



CAROLINAS COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Christmas is the spirit of giving without a thought of getting. It is happiness because we see joy in people. It is forgetting self and finding time for others.
~Thomas S. Monson

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SENATOR THOM TILLIS - DECEMBER COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER



Senator Thom Tillis

Congratulations to all Nursing and Clinical Laboratory Science students graduating on **December 18** at Pritchard Memorial Baptist Church, 1117 South Blvd. The awards breakfast will be in the church fellowship hall at 8:30 a.m. followed by rehearsal. The ceremony will be at 3:30 p.m. All are welcome. The College is pleased that the Honorable Thom Tillis, US Senator for North Carolina, will deliver the commencement address.



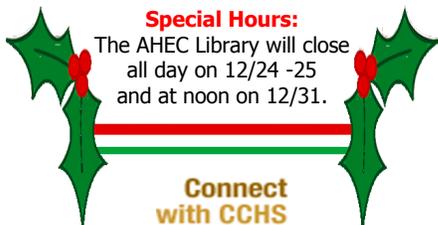
CCHS Hours of Operation
Mon - Fri, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Student badge access 24/7.
**The College is closed
December 25.**

**CCHS Computer Lab
Staffed Hours**
Mon - Thurs, 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
(No after-hours staff on Fridays.)
Saturday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Sunday - No staff support.
24/7 access with CCHS badge.

Special Hours:
There will be no computer lab coverage December 19 through January 4

CCHS Nursing Skills Lab
Staffed M-F 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

AHEC Library
Medical Education Building (MEB)
Staffed Access to Collection & Services, Mon - Fri, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Badge access to 2nd floor study rooms is 24/7.



Special Hours:
The AHEC Library will close all day on 12/24 -25 and at noon on 12/31.

Connect with CCHS



COMMITMENT TO CARING CEREMONY FOR GRADUATING NURSING STUDENTS

The ceremony will be **December 17**, 6 to 8 p.m. in the Suzanne Freeman Auditorium and will include the traditional pinning, lighting the Florence Nightingale lamp, and a "Blessing of Hands" by a member of the CHS Spiritual Care and Education department. A light reception will follow the ceremony. Graduates may invite a friend, family or faculty member who is a nurse to pin them; everyone may then receive a Blessing of Hands.



POST-GRADUATION MEDICAL INSURANCE

Have you thought about post-college medical insurance requirements? It's now the law that you have medical coverage, and as you leave CCHS your eligibility for student insurance may cease. Good news: Graduation is a life mile marker that triggers a "Special Enrollment Period." A special enrollment period allows a 60-day window for new graduates to sign up for medical coverage in the marketplace, even though it's not a typical open enrollment period.

Graduating students who don't have insurance through a job, a spouse/partner, or a new educational opportunity have two opportunities:

- ☞ Find a plan on the marketplace, at www.healthcare.gov.
- ☞ Stay on your parent's plan if you're 26 or under.

What you cannot do is simply "ride it out," hoping for no accidents or illness. So, unless you're covered by your parents' plan or a spouse's/partner's plan, you need to either have a job that provides coverage, or select a plan from the Marketplace within two months of graduating. For more information, go to the college information portal (Moodle) under the section on graduation.

STUDENT OF THE MONTH



Esther Aguayo

Esther Aguayo is the December Student of the Month. Esther is an outstanding student who many classmates go to for assistance or clarification if they have trouble understanding something and she is always willing to help out in her spare time. "When my dad had surgery, she recorded lectures and took notes in the event that I needed to miss any class time and even though I was able to be there, she was sure to send me reminders, ask for updates, and ask me if there was anything that I needed or anything she could do to help me out or take anything off of my plate," stated Meredith Pendleton who recommended Esther for recognition. "She always has a smile on her face even when things don't go according to plan. I've been most impressed by how willing she is to not only be an exemplary classmate and student but how she has stepped in to offer help as a friend during times in need." Esther started Carolinas College in the pre-nursing program and is currently in the nursing program with an anticipated graduation date of May 2016. Please congratulate Esther when you see her on campus.

