



FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

Christine E. Lynn
College of Nursing



Community Engagement Report

FY 2024-2025

A Message from Dean Cameron Duncan



Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing's impact on the lives of residents in surrounding communities and beyond is clearly evident in the primary and behavioral care provided to individuals of all ages. From health fairs to comprehensive services offered to patients at our clinics in West Palm Beach and Boca Raton, clinicians, staff, faculty and nursing students are expanding access to care to vulnerable populations.

The nurse-led FAU/NCHA Community Health Center, a designated Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) Look-Alike, has on average more than 5,400 visits from patients each year, most of whom are without insurance and reporting incomes at or below the poverty level. The Louis and Anne Green Memory and Wellness Center, a state-designated Memory Disorder Clinic under the State of Florida's Department of Elder Affairs' Alzheimer's Disease Initiative, offers services ranging from medical and neuropsychological examinations, art therapy, wildlife visits to group storytelling, and adult day care programs for patients and caregivers.

Our highly trained students also provide obesity, diabetes and blood pressure screenings, and other services for individuals with limited access to care at health and education fairs throughout south Florida. Twice a year, students and faculty are fulfilling a need in remote areas of Guatemala as part of a study abroad program where hundreds of patients receive primary care services they may not otherwise have access to in the region. We are determined to ensure the college's caring philosophy extends to those who rely on these services to improve their health and well-being.

Much of our work would not be possible without the support of the college's Advisory Board, community partners and donors who are committed to helping students achieve their goals and apply their skills and knowledge locally and across the globe. We are grateful for their confidence in our ability to meet an increasing demand for health care services.



Meet our Director of Development



Jillian Baker joined the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing as its director of development in May 2025. As the daughter of a nurse, she is excited to support the college's goals to enhance student success, faculty initiatives and community engagement.

For the past five years, Baker has served as a director of development at the University of Nevada, Reno. While she primarily worked with the Orvis School of Nursing, she also assisted the School of Social Work, School of Public Health and College of Liberal Arts at different points with development. In her last year there, Baker tripled fundraising for the Orvis School of Nursing.

Baker's career began in New York City at American Corporate Partners, an organization providing aid to service members and veterans entering the civilian workforce. She initially facilitated mentorships before helping build their initial fundraising team. As an English major, she fell in love with hearing people's stories, learning about their passions and establishing connections to the mission's needs.

Baker earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in English writing and history from the University of Nevada, Reno, and a Master of Arts degree in East Asian studies from the University of Virginia. She also lived in Taipei, Taiwan for two years to learn Mandarin Chinese, so the Florida summer has not been too overwhelming during this transition. Baker is eager to expand support for the college, and she looks forward to getting to know more about Florida Atlantic and surrounding communities.



Memory and Wellness Center Enhances Community Partnerships

The Louis and Anne Green Memory and Wellness Center (MWC), a component of the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing, serves as a dynamic hub for clinical care and student training.

Supported by an annual award from the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, MWC's integrated model of care strengthens the health and well-being of individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD), their caregivers and the professionals who serve them.

"As a State of Florida–designated Memory Disorder Clinic, the MWC maintains referral partnerships with over 170 local primary care providers and neurologists, ensuring timely and coordinated access to cognitive health services," said Dr. Alice W. Brumley, the center's interim director.

The center's strong regional networks include Baptist Marcus Neuroscience Institute, Broward Health North, Holy Cross Health, ARC Broward, and the University of Miami Comprehensive Center for Brain Health. Additionally, the MWC collaborates with Thema Brain Health, located at Florida Atlantic University Research Park, to explore innovative treatment options and support client access to cutting-edge research and care.



"These collaborations allow MWC to deliver grant-supported services, caregiver education, clinical scholarships, and inclusive dementia care for a wide range of individuals," Dr. Brumley stated.

A valued partnership with Baptist Health South Florida and Boca Raton Regional Hospital has provided MWC with essential scholarship funding to support access to clinical and Adult Day Center services for individuals and families.

In 2024, MWC was awarded a \$1.3 million grant from the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL) to expand dementia services into Broward County, including at the Florida Atlantic University Davie campus.



