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**Subbashini Neelam**  
**President**

On March 2nd and 3rd, New Jersey Nursing Students, Inc. (NJNS) held its 65th annual convention with its theme of Saving Lives: Inspiring Minds at Bally's in Atlantic City. We had an amazing total of 46 exhibitors, 45 speakers, and over 1,000 students and faculty in attendance. We had a successful array of speaker sessions, a productive House of Delegates, and a bustling exhibit hall. This convention would not have been as successful without your attendance and support. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely say, "Thank you!" The entire NJNS board worked tirelessly to organize this fantastic event so I hope all attendees learned, networked, and benefitted from the plentiful opportunities presented during this convention.

Our keynote speaker, Diane Reeve, RN, passionately presented on breaking stereotypes within nursing and taking challenging situations and

making the most of them. As mentioned during opening ceremony, it is important that students find what truly inspires and motivates us. We need to remember to embrace failure and learn from each setback. Our morals, goals, accomplishments, and successes define us and I sincerely hope this convention aided each of you in finding your personal destination to what inspires you.

I am honored to have served with such an outstanding NJNS board. Each member embodied respect, hard work, perseverance, leadership, and camaraderie. We worked together as a team to organize and plan this convention for the nursing students across New Jersey and, at the end of the day, we all pulled together. It was easy to work with such talented and driven peers and I cannot imagine my convention experience without them. NJNS gave me the opportunity to grow as a student leader and as a person. I have made lifelong friends with my board member colleagues and I am so grateful to have shared this opportunity with them.

For those who are ready to graduate, I encourage you to embrace the future with open arms. As scary as the future seems, this is one of the most exciting times in our lives and I cannot wait to see where we go! It has been a privilege to serve as your president for the 2016-2017 term. This experience has been such an enriching process and I am so glad to have been given the

opportunity to learn from incredible advisors, mentors, and peers. I wish you all the very best in your future careers.

Feel free to contact me at [sneelam866@gmail.com](mailto:sneelam866@gmail.com).



**Alyssa Wallschleger**  
**First Vice President**

Just like that the 65th annual New Jersey Nursing Students, Inc. (NJNS) convention has come and gone. I have served as first vice president of NJNS for two years now and it was bittersweet to drive away from Atlantic City after three great days of convention. Throughout my two years on the board I have challenged and developed leadership skills I did not have before I joined the board. The board brought together a convention of over 1,000 nursing students throughout New Jersey who received resources

and information to advance their careers and future profession.

As I walked around convention, it became evident how interested students were because they filled the speaker sessions. I had the opportunity to attend the Hurst Quiz Bowl where teams of students answered NCLEX-style questions. The winning group members each received a Hurst NCLEX Review. Studying for NCLEX is the last thing I want to do, but the review was fun and there was great competition to win. From speaker sessions to the exhibitor hall, there were many resources available at convention for NCLEX preparation.

Making friends is my favorite part of convention. I am grateful to have worked with such a hard-working board that pulled together as a team to make this event successful. The few days we had at convention were busy but we had the chance to bond together and enjoy the event. Because of NJNS I had the opportunity to meet other nursing students throughout New Jersey, make new friends, and share the same passion for nursing.

I am sad that my time on the NJNS board is coming to an end, but I am excited to begin my career as a nurse and become involved in other professional organizations. Good luck to the new board; I hope to see you at the Council of School Participants (COSP) in October! If you have any questions between now and May when my term ends, please contact me [1stvp@njnsinc.org](mailto:1stvp@njnsinc.org).



**Christine Abacan**  
**Second Vice President**

Milton Berle, a famous television personality from the 1950's and 1960's, once said, "If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door." This quote has resonated with me since high school where I began to foster a sense of leadership. It has been my life mantra for reaching my goals and following my dreams. I was well aware that opportunity isn't simply handed down, and that in order to reach success, one must reach out and grasp it. I have been involved in many clubs including Student Council, T.V. Production, Interact Club, French Club, Yearbook Club, Girls Tennis team, and I was inducted into the Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI), the National Honor Society of Nursing. Being involved has shaped me into the person and leader I am today.

