

Future Nurses Club—

Introducing Nursing to High School Students

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TODAY we have one nurse to 15,000 of the population in India when compared to 1,55,000, fifteen years ago.* An increasing interest is being shown by Governmental and other agencies to expand the existing programmes and to produce more trained nurses. The demand for more and better trained nurses will however continue far into the future. The number of applicants to Schools of Nursing might be considered to have risen considerably. Students are being drawn from a larger number of communities. The number of students with college education is gradually on the increase and perhaps, more students with better social status are coming into nursing at the present time.

Despite all these, does recruitment of students still remain a problem to some of the smaller Schools of Nursing? Could even the larger schools who are fortunate enough to attract a higher number of applicants be content with the calibre of the candidates who enter their schools? How many of these come into a School of Nursing with little understanding of what the profession involves? How many of them are faced with dissatisfactions and frustrations because of the wrong choice made? While some may withdraw from the School, others unfortunately continue to endure the dissatisfactions through the years of training.

Therefore, recruiting a sufficient number of desirable candidates to Nursing is an essential function of every School of Nursing. It could be considered a function of the professional organization too. There is very little evidence of any

planned programmes in our country for this purpose.

The National League for Nursing in the United States has a "Committee on Careers", which sponsors many programmes on State and National level, towards creating interest in Nursing. The "Future Nurses Club" is one such and is rather a unique and a very stimulating organization. The members of the club are High School students who have an interest in nursing. Membership is usually restricted to students in the last two years of High School—equivalent to Vth and VIth form. The School Nurse or the Counsellor often acts as the faculty Adviser.

The purpose of the Club is "To provide a setting in which young people, who are interested in nursing, can meet together to share that interest and explore the opportunities and requirements in the field". The future Nurses Clubs in the United States date back as early as 1920, but the largest number of clubs have been organized since 1950. Today there are 1400 or more clubs. Some have developed independently, while the others are sponsored by Women's Auxiliaries to the Medical Societies, Nurse Recruitment Committees, Hospital Auxiliaries, and a variety of civic and social organizations.

The programme includes meetings, projects and field trips which are planned with an attempt to meet the objectives of the club and the interest of the members. Distinguished and prominent nurses are invited to speak about various aspects of nursing. Discussions are held on subjects which may be studied in High School that might serve as pre-requisites to nursing education. Film and skits on nurs-

ing are shown to the entire school and this stimulates interest in other students to become club members. An Alumnae of the High School who is in nursing training may be invited to speak at a club meeting.

Making hospital supplies or toys for children, dressing up dolls in various types of nurses uniforms, are some of the interesting projects of the club. The club members assist the School Nurse in health service and attend classes on Home Nursing and First Aid. They volunteer for emergencies in the school and render their services in "Homes for the Aged", and assist with writing letters or in reading for patients.

The field trips provide an opportunity for the girls to see nurses at work in various fields of nursing. Visits to Health Centres, Hospitals, Schools of Nursing, Nursery Schools and Rehabilitation Centres are part of the programme.

A visit to one of these clubs while in the United States and seeing it in action, has prompted me to write this article. The programme for the day was "Nursing around the World". Graduate nurses from different countries, studying at a College of Nursing were invited to speak on nursing in their own country. The Club members took the lead in conducting the meeting and in organizing the programme. A display of dolls dressed in nurses uniform with various types of caps was one of the outstanding exhibits.

Studies have shown that a large percentage of students belonging to the Future Nurses Club often go into nursing and complete the course successfully, although some become convinced during their experience in the club that nursing

*Rajkumari Amritkaur "Address to the Skidmore Nursing College, New York". *The Nursing Journal of India*, LII (June, 1961), pp. 150-151.

is not the profession for them. The latter again is an useful purpose served by the Club as it saves valuable time both for the Nursing School and the student.

What are the prospects of launching any such programmes in our country? High schools in our country have set apart a day, which might probably be called a "career day", and students are taken to visit hospitals and other institutions, depending upon the interest expressed by the students but schools which recognize such a need are indeed limited in number.

The student nurses units in various areas could perhaps take the lead and organize activities for the high school girls. Some representatives from high School

classes may be invited to the nursing students' function. Conducted tours through the hospital, nursing students' residence and the School of Nursing may offer an opportunity to see the all round life of a nursing student. Graduate nurses can help with classes on Home Nursing and First Aid in High Schools, which is already being done in certain places. An approach to the parents, which is rather essential in our country, could be made through a body like the Parent Teachers Association.

A project for the S.N.A. that may be suggested is a competition in preparing a suitable pamphlet, with attractive captions and pictures illustrating the important aspects of nursing. These pamphlets could

be made available to high schools and colleges and preferably distributed following a talk on Nursing.

The beginning may seem small but educating the public, the prospective students and their parents on Nursing, should be considered a worthwhile project by our professional organization at District, State and National level. The Future Nurses Club is one of the many avenues to achieve this purpose.

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The Responsibilities of a Professional Nurses' Association for the Improvement of Nursing Service

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ing fight for recognition of the right of women to enter professions, remember that in some parts of the world today where our colleagues live, this fight has or may only just have got under way. Our international responsibilities, therefore, demand of us great knowledge, great sympathy and great understanding.

The Responsibility of the Association for the Future.

Many of you will recall the Jubilee Issue of the *International Nursing Review* and its headings—"The Past is Inspiring; The Future is Challenging; The Present is Our Responsibility." Let me adapt these for the purpose of this section and end this note, the future is our responsibility.

Nothing is static and we cannot, therefore, afford to stand still. Yours is the responsibility for the

future, individually and collectively; in your individual work, in your institutions and in your national associations. To achieve improvement of nursing services, awareness of responsibility is the first prerequisite, assessment is the next, action towards carrying the responsibility out, is the next.

Let me suggest that here, in this Section, we have an opportunity to assess our responsibility for the improvement of nursing service, and that here, too, we may discuss together the means of carrying it out.

Summary

In this paper provision of nursing service is noted as the chief aim of the nursing profession.

The variety of aims of professional associations are considered, and the economic aim is mentioned.

The need for unity is stressed

and the dangers of fragmentation in the nursing profession due to various causes, are outlined.

Communication and communicating are discussed.

Sound ethical practice and leadership are advocated.

International responsibilities and responsibility for the future are pointed out.

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