This initiative supports the delivery of REACH Community, an evidence-based caregiver intervention, as well as services for individuals living alone with or at risk for dementia, and dementia-specific training for health care staff providing care to those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Memory and Wellness Center Enhances Community Partnerships



The MWC's outreach team actively participates in health fairs, public lectures and wellness events throughout Palm Beach and Broward Counties. In spring 2025 alone, staff conducted brain health presentations at public libraries, exhibited at multiple community expos, and led discussions with city leaders on dementia education for businesses. Weekly caregiver support groups, offered both virtually and soon in-person, serve as a lifeline for families navigating dementia-related challenges.

In FY 2024–25, the center hosted 72 students across clinical placements, reflecting a 12% increase from the previous year, including from Florida Atlantic's nursing, education, and psychology programs, as well as Nova Southeastern University's students.

Interdisciplinary experiences include Spanish immersion students supporting cognitive engagement with Adult Day Center participants, holistic nursing students exploring non-pharmacological techniques to improve behavioral symptoms of dementia, and urban planning students studying the design of dementia-friendly spaces.



Louis and Anne Green Memory and Wellness Center Community Events

- Dr. Alice Brumley, interim director of the Louis and Anne Green Memory and Wellness Center, was the keynote speaker at the Boca Raton Chamber of Commerce Southeast Health Advocacy Network meeting on March 19, 2025. The topic was Healthy Aging. Dean Cameron Duncan opened the meeting with highlights about the College of Nursing.



- The Share Your Caring Heart Campaign held on Sunday, April 27, 2025, at the Cove Brewery in Deerfield Beach raised over \$18,000. Proceeds from the event supported caregiver programs and provided day care center scholarships for participants of the Louis and Anne Green Memory and Wellness Center.



- The Caring Hearts Auxiliary of Florida Atlantic University's Louis and Anne Green Memory and Wellness Center raised more than \$85,000 during the 18th annual "Keep Memories Alive" Walk-in-the-Mall on Sunday, Nov. 3, 2024. Many supporters turned out to participate in the event held at the Town Center in Boca Raton, including Mayor Scott Singer.



Community Health Center Extends Services and Builds New Partnerships

The nurse-led Florida Atlantic University Northwest Community Health Alliance (FAU/NCHA) Community Health Center is providing primary and behavioral health services to a growing number of residents in West Palm Beach through outreach and partnerships.



In collaboration with the Florida Department of Health, the center is addressing a high burden of heart disease in the local community with free blood pressure screenings. Clinicians and nursing students are meeting with residents to increase health literacy around lifestyle changes and medication adherence. Patients could also monitor their blood pressure at home with cuffs provided at no charge.

The center has also established a partnership with Cologuard®, a non-invasive, at-home testing service for colon and rectal cancer. Health care workers have found that the convenience of at-home testing eliminates barriers like taking time off from work or undergoing more invasive procedures. As a result, staff at the center have increased the screening rate at no cost to its uninsured clients, especially among those who were reluctant to undergo traditional colonoscopies.

The center, led by Clinic Director Dr. Monica Roundtree Cleckley, provides a lifeline for West Palm Beach residents, almost one quarter of whom are uninsured. All patients receive health care services regardless of their ability to pay.

“Being able to serve those in our communities who may be overlooked or uninsured and seeing the positive outcomes directly related to the care they experience is truly fulfilling,” shared Dr. Cleckley.

College of Nursing students are heavily involved with FAU/NCHA Community Health Center’s two clinics in West Palm Beach. Hands-on learning and practical experiences allow students to apply theory and class instructions to real-life situations, as well as learn about the importance of teamwork and collaboration with other health care providers and organizations.



Community Health Center Extends Services and Builds New Partnerships

In 2025, community outreach events included the annual Celebrate Westgate Community Event held on April 13, which attracted more than 1,500 people. Clinic staff and faculty provided blood pressure, BMI and mental health screenings. Staff and students also conducted free health screenings at the Campbell Health Expo on Feb. 28, the Black Family Expo at Inlet Grove-Riviera Beach on March 1 and the Community Care Health & Wellness Expo at the U.B. Kinsey Educational and Community Center on May 17. Palm Beach County Commissioner Bobby Powell Jr. greeted local residents and participated in the screenings. As part of a partnership with BRIDGES of West Palm Beach, the center hosts "House Calls with FAU" on the first Wednesday of the month via Zoom.