Do you know a fellow student who is making an outstanding contribution to the community, the college or the healthcare system? Consider nominating him or her as the Student of the Month. This award recognizes a student who exhibits dedication to the core values of the college. The College considers equally the student working hard behind the scenes as well as the leader who strives to make a positive impact. The recipient will receive a certificate, a profile in this newsletter, and a parking space in the V lot. Criteria and applications are available on the information portal in the "Student Resources" section, or send a nomination via e-mail to Hampton.Hopkins@CarolinasCollege.edu.

OPEN FORUM WITH PRESIDENT SHEPPARD

CCHS students have many opportunities for input into college decision-making: service on college committees, end-of-course surveys, the suggestion board (across from classroom 161), SGA opinion polls, etc. One of the most significant is the monthly President's Open Forum. Attend, and let your voice be heard! Dr. Sheppard will be available **December 7**, 10:00 to 10:45 a.m., room 137. Unable to fit this into your schedule? No problem! Stop by her office (room 110) or send her an email: Ellen.Sheppard@CarolinasCollege.edu.

CHS SAYS "THANKS" WITH END OF YEAR GIFT

CHS values you as a student, a potential teammate, and someone who provides excellent care to its patients. As a way to say "Thanks" CHS is including all CCHS students in the 2015 gift distribution. Students/teammates can pick up their gift at multiple CHS locations. See the distribution schedule posted on the lobby bulletin board for dates and times and be prepared to present your CCHS I.D. badge. Happy Holidays!



Jodie Huffstetler

NEW RAD TECH PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Jodie Huffstetler, clinical coordinator for the rad tech program, has accepted the position of program director being vacated by retiring director Doug Frankenburg, effective **December 27**. Jodie has a bachelor's degree in rehabilitation psychology and a master's in adult education and training. She is a CCHS Radiologic Technology graduate, Class of 2005 and worked as both a tech and a clinical instructor for Carolinas HealthCare System before joining CCHS in 2009. There is no doubt that Jodie will bring her experiences as a student and faculty member in the program as well as her connections within and understanding of Carolinas HealthCare System to her new role at the College. Congratulations Jodie!

ANSWER OFFERS SCHOLARSHIPS TO LOCAL MOMS SEEKING DEGREES

Alison Thornburg was a single mom in the mortgage business who longed to be a nurse. But she hesitated to get re-trained over worries about tuition and other costs. She remembers the moment when her life changed. "A dear friend said to me, 'Alison, you are wasting the best part of you not going to nursing school.' And that's when I decided to do it. Within two weeks of admitting, I had two friends talk to me about the ANSWER Scholarship, thinking I would be a good candidate. When I found out I had received it, I was so excited. This was life-changing. Receiving a scholarship meant fewer hours I had to work while I was in school, which meant more time I could spend with my daughter."

Thornburg graduated magna cum laude from CCHS in 2013. HER story can be YOUR story. ANSWER provides scholarships for single or married moms with school-age children, in Charlotte and surrounding counties, who are seeking college degrees. If you're looking for financial assistance for the next school year, check out ANSWER's website at www.answerscholarship.org and look under the Scholarship tab to see if you meet the requirements. Applications will be accepted from January to mid-March for the 2016-2017 school year. ANSWER is looking for new recipients - maybe one will be you!



Alison Thornburg (left) and Susan Andersen, Founder of ANSWER

CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

CCHS Admissions Information Session - December 1, 3:30 to 5 p.m. The schedule: 3:30 to 4 = tour; 4 to 5 = info session. Have friends who want to know about CCHS? Contact Joy Godwin at the front desk or 704.355.5051 to sign up for an info session. For information on Medical Laboratory Science or Histotechnology, contact Kelly Shirley, 704.355.4275.

