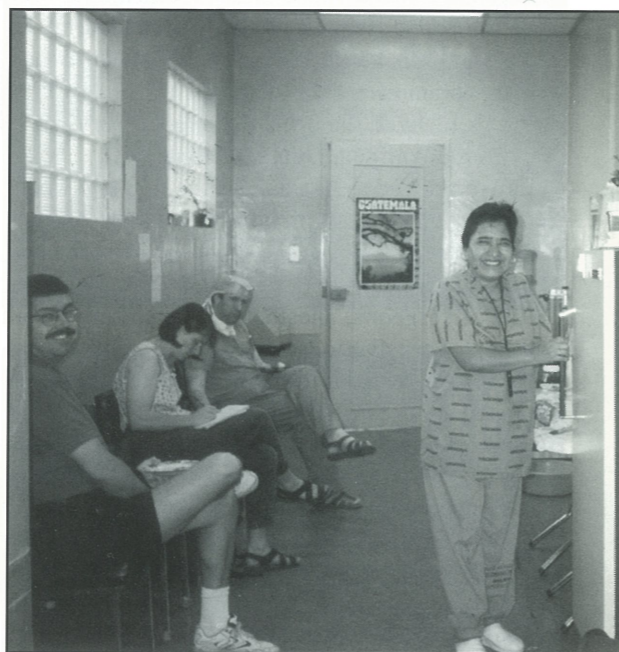
Dolores, the Guatemalan Registered Nurse manages the Hospital's ORs with great efficiency. ▼

the patient to the Recovery Room. Our team of seven Recovery Room nurses were assisted by a registered nurse from Chicago who had been helping in the Antigua hospital for one year. She was fluent in Spanish and was a great asset. After the patients recovered, they were transferred to the ward where they stayed in two large twelve-bed rooms. The surgeons did rounds twice a day.

While the operating room was changed over we had a break in a small lounge where we were treated to many local specialties from the kitchen. Each day we had fresh baked bread, refried beans, meat dishes, and plentiful trays of fresh tropical fruit. After a quick break it was on to the next case. At the end of nine days of surgery we had done almost one hundred cases.

Our surgeons were available to the staff of the hospital at night if the need arose. We had one patient who had a problem with intra-operative hemorrhage, and one of our anethetists and Recovery Room nurses remained with her continuously. The camaraderie of our team became very evident when working with this patient. When she had to return to the Operating Room to have the bleeding controlled, every member of the team present at the hospital that day was close by to lend support and suggestions. It was also a group victory when she was discharged home two days before we left to return to Canada.

On the weekend between our two weeks of surgery we were able to do a little bit of sight-seeing. A group of us flew from Guatemala City north to Tikal to see the Mayan ruins. We all had a great time hiking and exploring the ruins despite the 41 degree Celsius temperature. We stayed at the Jungle Lodge, and had an enjoyable weekend.



Many of us also experienced our first earthquake. At dinner on the second night we felt the tremor which lasted eighteen seconds. The quake measured 5.4 on the Richter Scale with the epicenter being one hundred miles away. Close enough for all of us!

Our last night included a group dinner with all of the staff from the hospital. It was a fun, but sad evening as we all said our good-byes. It was very emotional for us when Father Jose, the head of the hospital came and spoke to us. He explained that he could give us nothing but his thank you on behalf of himself and the patients. He said everyone would always be grateful and they would hold us in their thoughts and prayers. I know that the grati-



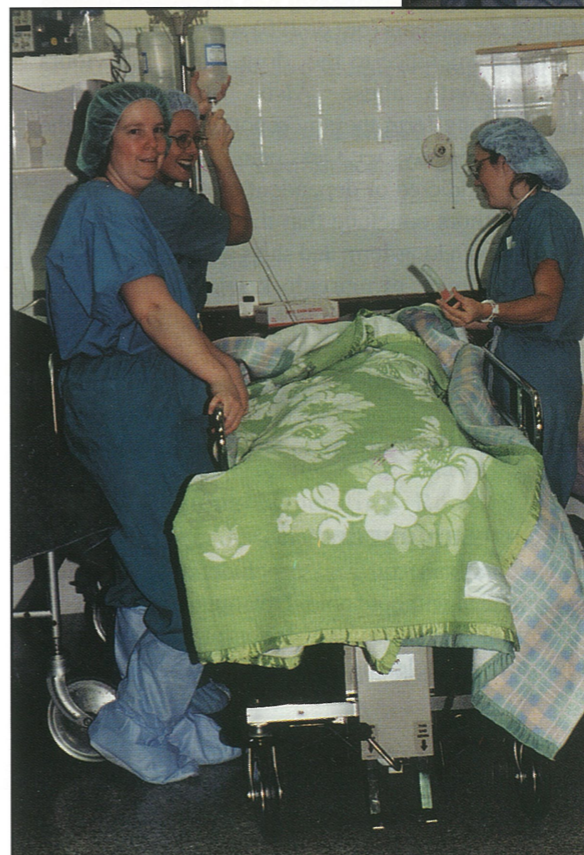
▲ Kim receives a *thank you* from Father Jose.



▲ The gang visits the Mayan Ruins in Tikal.

The focus of our team was on general surgery & gynecology. We performed many hernia repairs, varicose vein stripping and ligations, hysterectomies and open cholecystectomies. In nine days we performed some 100 cases. ▶

Recovery Room in Guatemala. Author Kim McLennan-Robbins is shown (left, forefront). ▼



tude of the people will be held in our hearts forever.

The cost of the trip was approximately \$1000 for airfare and about \$500 for the hotel which consists of four beautifully decorated houses which slept six to seven people. The gardens and pool area of the hotel were beautifully laid out, and were a popular gathering place for all of us to compare stories at the end of the day. An income tax receipt was received for airfare and days worked as a charitable donation.

The experience with Poco-a-Poco was one I will never forget and one I hope to repeat in the near future. ■

Poco-a-Poco Contact:

For more information contact: Heather Perl, Operating Room, Misericordia Hospital, Edmonton, Alberta. Tel: (780) 930-5863.