Community Health Center Extends Services and Builds New Partnerships

2024 Impact

5,417
TOTAL PATIENT VISITS

65.2% UNINSURED OR MEDICAID ENROLLED PATIENTS

\$3,144
NCHA SAVINGS PER PATIENT VISIT
COMPARED TO AVERAGE FLORIDA ER VISITS

94% PATIENTS BELOW 200% POVERTY LEVEL

"The FAU Community Health Center is transforming the lives of young adults by making overall health and mental well-being the top priority."

BRITTNEY ASHLEY, DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, VITA NOVA

"Our partnership with the FAU/NCHA Community Health Center has been a beautiful extension of our shared commitment to whole-person care. At FLITE Center, we serve youth who carry deep emotional and physical wounds, and this collaboration has helped us nurture their healing journeys from the inside out. Together, we're not just meeting medical needs—we're creating safe spaces where young people feel seen, valued, and supported in every part of their wellness."

AYESHA WILLIAMS, VICE PRESIDENT OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS, FLITE CENTER

- The Florida Atlantic University Northwest Community Health Alliance (FAU/NCHA) Community Health Center in West Palm Beach was pleased to welcome Congresswoman Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick on Oct. 24, 2024.



- Nursing faculty and staff joined the toy drive in support of the YMCA of South Palm Beach County. Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing's Committee on Students and supporters of the FAU/NCHA Community Health Center donated toys for families in the local community, Dec. 2024.



College of Nursing Veterans Recognized at Women in Military Service Event

In a moving tribute to the dedication, courage and sacrifices of women in uniform, Florida Atlantic University hosted a commemorative Women Veterans Recognition Day celebration on June 12, 2025, at the Delray Genesis Club at Flagler Credit Union Stadium on the Boca Raton campus. The program was supported by Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing, Canines Providing Assistance to Wounded Warriors (C-P.A.W.W.), Athletics, the Military and Veterans Student Success Center and Veterans & Homefront Voices, and Vets & Allies Storytelling.



More than 100 attendees – including students, faculty, veterans, community leaders and military family members – gathered to recognize and celebrate women in military history and the challenges they continue to face today.

“Hosting Women Veterans Recognition Day at Florida Atlantic is more than a symbolic gesture – it is a necessary act of acknowledgment and gratitude,” said Dr. Cameron Duncan, dean of the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing.

Several women veterans took the stage to share deeply personal reflections on courage, leadership and resilience, including Dr. Marilyn “Dee” Ray, a distinguished nurse scholar, retired United States Air Force Colonel, and professor emeritus, and Dr. Candy Wilson, a retired U.S. Air Force Colonel and associate dean for nursing research and scholarship at Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing.

Ray served for 32 years in the Air Force Nurse Corps, including as a flight nurse during the Vietnam War, and is renowned for developing the Theory of Bureaucratic Caring. Currently, she focuses on aging and caring science at Florida Atlantic, working to improve care and reduce stigma for older individuals and those with memory challenges.

With a distinguished 30-year career in the U.S. Air Force, Wilson brought authenticity and inspiration to the event, drawing from her experiences both as a military nurse and a pioneering health care researcher.

“Women Veterans Recognition Day is a time to reflect on the courage, resilience and dedication of those who serve,” she said. “Service requires commitment, heart and sacrifice – not just from those in uniform, but from the families and communities who stand behind us.”



Nursing Students Bring Lifesaving Health Care to Rural Guatemala

Through a powerful blend of cultural immersion and hands-on clinical care, nurse practitioner students and faculty are making a lasting impact in rural Guatemala while deepening their own commitment to compassionate, patient-centered care.



The College of Nursing's study abroad program, which includes two annual trips, is a partnership with Nursing Heart, Inc., (NHI) a nurses-led community health organization providing care to rural and indigenous populations of Guatemala. From remote villages with limited medical access to makeshift clinics filled with long lines of patients, these unique experiences challenge students to grow as clinicians, embrace the values of empathy, and carry forward the college's caring philosophy.

In November 2024, the group treated residents in Santa Maria de Jesus, Sacatepéquez, and Los Magueyes, San Martín Jilotepeque, rural areas of the country. A total of 211 patients in the general clinic and 58 patients in the women's clinic were screened, including one treated for cervical cancer, which remains the number one killer of women of maternal age in Guatemala. During each trip to the country, nursing students provide cervical cancer screenings and other treatments.