CPR: BCLS Online - Part 1. Cost \$22.00 (Online payment required - cannot register via brochure.) Access the American Heart Association website by typing in the web address (<https://www.onlineaha.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=main.registration&login=redirect>); choose BLS Online - Part 1. The course takes approximately 1 hour. The test has to be completed in one sitting. Print the Course Completion Certificate to bring to BCLS Online Skills Check Part 2.

CPR: BCLS Online Skills Check - Part 2. December 2, 9, 16 & 30. 1 to 3 p.m. Cost \$25.00. You must bring the Part 1 Course Completion Certificate (Passing) to Part 2. Be ready to check off on all BLS Skills. Complete skills check (Part 2) within 60 days of completion of online BLS (Part 1).

CPR: BCLS for the HealthCare Provider - December 16, 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. Cost \$60. Textbook included. This course is designed for professional rescuers or students required to have professional rescuer certification for their healthcare program of study. The course provides information on adult and pediatric CPR, two-rescuer scenarios, use of the bag-valve mask, foreign-body airway obstruction (conscious and unconscious), AED, special resuscitation situations, and other cardiopulmonary emergencies. Questions about course information or requirements should be directed to Christy Dull at 704-355-5699 or Christy.Dull@carolinashealthcare.org.

Chaplain's Grand Rounds - Mental Illness: Mind, Body and Spirit - December 17, Noon to 1 p.m. Monthly, the Spiritual Care Division invites all CHS learners and teammates to a 1-hour, thought-provoking presentation by a local, regional, or national thought leader. Held in the Suzanne Freeman Auditorium (at top of Loop Road turn right toward loading dock then left into Cannon Research Building), this month's speaker is Dr. John Santopietro, topic is *Suicide: Permanent Solution for Temporary Problems*. Bring your lunch!

Managing Difficult Transitions (Webinar) - December 17, Noon to 1 p.m. Objectives of the webinar include: Understand emotions experienced during stages of transition, learn coping skills for managing transitions, and develop unique strategies for different types of change. Sponsored by CHS Employee Assistance Program (EAP), 720 East Blvd. **FREE** for CCHS students! Advanced registration is required and space is limited so please call 704.355.5021 to register.

Basic Phlebotomy Skills Workshop - December 18, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Cost: \$169. CE Credits: 6.5 contact hours. Spaces are still available! Learn basic adult venipuncture techniques, review lab tests and the specific test tubes and additives, learn why the order of draw is important, and get updates on newest national guidelines. For more information or to register for this workshop contact Lakisha Bennett at 704-355-2663 or Lakisha.Bennett@carolinascollege.edu.

TEAMMATE SPOTLIGHT - Kali Simien

Kali Simien, surgical technology program director, was born in Harrisburg, PA, but has called Charlotte home since the early 80's. As a child, she enjoyed playing the flute with her musical family and taking tap/jazz with Miss Donna's School of Dance. After high school, her family moved to the Norfolk/Virginia Beach area where she completed the surgical technology program at Sentara College of Health Sciences. A year later, she and her daughter, Tyri, moved back to Charlotte where she joined the general surgery team at Carolinas Medical Center (CMC). While at CMC she specialized in general surgery and was a member of the liver transplant team. After spending many years in the operating room, Kali graduated from UNC at Charlotte with a bachelor's of science degree in business administration. Kali has been with CCHS since 2008 and celebrates 16 years with Carolinas HealthCare System this year.



Kali Simien

ITS SNOWING...WHAT ABOUT CLASSES?

Should inclement weather necessitate the delay or closing of the college, the status will be posted on the college's inclement weather hotline (704.446.7854) and information portal, as well as local television and radio stations. If a delayed opening is announced, count the delay from 8 a.m. So if there's a 2-hour delay, the college will open at 10 a.m. **Pop Quiz:** Your class regularly meets 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. on a day the college is on a 2-hour delay. What do you do? **Answer:** If you can do so safely, come in at 10:00 a.m. Your class will meet for one hour.



STUDENT NURSES ASSOCIATION (SNA) UPDATE

Thanks to all who supported the SNA Café fundraiser. Proceeds will be used to sponsor the Cynthia Favorite Scholarship and NUR101 luncheon during nursing orientation. SNA is pleased to announce that Renae O'Neil is the winner of the V Lot raffle. Congratulations Renae!

