

FRONTLINE

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Alumni Spotlight

Pia Love
BSN 2002

CON Series:
Rural Nurse
Network

Save the Date:
Alumni
Weekend

New Scholarship:
Julie and Gerald
Abraham



Pia Love (BSN, '02) selected to present at APNA 2024 Alumna to share innovations in psychiatric nursing at conference

Pia Love, BSN '02, was selected to present at the annual American Psychiatric Nurses Association (APNA) conference held in September 2024. Love will present a poster discussing innovations in psychiatric nursing practice to bridge the knowledge-to-practice gap for implementing new treatments.

The presentation's main priority is to renew minds on what tools are available for psychiatric nurses, including tools and practices for a nurse's own mental health and wellbeing. Love says that sharing different techniques for helping people, not just in a hospital setting, but also for fellow nurses, will improve all around care.

Love aims to address the gap between knowledge and implementation with her presentation. The gap exists in bedside practice, personal wellbeing practice, and, for Love, continuing education decisions for nurses.

Love explained that she recently received notice from a nursing governing board that she was practicing outside her scope performing behavioral therapy. However, Love had received a certification as a cognitive behavioral therapy psychiatric nurse practitioner.

"The board member told me to stop what I was doing for business. It was a learning opportunity because she didn't know [about it]," said Love. "No one has a license as a cognitive behavioral therapy practitioner."

The board and Love found common understanding once it was cleared that Love was practicing within her scope. It still showed Love an opportunity to educate nurses about certifications and licensures that could enhance their nursing degrees outside of higher education.

Love found a calling in psychiatric nursing. She excelled at all psychiatric courses during her BSN studies. She found a comfort in psychiatric practice, especially as she applied her battle with mental health issues to her studies. Following her program, Love suffered the loss of her mother. Her passing took a mental toll on Love that was nearly debilitating.

"She was my number one support," said Love. "She was the person that pushed me to go to nursing school. When she died, I didn't really know what to do. My mind was just gone."

Love made significant effort to cope with her grief as she prioritized keeping her mental health intact. With time, she learned to live with grief and share her mental health practices with fellow nurses. She saw an opportunity with this knowledge sharing to establish her

own business. The organization aims to make positive impacts on mental health education, consultation, and establishing therapeutic communication options for healthcare professionals and the general public. Love witnessed many instances of nurses not prioritizing wellness for themselves and others. In order to properly care for patients, Love believes that taking care of oneself greatly improves your patient care. This also includes taking care of fellow nurses and prioritizing civility.

"We can help people in a variety of ways with the foundations of nursing that we have," said Love. "We just need to do it, even amongst ourselves because incivility has huge implications."

Love attributes her leadership skills to her education at MSU. Love was highly involved with student affairs during her undergraduate studies. From serving on student nursing committees to engaging with Sigma Theta Tau, she immersed herself in the academic challenges of the nursing program.

Love is forever grateful for the mentorship of Drs. Renee Canady, Clarissa Shavers, and Mary Jo Arndt. They empowered Love to embrace her calm, cool personality in her nursing care.



Pia Love, BSN '02, visits the Bott Nursing Building. Love was selected to give the commencement speech for the summer 2024 pinning ceremony, following up her commencement speech from her own graduation in 2002.

"Spartans will, and that how I feel about life," said Love. "I will, no matter what, no matter who. Be proud of yourself."

Rural Nurse Network: The only game in town

Mindy Turchin, BSN '17, provides healthcare to Yoopers



Mindy Turchin (BSN, '17) cares for ER patient in Escanaba, MI.

Cross the Mackinac Bridge, head west and Michigan's Upper Peninsula is a painting come to life: Deep blue waves crashing on the shoreline to the left and a seemingly endless formation of green forest to the right. Small mom-and-pop buildings selling the culinary sta-

ple of the north — pasties — litter the two-lane highway, U.S. 2, en route to Escanaba, a town of 12,000 located a short jaunt southwest of the Hiawatha National Forest.

"It's a beautiful area," said Mindy Turchin, BSN '17, a registered nurse who works in the Emergency Department at the OSF St. Francis Escanaba Hospital. "We do have a lot of things to offer families and people, recreational wise. The sense of community is huge here."

But with that beauty comes a price: Access to healthcare is not abundant in the area. The Escanaba hospital is the only one for at least 50 miles in any direction, which means it pulls in a wide variety of patients from the more developed town of Escanaba as well as its many rural neighbors.

"Even driving through the U.P., you can look around, you can see it looks typical like everywhere else," Turchin said. "What we do see, though, with health care are people that are in our surrounding areas that don't jump out ... who live here, live in the woods, don't have running water, don't have electricity, and haven't had health care in 30 years that come in.

"You stabilize them in the ER but then (it's like) how can we help the quality of their life outside of there?"

That can force nurses like Turchin, who grew up in Escanaba, to adjust their approach to treatment, including identifying a long-term health care provider so the patient has support beyond discharge from the hospital. The level IV trauma center is often the first — and only — place patients in the area can go to for significant health issues. It is also home to the area's only flight medic crew and landing pad. In all, more than 18,000 people come into the hospital's Emergency Department each year. Turchin started at the hospital in 2012, after earning her associate's degree in nursing from a local community college. She previously had earned a degree in human resources from MSU and lived downstate for a period but realized health care — and Escanaba — were where she belonged. After a few years in her role, she wanted to further her education and enrolled in MSU's all-online RN to BSN program, earning her degree in 2017.