In February 2025, 12 nursing students, led by Drs. Nancy Harris and Kathleen Kazdan, provided essential medical care in the village of Chi Don Juan in San Martín Jilotepeque and Sacatepéquez, Pastores. Over the course of the week, the team treated 514 patients, including 316 in the general clinic, 135 middle school students and 63 women who received cancer screenings, three of whom were treated for precancerous cells.

"Our students are exposed to diverse medical conditions in rural Guatemala, often with limited resources," Dr. Harris said. "The hands-on patient care strengthens their diagnostic and treatment abilities, while working in this low-resource setting fosters creativity and adaptability – essential skills for clinical practice."

Nursing Students Bring Lifesaving Health Care to Rural Guatemala

Engaging with Guatemalan communities broadens students' understanding of cultural influences on health, improving patient communication and care when they graduate and begin their practice.

"More importantly, directly witnessing inadequate access to care deepens our students' compassion and reinforces their commitment to patient-centered care," Dr. Harris noted.

"The college's caring philosophy is a perfect match with the caring that comes from Nursing Heart, Inc., the non-governmental organization we work with to provide care in Guatemala," Dr. Kazdan remarked. "We were proud of our hard-working students who treated each patient with love, kindness and respect."



Heidi Wills, a Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) student in the master's program who went to Guatemala in February 2025, called the trip "one of the most challenging yet rewarding experiences she had as a nurse."

"Being a part of the program left me with a profound appreciation not only for the comforts I often take for granted but also for the resilience of the patients I encountered," Wills said, adding that witnessing the strength and determination of Guatemalans to receive quality care reinforced the critical importance of their work.

For Baudelaire Duvert, another FNP master's student, the study abroad trip to Guatemala was a transformative moment in both his academic and professional journey. "That was my first trip to Guatemala, and hopefully I will be able to take part in 2026 as an APRN-certified volunteer."

Reflecting on the cultural contrasts between the U.S. and Guatemala, Duvert emphasized the humility and patience of the local residents. "We saw people waiting for hours before being seen, yet they remained respectful and grateful that someone had taken the time to care for them."

These moments, he said, reminded him that most health care professionals enter the field with a deep desire to help others.

Developing Meaningful Connections in the Glades

Hypertension, diabetes, anxiety, depression and cognitive screenings are among the services Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing faculty and students are providing to residents in the Glades, a rural region near Lake Okeechobee, Florida. With limited access to health care providers and clinics, the college is helping to fill gaps in care in the region.

“This partnership has made a significant impact, benefiting both the community and our students,” said Dr. Lisa Wiese. “By offering screenings and raising awareness about conditions that increase risk for Alzheimer’s disease, we’re helping residents take charge of their health. At the same time, our students develop critical skills and a sense of purpose by working directly with individuals and families in real-world settings.”

The work is part of the five-year grant that Dr. Wiese leads, which examines the effect of air quality and pollution on social isolation and cognitive function among the Lake Okeechobee residents, potentially leading to higher risk for Alzheimer’s. The effort is also grounded in Dr. Wiese’s National Institute on Aging/National Institutes of Health career development grant that established a local team of faith-based health educators to provide community health outreach.

The nurse-led Mobile Health Unit, part of the Caring-based Community and Academic Relationships for Excellence (CARE) grant funded by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and led by Dr. Beth King, provides primary and mental health services. The team, comprised of faculty and students, supports health fairs and works alongside the VA Fresh truck to provide nutrition services for local veterans.



“Providing care in the Glades goes beyond addressing immediate health needs; It creates meaningful connections between our students and the community,” said Dr. King, adding that when students engage directly with residents, they also gain a deeper understanding of the social and environmental factors that shape health outcomes.

Developing Meaningful Connections in the Glades

The team's outreach has included health screenings at the Greater Union Missionary Baptist Church in South Bay, Florida, the Greater South Florida Baptist Women's Conference Health Fair in Belle Glade and the Rotary Club Golf Tournament in the Glades. Students also screened participants for hypertension and provided medication management support at the West County Senior Center in Belle Glade and conducted blood pressure checks for seniors participating in Chair Yoga in the Glades. The CARE team conducted screenings at First Haitian Baptist Church Belle Glade and other events hosted by the Faith-Based Health Educators, Healthier Glades, Westgate Health Fair and Glades Ministerial Association.