The nurse manager's panel discussion on November 19 was a great success. Students were able to meet system leaders face to face and discuss measures to put in place now to promote themselves within the system post-graduation. The panel consisted of eleven nurse managers who provided insightful feedback to students wishing to be hired in the system.



Nurse managers from Carolinas Medical Center participate in a panel discussion.



L to R, SNA members host SNA Café: Gary Humphries, Christine Perzinski, Elizabeth Sutcliffe, Rachel Williams, Chris Yen, and Brittany Vandermeid.

The SNA Board and faculty are sponsoring two children from the angel tree, providing support and good cheer in the holiday season.

April Davis, SNA faculty advisor, wishes to thank all of the current board members who made 2015 the phenomenal SNA success it was: President-Christine Perzinski, Vice President-Meg Jones, Treasurer-Erin Holland, Secretary-Elizabeth Sutcliffe, Fundraising Chair-Gary Humphries, Marketing Chair-Chris Yen, Community Service Chairs-Caroline Roberts/Rebecca Moody, and NUR101 representative-Jennifer Edwards. Stay tuned for new SNA Board member announcements in the January newsletter!

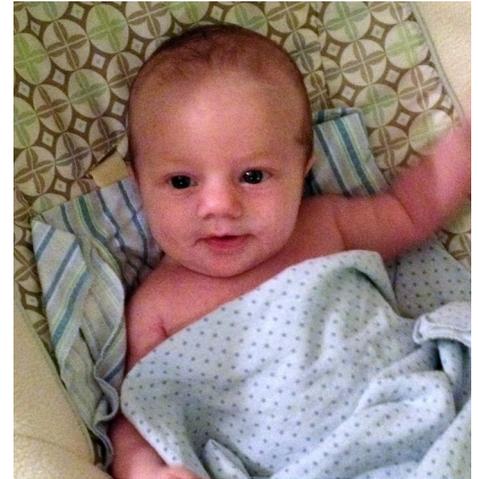
The SNA Family wishes all a happy and safe holiday and looks for-

IT'S A BOY...

Congratulations to Karlene Walker, incoming nursing student, on the birth of son Jackson. Born at Carolinas Medical Center on August 22. Welcome Jackson!

AND A GIRL!

Congratulations to Mike Bossick (sociology instructor) and wife on the birth of Lucy Elise Bossick, born November 24. Welcome Lucy!



Jackson Walker

COMPLIANCE CORNER - Carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae

This month's Compliance Corner is dedicated to Carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae otherwise known as CRE. Enterobacteria exist in everyone's intestinal system, but they can be carried outside the intestinal system to other parts of the body where they can cause serious infection. The infections characterized as CRE are extremely difficult to treat because they are highly resistant to antibiotic therapy so identifying and preventing the spread of these infections is very important.

At Carolinas Medical Center patients identified with CRE are kept in isolation. Visitors and practitioners who enter these patients' rooms wear gowns and gloves and do rigorous hand hygiene before and after their visits. Any equipment in the room is considered "dedicated" meaning that it is kept only in that room and used only for that particular patient. Even nurses and techs providing direct care to CRE patients may not care for any other patients on their unit. Rooms that CRE patients occupy are carefully cleaned and undergo specialized disinfection after they leave.

Patients most vulnerable to CRE infections are those who are acutely ill, have extended stays in healthcare settings, or those who have very complex antibiotic regimens. The System is very proactive in the care and containment of CRE, but it takes everyone involved in patient care to be knowledgeable and compliant with infection control policy.

PHI THETA KAPPA (PTK) UPDATE

Thanks to Cathey Miller, Cathy Borysewicz, Kathryn Gorham, Mary Warren, Chris Yen, Gary Humphries, Teresa Greene and Erin Lance, who helped out at the Men's Shelter in November; one hundred and twenty-one meals were served to the men.

