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University of Lethbridge nursing students promote health in the community

University of Lethbridge nursing students have been engaged in health promotion across the community as part of their clinical training this past semester. They partnered with a wide range of community organizations serving Lethbridge citizens from school-aged children to seniors.



Students in Shannon Vandenberg’s and Morgan Magnuson’s, nursing instructors, Praxis in Health Promotion classes partnered with several community organizations, including Streets Alive, McMan Youth, Family and Community Services Association and River House, that serve unhoused people, those with lived or living experience of substance use, and those recovering from substance use.

“This is a remarkable and eye-opening experience for our students, where they had many opportunities to provide empathetic care for unhoused people exposed to an unregulated drug supply that is increasingly toxic and unpredictable,” says Vandenberg. “Their enhanced knowledge of harm reduction, trauma-informed care, healthy public policy, and appreciating the importance of lived experiences, empathy, and implicit bias will benefit students as they enter nursing practice.”

Their activities included collecting warm winter clothing, sharing information about preventing and treating frostbite, creating first-aid and wound-care kits, and distributing harm reduction and hygiene supplies, clothing and snacks. Students also volunteered at the Lethbridge Soup Kitchen.

“My semester working in the community has been an incredible learning experience,” says Hannah Mallette, a nursing student. “I have learned that it is vital to maintain a genuine, non-judgmental approach to care for each client because this approach goes a long way when building relationships and trust with clients. During this community placement, I have also

learned the importance of self-reflection and accountability, how these practices aid in my growth as a student nurse, and how they will be an active part of my practice as a registered nurse. The street-involved population in Lethbridge displays an inspiring amount of resilience, and I am grateful to have gotten the opportunity to provide these individuals with care in the community setting.”

Trenna Devoy’s students worked with the ULethbridge Health Centre to educate students about Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and the importance of consent to eliminate gender-based violence. They created educational resources and used social marketing strategies, such as an Instagram takeover, digital screens, posters and a health booth, to reach as many students as possible.

“They also focused on the primary prevention of influenza and vaccinated over 350 employees and students at ULethbridge,” says Devoy, an instructor in the nursing program.

“This experience has been very eye-opening!” says Elizabeth Hill, a nursing student. “The feedback we have gotten from students regarding the different sexual health promotion strategies we have implemented has shown us that sexual health needs to be talked about more amongst the student body and needs to be de-stigmatized for everyone’s health and safety.”

Another group of Devoy’s students partnered with the ULethbridge Housing department and students living in residence. They focused on stress management and life skills like time management, budgeting, nutrition and cooking. The students provided one-to-one health coaching for stress management and hosted a cooking and budgeting session.

“This experience really helped open my eyes to a number of health issues impacting university students,” says Mitchell Gruber, a nursing student. “The manner in which difficulties with proper nutrition and mental health cause a detrimental effect on people was something I was very aware of prior to this experience, but I was not truly in tune with the sheer amount of people affected. Reading some of the responses we got from participants in our stress management workshop and cooking class gave my groupmates and me a sense of pride and satisfaction that we were able to provide something that participants not only enjoyed but also found helpful. I know that mental health and community health are something that my groupmates and I are very passionate about, and being able to positively affect even just a small number of people was a fantastic experience for all of us.”

Other groups of students worked with the Nordbridge Seniors Centre, Lethbridge College’s health centre, Lethbridge Immigrant Services, as well as several schools.

This news release can be found online at [Nursing Students](#).

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