Current community partners include Healthier Glades of Palm Beach County, the Diabetes Coalition of Palm Beach County, Pahokee Housing Authority, Lake Okeechobee Rural Health Network, Bridges of Belle Glade and Palm Health Care Foundation, Palm Beach County American Heart Association, Palm Beach Veteran Affairs Medical Center/Fresh Truck, The Salvation Army Palm Beach County, Vita Nova, YWCA Palm Beach County, West Palm Beach Housing Authority, and the Glades Area Ministerial Association.



College of Nursing Engages RNs at HCA Education Fairs

Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing Recruiter and Community Outreach Specialist Alyssa Ledwon met with attendees at HCA Palms West, Kendall and Woodmont hospital locations for their Education Fairs in March 2025. Alongside eight other universities, Ledwon shared information about the college's academic programs with Registered Nurses interested in pursuing bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees and certificates in different concentrations such as Nursing Administration and Financial Leadership, Adult/ Gerontological Nurse Practitioner, Nurse Educator and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner.

The fairs were open to all hospital staff and the community, and participants had an opportunity to ask questions and explore their educational options. Hospital employees collected informational materials and promotional items were raffled off as an interactive way to promote the college. HCA East Florida Division and Galen College of Nursing hosted the fairs for those seeking to advance their education, skills and knowledge.



Nursing Students Advocate for Expanded Opportunities, Resources

Every year, students advocate on behalf of the university for Florida Atlantic Day at the State Capitol. On Feb. 18, 2025, three Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing graduate students, Nicole Carty-Mullings, Zaysheron Keora Francis and Tracey Saint-Louis, joined a delegation of university leaders, students, alumni and elected officials in Tallahassee.

Together with Dean Cameron Duncan and Assistant Dean for Strategic Affairs and Public Engagement Suzanne Ffolkes, the group spent the day meeting with state legislators. While they spoke about the impressive impact the College of Nursing and students have across the state, they also shared meaningful insights on improving nursing education and health care for residents of all ages.



“It was an honor to represent Florida Atlantic and the College of Nursing at the State Capitol,” shared Keora Francis, a part-time Family Nurse Practitioner student. “It was an excellent chance to voice the needs of my fellow nursing students and future health care providers.

Saint-Louis, a BSN to DNP student, has already worked on the frontline of health care. Her career path includes providing mental health therapy throughout Broward County as a clinical social worker, and she has served as a Registered Nurse with the veteran population at the Miami Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center.

“Attending Florida Atlantic Day was an opportunity to offer up my personal encounters to help state legislators better understand today’s pressing dilemmas,” noted Saint-Louis. “When I met with House Representatives and Senators, I emphasized how crucial it is for students to have access to top-tier training facilities and resources in order for the college to equip the next generation of nurses to meet the changing needs of health care.”

Carty-Mullings, who is working toward a Ph.D. in nursing, serves as the clinical educator at the Miami VA Medical Center. Her primary responsibilities encompass developing and implementing educational programs for nursing staff, providing training and support, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of educational initiatives.



“Today, more than ever, nursing education requires significant funding for student scholarships, resources for clinical training and policies that support the growth of the nursing workforce, especially as we face ongoing shortages in health care,” expressed Carty-Mullings.

Student Nurses' Association Organizes Donation Drives

The Student Nurses' Association (SNA) demonstrates its commitment to leadership, service and community engagement throughout the year, earning national recognition and supporting fellow students through events, advocacy and outreach efforts.

"Community engagement helps nursing students grow as compassionate leaders while making a real difference beyond the classroom," said Dr. Wanda Morancy, SNA faculty advisor. From organizing donation drives and wellness events to representing the college at state and national conferences, SNA members play an active role in shaping a supportive and service-oriented student community.



Valerie Huber, one of the vice presidents for the group's 2025–2026 academic year, emphasized the importance of building a strong peer network for nursing students. She highlighted the success of the Hand-Me-Scrubs donation drive, which ran in April 2025 and collected scrubs, lab coats and polo shirts from graduating seniors.

"Thanks to the initiative, students have access to loaner scrubs each semester," she added. "It not only provides support during clinicals but also helps ease the financial burden of having to purchase an extra pair," she added.

The student organization also received the National Student Nurses Association's (NSNA) Stellar School Chapter Recognition at the NSNA conference in Seattle, WA, on April 12, 2025. The program recognizes NSNA school chapters for their ongoing involvement in NSNA and their commitment to shared governance and professional development.