Check your email for information regarding nominations for the PTK scholarship. One graduating PTK member is eligible to receive a \$250.00 scholarship. Please nominate a deserving PTK member.

The PTK Outreach Coordinator position which will be vacated by graduating student Jason Mitchel, will be available after December. Any PTK member interested in this position contact Cathey Miller or Cathy Borysewicz. Please consider this wonderful opportunity.

PTK has adopted 2 angels, 1 boy and 1 girl this year for Christmas. Contact Kathryn Gorham if you are interested in shopping for these gifts.

Upcoming Events:

December 12: Christmas caroling at the Men's Shelter. Everyone is to meet at Brix on East Blvd. at 5 p.m., then carpool to the shelter. Caroling takes place at the Tryon shelter. Please bring home baked goods or juice/cider to share with the men. Donations of new socks, underwear and t-shirts are always appreciated along with toiletry items. Don't forget your holiday apparel and singing voice. Hope to see you there!

Save the Date:

January 14: PTK meeting, room 137, 8 a.m. Hope to see you there.

New Blue PTK t-shirts are available to members for purchase. See Cathey Miller, Rm 252, to get yours today! Sizes available: S, M, L & XL = \$9.90 ea.

PTK recognizes and encourages the academic achievement of 2-year college students and provides opportunities for individual growth and development through participation in honors, leadership, fellowship, and service programming. For questions please contact President Kathryn Gorham. Members are reminded to regularly visit the PTK site on Moodle for the latest information, updates, and upcoming events! Faculty advisors are Cathey Miller and Cathy Borysewicz.

WOW - THESE FOLKS ARE AMAZING!

Part of a culture of excellence is recognizing others. CCHS does that with WOW cards, Values In Action recognition and KEAP bonuses. Read the posted WOW cards on the WOW board to see what your classmates and CCHS teammates are being recognized for! The following CCHS Stars were recognized recently:

Students: Jazmin Aguilar, Alesia Hamilton, Honnah Jones

Teammates: Kisha Choice (2), Ann Keathley, Nancy Watkins, Caroline Wrisley

KEAP Award Tracy Hayes

CHS AMBASSADOR OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

Carolinas HealthCare System (CHS) participates in tons of local activities – sometimes to provide assistance, sometimes for visibility. Either way, energetic, outgoing CCHS students can help as ambassadors. Below is a list of events coming up. To participate in any of them, email Devon.Smith@CarolinasHealthCare.org or call 704-667-6509. The only rule: If you sign up, show up; you are representing both CCHS and CHS! (This is different from being a CCHS Student Ambassador. See Rhoda Rillorta in student services for more information about becoming a Student Ambassador.)

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8 • 5:30 PM Sun City Carolina Lakes Health Talk: Located at the Sun City Carolina Lakes Retirement Community, this monthly health talk series provided by clinicians encourages participants to make the right decisions that lead to a healthier lifestyle. Dr. Erinn Myers of the Women's Center for Pelvic Health will be presenting. Ambassadors are needed to set up and greet guests.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12 • 7:00 AM Girls on the Run South Charlotte 5K: The Girls on the run 5K is a celebratory event and is open to the public. This is a way to congratulate individuals who participated in the program in 2015. Ambassadors are needed to set up, greet guests and hand out specialty items.

ALL 2016 GRADUATES - PORTRAIT DATE IS FINALIZED!

Each year as a gift to graduating students, the College has a large composite photo made of their class. Each graduate receives an 11 X 14 souvenir copy as well as two small individual pictures ideal for your certification exam application. A large framed composite hangs in the lobby for the next 12 months, and a smaller framed version hangs in the portrait hall forever. Pictures will be taken on **January 28 & 29, 2016**. **Drapes will be provided for the ladies, gentlemen should bring a dress shirt and tie.**



STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER: TIPS FOR YOUR SUCCESS

Success Tip of the Month - Do you have the right study environment? Your study space should speak to you of focus and concentration. Think of it as your individual learning workshop, quiet, well-lit and secure. Because breaks in concentration hinder "flow," minimize distractions by:

- ☞ Leaving your cell phone behind or turning it off – you can do it!
- ☞ Facing away from windows and areas of activity.
- ☞ Using earplugs, if necessary.
- ☞ Turning down loud music, or turning it off entirely.