In college, I knew I had to cut back on some of my extracurricular activities to place more focus on my major. As much as I wanted to continue to be as involved but realized that I could not possibly do everything lest I allow myself to drown and be overwhelmed by the work. It would not have benefitted me nor the people I wanted to help. I needed to be more strategic with my involvement and focus on skills that I would use when I began working as a nurse. I became a student ambassador for my university, joined the Student Nurses' Association (SNA), and eventually became president of our SNA chapter to help others with networking and with career development opportunities. This

exposure has helped me grow professionally and personally. As a student leader, I had to remember that I am a student first and that my studies were my first priority. I also realized that my involvement provided opportunities I otherwise would not have had, such as a nursing externship, which led me to my first job at a hospital.

Being a student leader offered opportunities to attend conferences such as the annual New Jersey Nursing Students, Inc. (NJNS) convention, which allows for knowledge acquisition in the ever-changing field of nursing. Convention attendees learn from various professionals at the top of their fields who inspire and captivate audiences with essential skills and strategies for nursing success. Joining a pre-professional organization such as NJNS has given me invaluable insight into the scope of the field of nursing. I met nurses who have entered various fields and roles I would otherwise not have considered with nursing as a major. Organizations such as NJNS exist to provide insight on how to navigate the field of nursing and offer opportunities for career and professional development.

Community outreach is at the forefront of these organizations, allowing individuals to expand their knowledge base and enhance their networks. These organizations also offer mentoring opportunities and resources to help with preparing for the nursing licensure examination. Scholarship opportunities also exist. As a matter of fact, six students were awarded scholarships during this annual convention.

I am truly grateful to have worked with such a dedicated team of individuals who share my passion for the field and who worked so hard to provide the best for nursing students. Nursing is a team-oriented field that relies on many healthcare professionals to provide services that best meet a patient's

needs. As nurses, we are leaders and managers of our patients' care. We collaborate with the entire team that includes physicians, nurse practitioners, physical, speech, and respiratory therapists, licensed practical nurses (LPNs), social workers, and many others to provide quality, safe patient care. Honing the skills of teamwork, communication, time management, delegation, and prioritization strengthen professional competence in the dynamic field of nursing.

beginning of an exciting future. The last four years have been a rollercoaster. Studying for nursing school, while participating in different organizations and attempting a social life, called for multiple sleepless nights and gallons of caffeine. However, I can confidently say that nursing school and college in general were the best four years of my life (so far). Thanks to my experiences, the good and bad, I have grown into a driven individual who is ready to take on life after graduation.



**Vanessa Trancoso**  
**Treasurer**



**Nikhila Manchikanti**  
**Secretary**

I want to thank everyone who attended the New Jersey Nursing Students, Inc. (NJNS) convention and participated in this incredible experience. From organizing the Council of School Participants (COSP) to the annual convention, my role as secretary has been very rewarding. The convention was truly a success because of an enthusiastic and supportive board and your involvement. Your passion for the nursing profession was palpable at convention and I know there's a bright future ahead.

Being part of the NJNS board for the last three years has truly been an honor. I have grown since I applied to be a delegate as a freshman four years ago. Despite being a senior and my last year on board, I know that it is only the

Looking back, the advice I would offer to nursing students is get involved. You only live once and nursing school can take a toll on you mentally and physically. By participating in nursing organizations, you network with incredible individuals from around the state and nation, and receive a reprieve from the stress of nursing school. By participating in NJNS, Rutgers Student Nurses' Association, and Rutgers School of Nursing Senate, I was able to connect with other nursing students, share ideas, and improve my communication and interpersonal skills. Pursuing a career in the nursing profession requires making connections and taking action in roles outside of the workplace. As a nurse, do not feel confined to the walls of the hospital but continue to improve your role as an educator and advocate. Remember that learning does not end with nursing school; make it your goal to make a difference by continuing your lifelong learning.

Once again, thank you for allowing me to serve on such a wonderful board the last three years. I will never forget the way this organization has positively impacted me and I will take what I have learned in my role as a nurse.

It has been said that education is the key to success, and New Jersey Nursing Students, Inc. (NJNS) would like to congratulate the 2016-2017 scholarship winners. May your "key" open a world of opportunities!

NJNS offers scholarships to assist New Jersey nursing students with tuition. We awarded nearly \$10,000 in scholarships this year. To be eligible for consideration for scholarships, the student must be a current NSNA member, have professional involvement in nursing, a grade point average above 2.5, and financial need. An essay and two letters of recommendation must be included in the application packet.