"The convention was a great opportunity to learn, network and grow as professional nurses," said Dr. Morancy, who represented the college at the NSNA conference with freshman student Lilian Krechnyak. "Being named a Stellar School Chapter reflects our strong commitment to student engagement, shared governance and preparing the next generation of nurse leaders."



Earth Day at the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing

The Student Council and Student Nurses' Association partnered to host a special Earth Day event outside the college's Boca Raton building on April 22, 2025. The student-led initiative featured a rock painting activity open to nursing students, faculty and staff.

Dr. Katherine Heinze, faculty advisor for the Student Council, shared that the inspiration for the event came from the 2024 Anne Boykin Institute Summer Academy's theme of Earth Caring.

"College of Nursing faculty were encouraged to think about ways we could incorporate an earth caring activity on Earth Day," she explained.

Attendees gathered in the college's labyrinth and tropical garden area to express their creativity by painting rocks, enjoy the peaceful setting and connect with one another.

Dr. Heinze noted that the timing - just ahead of finals week - made the activity especially meaningful. "The students said it was the perfect way to take a break from studying and relieve some stress."

"I'm really proud of the way the students worked together to plan the rock painting," she added. "We have some amazing student leaders at the College of Nursing, and it's always a pleasure to support their work."



Florida Atlantic's Sigma Iota Xi Chapter Supports Community Through Service

Hosting wellness experiences for nurses and providing supplies for those in need are among the activities of Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing's Sigma Iota Xi At-Large Chapter.

Rooted in the values of Sigma Theta Tau International, the chapter prioritizes professional development, educational programming and service that supports both the nursing profession and the broader community.



In spring 2025, the chapter hosted Healing for Healers Night on February 13, a community-wide event presented in collaboration with the College of Nursing Initiative for Intentional Health and the Florida Nurses Association. Students, faculty, staff and guests participated in an evening of relaxation and self-care, with offerings such as aroma and sound therapy, Reiki, massage therapy and a reflective Labyrinth Walk.



In addition to promoting wellness, the chapter addressed pressing community needs through its Helping the Unhoused project. Hygiene items were collected at donation points located at the College of Nursing and Broward College. On April 30, chapter representatives delivered the supplies to the Caring Place/Miami Rescue Mission Broward Outreach Center.



"In a compassionate response to the growing needs of the unhoused community, members of the Iota Xi At-Large Chapter came together in an impactful show of solidarity and service," said Dr. Barbara Lovell-Martin, chapter president. "Generous donations from our members at both Broward College and Florida Atlantic University enabled us to provide essential supplies for those in need."

More than 50 hygiene kits were assembled and packed in the chapter's signature purple bags for easy distribution. The kits were filled with toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, conditioner and soap. Additional donations included socks, washcloths, and pull-ups – items that are often overlooked but greatly appreciated by those who receive them.

Nurses Christian Fellowship Embraces Service, Faith and Action

Members of Nurses Christian Fellowship (NCF) are blending spiritual growth with community outreach, offering students opportunities to serve with compassion and care.

Under the guidance of Assistant Professor and faculty advisor Dr. Mary Ann Leavitt, the organization participated in several service initiatives during the 2024–2025 academic year.

NCF members took part in the Light the Night Walk for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society in West Palm Beach in November 2024, joining others in raising awareness and support for patients with blood cancers.



“As nurses and nursing students, we witness the struggles of patients with blood diseases firsthand and are driven to make a difference,” said NCF President Sydney Gibbons. “By participating in the Light the Night fundraiser, we wanted to raise awareness about the change and hope that the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society is fostering.”

In December 2024, NCF students and faculty participated in Operation Christmas Child. “We collected and sent 20 boxes to Samaritan’s Purse to distribute to children in various countries,” shared Dr. Leavitt.

Gibbons added that outreach events help future nurses provide more patient-centered care by promoting health care access and advocacy while developing professional skills.

The group also volunteered twice at Boca Helping Hands, a local nonprofit serving families in need. During their visits, NCF students assisted with food distribution, sorting and packaging groceries, and preparing boxes of produce, dry goods, children’s toys and other essentials for up to 50 families.

“Community service is important for NCF because it allows us to turn faith into action by serving others with compassion, humility, and love,” Gibbons shared, adding that volunteering opportunities with Boca Helping Hands gave students a hands-on experience that cultivates empathy and understanding for those with various needs and challenges.