Stock your study workshop with everything you might need: paper and pencil, calculator, calendar, texts, notebooks, etc. Make sure to make mini-goals for your studying with regular breaks in-between study sessions.

For more study tips, as well as current opportunities for part-time and PRN employment, check out the Student Success page on the information portal. (Click on *Student Resources*, then on *Student Success Center*.)

Student Employment Opportunities - Interested in part-time/PRN employment? CHS Recruitment Specialist Cliff Chapman will be in the main lobby on **December 7**, 10 a.m. to noon.

To make an appointment with Cliff:

- ☞ Log into the information portal and click on *Student Success Center* under *Student Resources* at the top of the page.
- ☞ Select the *Job Search Resources* tab. When you open that section, the interview sign-up sheet will be your first choice. You may sign for any open 15-minute timeslot.

Contact Cliff at 704.631.0347 or Clifton.Chapman@carolinashealthcare.org. Nancy Watkins is also available here at CCHS to support your job search efforts.

Reminder: New Mental Health First Aid Requirements at CCHS. Beginning spring of 2016 - all new program students are required to take an 8-hour mental health first aid training class. This is a stand-alone training; it is not offered as part of any other course.

If you are a student starting a CCHS program in the spring semester, see below for the currently scheduled training dates at Carolinas College that meet your March 9 deadline. You may register for one on the Information Portal under *Admissions, Registrar & Graduation Support*:

DATES	TIME	ROOM
12/21/15*	8 AM to 5 PM (one-hour lunch break)	190
Part 1: 1/4/16	(Pt. 1) 1 to 5 PM	Both days: 219
Part 2: 1/6/16	(Pt. 2) 8 AM to Noon	
1/8/16	8 AM to 5 PM (one-hour lunch break)	190
1/18/16	8 AM to 5 PM (one-hour lunch break)	219

***The December 21 training is almost at capacity (34 students).**

Although you are required to take MHFA training, you are not required to take it at CCHS. Outside the college, other trainings are available:

- ☞ Some classes offered within the community are listed on the CHS Behavioral Health website: <http://www.carolinashealthcare.org/mental-health-first-aid> (On that page, under Mental Health First Aid in the left-hand column, click on *Mental Health First Aid Course - Individual Registration*.) These classes are open to the public as well as to Carolinas HealthCare System employees and all students.
- ☞ Students who are employed by CHS can also search for MHFA classes on PeopleLink:
 - From the Human Resources drop down menu on PeopleConnect, log into PeopleLink.
 - From the People Link home page, click on *Home* in the upper left hand corner.
 - Scroll down and click on *Learning*.
 - Under the section *Find Learning*, type a word about the course you would like to attend (e.g., Mental Health) and hit *GO*
 - These classes are open only to Carolinas HealthCare System employees unless otherwise noted.



Interested in Earning Some Extra Cash? Contact Dianne McClure at Dianne.McClure@Carolinashealthcare.org or 704-631-1138 to be added to the babysitter referral listing for the CMC Physicians' Concierge Service.

STUDENTS NEEDED TO ASSIST IN EMERGENCY DRILL



Carolinas HealthCare System Pineville will conduct an emergency drill on **December 17**, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. This will involve evacuation of the bed tower. Student volunteers are needed to be "patients" during the drill. Volunteers will meet Lisa Foster, MSN, RN-BC, nurse educator for Carolinas HealthCare System Pineville, in the lobby at the main entrance at 4 p.m. to receive a brief orientation and sign necessary paperwork. Dress is casual but your name badge is a must. Interested? Contact Lisa Foster, at lisa.foster@carolinashealthcare.org.

Your involvement can help ensure that in a REAL emergency patients' lives are the top priority. Please be part of this important event.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER IN DECEMBER

Details of each are found elsewhere in this newsletter. Red indicates special opportunities to engage and connect!