Complete scholarship applications received by deadline are carefully reviewed and ranked; the winners are announced at the annual convention. These students are: Lillian Johnson from JFK Muhlenberg School of Nursing;

Leigha Fromm  
*Hudson County Community College*  
Alexandra Maye  
*JFK Muhlenberg School of Nursing*  
Karen Ojeda  
*Felician University*  
Kimberly Dempsey  
*Ocean County Community College*

Congratulations! Your hard work, determination, devotion for serving others and strong commitment to the nursing profession have proven that

you are students NJNS wants to recognize and applaud as you continue your educational efforts. A big thank you to The New Jersey League for Nursing for its generous donation that helped fund one of these scholarships. Watch our website at [www.njnsinc.org](http://www.njnsinc.org) to apply for our scholarships for 2017-2018. May all your aspirations be grandiose and accomplished!

If you have any questions, contact me at [trancosov@gmail.com](mailto:trancosov@gmail.com).



**Ofure Oboh**  
**Public Relations Director**

Saving Lives: Inspiring Minds was the theme of the New Jersey Nursing Students, Inc. (NJNS) 65th annual convention. I personally loved this theme because it is the epitome of what a nurse is. As nurses, we have various responsibilities, from assisting members of the healthcare team to educating patients. We save lives and inspire minds by possessing the power and knowledge to help others, by being positive, empathetic, and strong-spirited. We are also advocates for others. Someone once said, "Save one life and you are a hero, save one hundred lives and you are a nurse". At the 65th annual convention, I was surrounded by future nurses who were excited to begin their careers and registered nurses who were honored to share their experiences.

The 65th annual convention held at Bally's Atlantic City on March 2nd

and 3rd was an amazing success with the exceptional planning of our advisors and board members. While planning the convention, the board members learned the importance of working together which played an important role in the convention and in our future nursing careers. I want to thank the exhibitors, the focus session speakers, convention sponsors, monitors and the keynote speaker for making the 2017 convention a success. I would like to take this time to reach out to nursing students in New Jersey who know that nursing school can be challenging and time-consuming. It may seem difficult to participate in planning events such as this convention, but challenge yourselves. One of the biggest joys of my undergraduate program was being part of NJNS.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me at [publicrelations@njnsinc.org](mailto:publicrelations@njnsinc.org).



**Julie Titus**  
**Membership/Nominations Director**

I am proud to announce that New Jersey Nursing Students, Inc. (NJNS) had a fantastic turnout at the 65<sup>th</sup> annual convention held at Bally's Atlantic City on March 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. The guidance of our talented advisors went a long way in making it possible for the board members to put on a successful event. With our theme of *Saving Live: Inspiring Minds*, our

keynote speaker, Diane Reeve, RN, inspired so many nursing students and registered nurses to advocate for others. She shared her life-changing story about how she was able to encourage and inspire other women to be brave enough to save other women's lives.

As membership/nominations director, I helped guide the monitors who had an important role in convention operations. Monitors are assigned to speakers' rooms and help assist with solutions to any problems that the speakers may have. They also keep a record of the audience satisfaction surveys. I would like to thank the monitors for their time and effort and I would also like to thank their schools for sending them.

In addition to monitors, my role includes putting together a slate of nominees for next year's board. I am proud to announce that we have a full board for 2017-2018. The new board is very eager for their terms to begin. I was nominated and won the election as second vice president. As a nursing student, I am so proud to be part of such a great team. I look forward to next year with my new responsibilities and team. If anyone is interested in being involved in such a great organization, it is never too early to express interest. Please contact me at [membership@njnsinc.org](mailto:membership@njnsinc.org).





**Alexandra Maye**  
**Breakthrough to Nursing Director**

Greetings, New Jersey nursing students! It continues to bring a huge smile to my face thinking about the great turnout and positive energy at this year's New Jersey Student Nurses, Inc. (NJNS) convention at Bally's in Atlantic City. I enjoyed seeing so many happy faces in the exhibitor hall as students sought opportunities for future growth and everyone's alert and inquisitive faces when our guest speaker, Diane Reeves, RN spoke of personally living with HIV during her keynote address. I especially appreciated how the students, selected by their schools to vote on the 2017 bylaws and resolution, approached this task with enthusiasm and provided constructive input. This enthusiasm shows the true passion of students who want to make an impact in nursing at the state level by becoming a voice for nursing students of New Jersey.