Student Outreach and Community Involvement

- College of Nursing faculty and students participated in the Men's Empowerment and Health Fair at Pahokee Elementary School on Saturday, June 8, 2024 providing health care access for rural and vulnerable communities. The CARE grant nurse-led Mobile Health Unit team offered free blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar screenings, as well as essential health information to residents.



- Doctor of Nursing Practice students Janeth Noguera Pardo and Cristina Calvo were recognized at the Palm Health Foundation's annual Scholarship Dinner on Nov. 2, 2024 at the Norton Museum of Art in West Palm Beach, for their project on Skin Cancer among African Americans in the Glades region of Florida.



- Family Nurse Practitioner and Adult Gerontological Nurse Practitioner students provided sports physicals to nearly 60 local students in St. Lucie County, helping ensure their readiness for the school year ahead.



- Nursing students volunteered at State Representative Patricia Williams' Annual Back-to-School event on August 17, 2024 in Broward County. They helped to distribute school supplies donated by the College of Nursing and other Florida Atlantic colleges and contributors for students in grades K - 12.



Student Outreach and Community Involvement

- Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing students joined Assistant Professor Dr. Hope Shaw for Plantation Goes Pink 5K event on October 13, 2024 to support breast cancer research and awareness.



- Dr. Theresa Gibson and Family Nurse Practitioner students conducted health screenings at the Jessica Clinton Know Your Heart event on November 16, 2024. Sponsored by the St. Lucie County Department of Health, over 500 children were screened for cardiac defects with EKGs, physical exams, and, if needed, echocardiograms.



- Family Nurse Practitioner students got into the spirit of Halloween with their young clients during pediatric physicals and lead screenings on October 31, 2024 at the Head Start Center in Riviera Beach and West Palm Beach.



Advisory Board Spearheads Fundraising Efforts

Each year, the college's Advisory Board raises funds for the Lamplighter and White Coat scholarships to help Bachelor of Science in Nursing students cover the cost of textbooks and supplies for their courses. The Lamplighter scholarship program recognizes the students' entry into the nursing profession as the lamp symbolizes the light that a nurse becomes to their patients while the White Coat ceremony confirms their compassion and professionalism within the field.

For more information, visit <https://fauf.fau.edu/funds/lamplighter-whitecoats/>

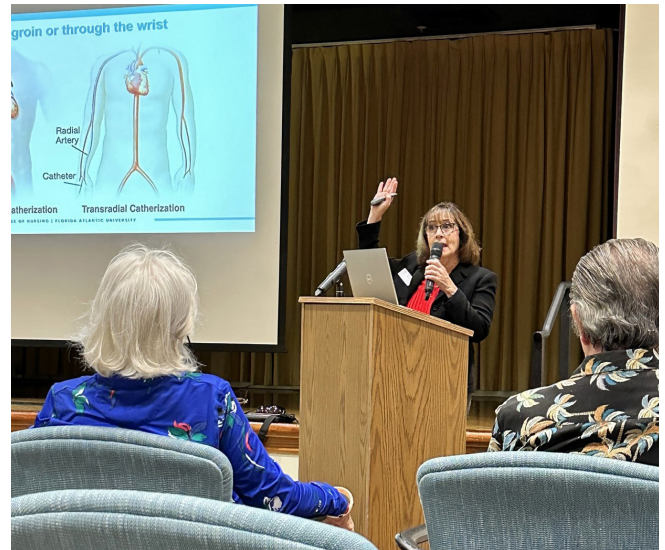


Faculty Share Health Insights with Abbey Delray South Residents

Faculty members are bringing health education directly to local residents through a series of presentations at Abbey Delray South, a senior living community located in Delray Beach, Florida.

Discussing topics ranging from cardiovascular disease and healthy aging to substance misuse and pandemic resilience, these talks offered older adults valuable knowledge and practical strategies to support their well-being.

Dr. Mary Ann Leavitt focused on cardiovascular disease in her presentation on July 16, 2024. She spoke about self-care in heart health and the symptom and treatment differences between a heart attack and heart failure. She also described her research with the College of Engineering to develop and test a wearable device to sense when patients with heart failure were having worsening symptoms.