December 1	CCHS Admissions Information Session
December 2	BCLS Online Skills Check
December 4	Ugly Holiday Sweater Contest
December 7	Open Forum with President Sheppard
	HR Rep on Campus
December 9	BCLS Online Skills Check
December 12	PTK Sings Christmas Carols at the Charlotte Men's Shelter
December 14 & 15	Exam Break: Cookies and cider in the lobby
December 16	BCLS Online Skills Check
	BCLS for the Healthcare Provider
December 17	CHS Pineville Emergency Drill
	Employee Assistance Program Webinar - <i>Managing Difficult Transitions</i>
	Chaplain's Grand Rounds - <i>Suicide: Permanent Solution for Temporary Problems</i>
	Commitment to Caring Ceremony
December 18	December Commencement Ceremony
	Basic Phlebotomy Skills Workshop
December 19 - January 1	No Computer Lab Support
December 21	Mental Health First Aid Training
December 24 & 25	AHEC Library Closed All Day
December 25	HOLIDAY - COLLEGE CLOSED
December 30	BCLS Online Skills Check
December 31 & January 1	AHEC Library Closed Half Day

SAVE THE DATE:

January 4 & 6	Mental Health First Aid Course
January 8	Mental Health First Aid Course
January 14	PTK General Meeting
January 18	Mental Health First Aid Course
January 28 & 29	Graduation Pictures



CULTURAL & RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY: Understanding and Respecting Others' Beliefs.

Charlotte's increasing diversity is reflected in the patients we serve. A culturally competent provider knows that religious beliefs can bring comfort to patients dealing with illness, pain and stress. Listed below are some of the current month's days of cultural and spiritual significance.

December 6. *Second Sunday of Advent (peace) – Christianity (Western churches).* *Hanukkah begins (through December 14) – Judaism.* The Jewish Festival of Lights commemorates the Maccabean victory over Syrian-Greek oppressors and the recapture and rededication of the Jerusalem Temple in 165 B.C.E. Special readings and praise songs focus on liberty and freedom. The eight-candle Menorah is lit at sundown, and gifts are given.

December 8. *Bodhi Day (Rohatsu) – Buddhism.* Celebration of the time when Prince Gautama (also later known as Shakyamuni Buddha) took his place under the Bodhi tree, vowing to remain there until he attained supreme enlightenment. *Feast of the Immaculate Conception – Catholic Christianity.* A Roman Catholic holiday celebrating the belief that Mary, mother of Jesus, was preserved from original sin for her entire life.

December 12. *Feast Day of the Virgin of Guadalupe – Catholic Christianity.* Commemorating the appearance of the Virgin Mary near Mexico City in 1531 C.E. *Masá'il – Bahá'í.* The beginning of the fifteenth month of the Bahá'í year; its name means "questions."

December 13. *Third Sunday of Advent (joy) – Christianity (Western churches)*

December 16. *Posadas Navideñas begins (through December 25) – Christianity (Western churches).* A Latino/Latina Christian feast of the Lodgings, commemorating the journey of Mary and Joseph toward Bethlehem in preparation for the birth of Jesus.

December 20. *Fourth Sunday of Advent (love) – Christianity (Western churches).* *Yule – Wicca.* A celebration symbolizing the rebirth of the sun by the Goddess. A present-day Wicca event that ritually marks the shedding of the dross of the past year and contemplating one's future spiritual development.

December 21. *Winter Feast – Native American spirituality.* A time when Native Americans of the Woodland tribes share food with the spirits of winter. *Yaldā – Zoroastrianism.* The "night of birth" which marks the longest night of the year, after which days begin getting longer—thus symbolizing the victory of light and goodness over dark and evil. This festival is celebrated with storytelling, poetic readings, family reunions, and feasting. *Maunajiyaras – Jainism.* A day of fasting, silence, and meditation on the five holy beings: monks, teachers, religious leaders, Arihants or Jinas (enlightened masters), and Siddhas (liberated souls). This day is also marked as the birth anniversary of many Tirthankaras or Pathfinders.