"The RN to BSN program through Michigan State University is completely online," Turchin said. "It allowed me to jump from my associates degree to my bachelor's degree in a relatively short amount of time while doing it from home, six hours away from where the campus actually is, which made it convenient.

"I was an adult already working full time, two children at home. It made that transition a lot easier for me to do. I could still enjoy my family life, but still pursue my education and do things for myself as well."

Turchin appreciated her program's faculty getting to know the students.

"I felt like I knew the faculty a little better," she said of choosing the Michigan State University College of Nursing, which has nursing students in clinical rotations in most of the state's counties. "They got to know you a little more on a personal basis. They ask you more personal questions. I felt like many of them knew my kids' names and knew what they were into, and it just makes them more approachable."

With two kids, a husband and a full-time job in health care, Turchin keeps busy but said she won't rule out an advanced degree in her future. One thing is for certain: Turchin can't picture herself anywhere else.

"I am a part of bringing quality care to Yoopers."

Have you register for
CON Alumni Weekend?

2024

Reunion
Celebration

Homecoming
Tailgate

Class of 1974, 1984, 1994, 2004, and 2014 are invited to the Reunion Celebration. All CON alumni are invited to participate in Alumni Weekend over MSU's Homecoming. If you are interested in attending, contact the **CON Advancement Office** at con.adv@msu.edu.

Caring for Those Who Care for Us

Abrahams open \$500k endowed scholarship for nursing students

Gerald “Jerry” (MSU, 1976) and Julie Abraham are turning a lifetime of health struggles into positive impact with a new scholarship to the MSU College of Nursing. The Abrahams are dedicating a \$500,000 endowed scholarship to support nursing students who desire to serve as advocates for their patients.

Julie and Jerry have seen their fair share of hospital rooms during their marriage. Julie has spent most of her life battling pancreatitis, primary biliary cholangitis (PBC), and their related complications. Checking into the hospital for a pancreatic flare up became the norm for Julie and Jerry. Julie recalls their family found a routine with the hospital stays with the help of Julie’s gastroenterologist nurse, Margo, who was always her first call when she or Jerry had questions.

“For about nine years, I would have to go into the hospital every six weeks,” said Julie. Through all the hospital trips, Julie and Jerry maintained a great rapport with the medical professionals. The nurses made a deep impact on their family, offering empathy and education whenever they needed it.

“The education we received from the nurses was huge,” said Jerry. “It wasn’t just the patient they were teaching; they also taught their support and family.”

A day finally arrived when Julie would receive a Whipple procedure, meant to remove a dying portion of her pancreas.

Five days after the successful procedure, Julie was not getting pain relief as she should and realized the pump delivering pain medication had turned off.

“I was in excruciating pain. I tried to keep telling people that I was in pain, but it didn’t register with anyone that the pump was off,” said Julie.

Enter Bernice, a long-time nurse covering Julie’s recovery unit. Bernice corrected the malfunctioning pain pump, and she took extra time to offer emotional support. Bernice stayed in Julie’s room for two hours calming her down from the depressing pain.



College of Nursing
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Michigan State University College of Nursing
Life Science Building,
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“Without her support and understanding, I may not have made it through that day,” said Julie.

After the procedure, Julie began seeking new ways to manage her recovery and health. In addition to traditional medicine she received from her long-time primary care team, she began working with Dr. Dorothy (Robin) Pedtke (D.O., 1999) at the Born Clinic, owned by Dr. Tammy Born Huizenga (D.O., 1986). There Dr. Pedtke and Dr. Born Huizenga began to administer functional medicine to Julie. Dr. Pedtke noticed that Julie’s traditional gastroenterology testing was not offering insight to why Julie was feeling weak, despite maintaining Whipple-safe fitness regimens.

“I and everyone assumed that my symptoms were just complications from the Whipple,” said Julie. “Robin decided to do new testing to see how my body was accepting nutrients.”

This round of testing, coupled with her regular blood testing, revealed that Julie’s PBC had worsened after several years, only being exposed by nutrient testing.

Julie received a liver transplant on October 31, 2015 at Indiana University (IU) Health University Hospital. While in the hospital recovering, Michigan State football was playing the University of Maryland. Julie requested that she be updated as frequently as possible on the score of the football game, which the nurses happily obliged to.

Julie was having additional follow-up procedures completed. “Before I woke up from the procedure, the nurses wrote the score of that week’s game on my wristband,” said Julie. “They even wrote it on the white board in my room for everyone because I kept asking about it each time I woke up.”

Julie and Jerry continue to manage all these health concerns with the assistance of physicians and nurses across the state. A nurse at her primary care office, named Kathy, is always ready to take her call when she or Jerry have questions.

“Kathy taught me how to do it all [managing pancreatitis at home] with as little struggle as possible,” said Julie.

Jerry and Julie want to continue preparing future nurses to advocate for their patients through education and support. They benefitted greatly from the empathy offered by Bernice, the attentiveness offered by the IU Health University Hospital staff, and the education offered by every nurse they’ve interacted with. Through all the struggles they faced, Julie and Jerry know that “nursing will always be there.”

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