"I love speaking to our local residents," Dr. Leavitt said. "Health care can be very rushed and sometimes patients do not understand their condition or the medications they are taking to treat it." She added that the part of the event when the audience gets to ask the researchers questions makes the experience more meaningful for all.



Dr. Lisa Wiese provided information on Healthy Aging during her presentation on August 13, 2024. She discussed key strategies for maintaining physical, mental and emotional well-being.

"Connecting our university faculty with local communities through outreach events is an effective avenue for informing residents of the most recent advances in health promotion and disease management," Dr. Wiese shared.

Upstream approaches through health prevention measures are the most effective way to empower residents to remain healthy, she added, which includes education and vaccinations, secondary screenings and proactive disease management.

Faculty Share Health Insights with Abbey Delray South Residents



Dr. Armiel Suriaga delivered a presentation on substance use and misuse on October 8, 2024, specifically highlighting opioid use among older adults.

“Having community outreach aimed at disseminating research findings on unhealthy substance use among older adults is an excellent opportunity to help them manage their pain, anxiety, or other clinical conditions,” Dr. Suriaga noted.

By understanding evidence-based interventions, including non-pharmacological treatments available to them, residents can discuss health-related issues with their providers more effectively, he added.

On November 12, 2024, Dr. Lenny Chiang-Hanisko and Dr. Patricia Liehr presented their research on how older adults bounced back from COVID-19.

“It is our responsibility as researchers to share what we learn with those who took the time to participate in our research and to engage the community in dialogue about what we discovered,” said Dr. Liehr.

Drs. Liehr and Chiang-Hanisko learned that while many residents experienced anxiety and depression during the pandemic, they also had a newfound gratitude for life and reevaluated their personal values and goals, focusing on healthier lifestyles and “living life to the fullest.”



Dr. Kelley Jackson spoke about brain health and its effects on driving for older adults on June 9, 2025. She shared helpful tips to stay mentally sharp and offered attendees an opportunity to participate in a driving study that explores how brain changes impact driving performance.

Results of the study will be used to improve a tool to predict when a person’s cognitive functioning may interfere with safe driving.

Faculty and Staff Outreach and Community Involvement

- College of Nursing faculty and students participated in the Greater South Florida Baptist Women's Conference Health Fair in Belle Glade on Oct. 12, 2024. The team shared health information with local residents and conducted diabetes and blood pressure screenings.



- Dr. Nancy Harris was deployed to a special needs shelter as a member of the Medical Reserve Corps of St. Lucie County, where she served as a triage nurse during Hurricane Milton in October 2024.



- Louis and Anne Green Memory and Wellness Center Interim Director Dr. Alice Brumley served as a panelist to discuss "Preparing for the Silver Tsunami" during the South Florida Regional Planning Council event on Nov. 15, 2024.



- FAU/NCHA Community Health Center Clinic Director Dr. Monica Cleckley was the guest speaker for the NAACP Chapter's 13th annual Red Ball Affair on Nov. 20, 2024, which raised awareness for HIV/AIDS. The chapter's Education Chair Olivia Page and Community Health Center Board Member Carla Davis were among the attendees.



Faculty and Staff Outreach and Community Involvement

- Dean Cameron Duncan joined Christine E. Lynn, Honorary Chair of The Rotary Club of Boca Raton's Opal Awards, to celebrate this year's class of honorees at the Boca West Country Club on Jan. 11, 2025.



- Drs. Lisa Wiese and Christine Williams spoke to older adults at Royal Palm Beach Library on Jan. 8, 2025 about "Brain Health in Later Life: Tips for Preventing Cognitive Decline through mental, social and physical activities."



- Participants for the Alzheimer's Association "Rally in Tally" Advocacy Day at the State Capitol on March 10 and 11, 2025 included Dr. Lisa Wiese and others who met with state legislators in support of a measure to establish a publicly funded Alzheimer's disease awareness program.



- Assistant Dean for Strategic Affairs and Public Engagement Suzanne Ffolkes joined Congresswoman Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick on March 29, 2025 for her annual EmpowHER Awards Ceremony honoring women in STEM, leadership, arts and culture, humanitarian efforts and sports, and the men who support them.



- The College of Nursing represented Florida Atlantic University at the Stars of Tomorrow Career Symposium for middle and high school students hosted by the T. Leroy Jefferson Medical Society in Riviera Beach on April 5, 2025.





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