I am also excited and humbled to be elected as your 2017-2018 president! Since joining the board as the breakthrough to nursing director at last year's convention, my enthusiasm and appreciation for the work of NJNS has only increased. I believe that it is so important to have an organization like NJNS that allows us to be involved on the student level and teaches us the importance of coming together and uniting as student nurses and future registered nurses (RNs). One of my favorite African proverbs, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together" resonates with me because I think it applies to many facets of life, specifically the life of

nurses. Nurses are the most trusted professions in the world according to the Gallop Poll, because we take the time to work with each other and other health care professionals collaboratively to get the job done.

Collaborative care is so important because everyone has talents and every health care professional allows the wheel to turn smoothly. Nurses are on the forefront of collaborative caring because we learn information from our patients that sometimes is only expressed to us. We may hear from our patients that the medications prescribed are not affordable so we contact a social worker to discuss other options. We may see that our patient's gait and coordination are not their "normal" so we call for a neurology consult and evaluation. We may recognize that the patient's meals at home contain too much sodium so we intervene through teaching. Regardless of the reason, nurses are on the forefront of connecting patients to the care they need while working collaboratively with others. When we approach various obstacles as a united front, we are able to make the changes necessary to improve patients' health. NJNS brings students together from all over the state and enhances that united front. Whether it is connecting students with experienced nurses during our annual Council for School Participants (COSP) in the fall or putting on a resourceful convention, students are able to come together and learn together.

As I fulfill my term duties, the excellent, passionate board members will continue the legacy of NJNS by uniting nursing students throughout the state so we may go far and excel together. Good luck on final exams and the last few tests of the semester; stay positive throughout this exciting nursing journey. Happy nursing!

Contact me at [btn@njnsinc.org](mailto:btn@njnsinc.org) if you have questions.



**Resolutions Director**  
**Sonam Patel**

New Jersey Nursing Students, Inc. (NJNS) held its 65th annual convention at Bally's Casino in Atlantic City on March 2nd and 3rd. As the resolutions direction I have had the honor to serve NJNS for the 2016-2017 term, present my resolution to the House of Delegates, and have it approved by the NJNS delegates. The approved resolution will now be presented at the National Student Nurses Association (NSNA) convention in Dallas, Texas.

This was the first convention I ever attended and it exceeded my expectations; presenting the resolution was an additional eye opening experience. This journey has been a unique experience and demonstrated that as a student, I have a voice and the ability to work to change issues in healthcare while seeking input from other nursing students.

This resolution, titled the Importance of Education on the Use of Opioid Medications and Associated Risks of Dependence, was personal because I see individuals who are dependent on opioids while I am working as an emergency medical technician.

I am happy to announce that I will be serving NJNS as its treasure for 2017-2018. I also want to congratulate our new board members on their positions and I look forward to working with them.

If you have any questions, please contact me at [sp081489@gmail.com](mailto:sp081489@gmail.com).



**Danielle Stoever**  
**Fundraising Director**

I am honored to have served as your fundraising director for 2016-2017. I hope you enjoyed the New Jersey Nursing Students, Inc. (NJNS) convention at Bally's in Atlantic City as much as I did. The connections that I made this year were incredible.

Having just passed my NCLEX and being newly licensed, I met influential and awesome nurses and members of the boards of the National Student Nurses Association (NSNA) and the Institute for Nursing of the New Jersey Nurses Association (NJSNA). I connected with many of the exhibitors to further my education. Diane Reeves, our keynote speaker, was very inspiring as she spoke of her life living with HIV. I personally enjoyed her speech about the stigma of patients living with HIV during the Deans' and Directors' luncheon. I plan to use this knowledge with my patients as I embark on my nursing career. Meeting such influential people in the field of nursing has inspired me to strive to be the best representative of this wonderful profession that I can be.

I look forward to continuing to support NJNS as a sustaining member and when future opportunities arise. Hopefully I will see new and repeat members at next year's convention. Please continue to check our website [www.njnsinc.org](http://www.njnsinc.org) for further information on upcoming events. As always if you have any questions or concerns please feel free to reach me at [Dstoever219@yahoo.com](mailto:Dstoever219@yahoo.com).

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