December 22. *Winter solstice. Mawlid al-Nabi – Islam.* The anniversary of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad in Mecca in ca. 570 C.E., observed by Sunni Muslims beginning at sundown. Shi'a Muslims celebrate five days later, on December 27. *Tohji-Taisai [Grand Ceremony of the Winter Solstice] – Shintō.* This day marks the end of the sun's decline (the yin period) and the beginning of its growth (the yang period). In Japanese spirituality, the sun is expressive of Amaterasu Omikami, the sun goddess and guiding spirit of the Japanese people.

December 23. *Birthday of the Prophet Joseph Smith – Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.* Commemorating the birth of Joseph Smith, Jr., in 1805 C.E. in Vermont. He translated what became known as the Book of Mormon and became the first president of the LDS Church when it was founded in 1830 in Fayette, NY.

December 24. *Christmas Eve – Christianity (Western and Eastern churches).* Celebration of the arrival of Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem for the birth of Jesus. It is observed with worship, carols, candle lighting, manger scenes and festive meals.

December 25. *Christmas Day/Feast of the Nativity – Christianity (Western and Eastern churches).* Celebration of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, observed by prayers, exchanging of gifts, and family parties. *Sanghamitta Day – Buddhism.* Celebrating the anniversary of the arrival of King Asoka's daughter Sanghamitta, who founded an order of nuns in Sri Lanka and carried with her a branch of the original tree under which the historical Buddha found enlightenment (it still survives in the ancient capital of Anuradhapura). This festival occurs on the full moon day in December

December 26. *St. Stephen's Day – Christianity.* Remembrance of St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr. *Kwanzaa begins (through January 1) – African American heritage.* A seven-day festival that celebrates values highly regarded by people of African American ancestry. The values include umoja (unity), kujichagulia (self-determination), ujima (collective work and responsibility), ujamaa (cooperative economics), nia (purpose), kuumba (creativity), and imani (faith). Each of these principles, collectively known as the Nguzo Saba, is represented by a red or green candle, each of which is lit on successive days using a central black candle.

December 27. *Birthday of Amitābha Buddha – Buddhism.* Marking the birth of the bodhisattva Dharmakāra who resolved to attain enlightenment as a buddha and vowed to create a Pure Land. He became the buddha Amitābha ("infinite light"), and any sentient being who desires to be born into that land is guaranteed rebirth there through his vow, and from there she/he/it will unfailingly reach Nirvana. This belief forms the foundation of Pure Land Buddhism, which is practiced by many Buddhists in Japan, China, and other East Asian countries.

December 29. *Holy Innocents' Day – Christianity.* A day of solemn memory for the male children of Bethlehem killed by King Herod in an attempt to destroy Jesus.

December 31. *New Year's Eve. Ghambar Maidyarem (through January 4) – Zoroastrianism.* A celebration for the creation of animals, and a time for the equitable sharing of food with others. *Sharaf – Bahá'í.* The beginning of the sixteenth month of the Bahá'í year; its name means "honor."

Our thanks to the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago, the Multifaith Action Society of British Columbia (Canada), BBC's Religion Website, Peel Schools District Board (Mississauga, Ontario, Canada), the Arizona State University Provost's Office, the NCCJ of the Piedmont Triad, the Anti-Defamation League, Project Interfaith (Omaha, NE), and www.interfaithcalendar.org.



COLLEGElife

Graduating CLS Students, L to R, front row: Melissa Keller (HTL), Funmi Adewale (MLS), Georgia Kontos (MLS), Beth Sloop (HTL). Back row: Bethany Folk-Middlebrook (MLS), Kelly Kerschner (MLS), Christian Yeatts (HTL), Molly Sunderland (HTL). Good luck in your new career!



Congratulations to Chris Yen, Ashley Amirghanian, Gary Humphries & Terra Greene, winners of the 2015 CCHS Pumpkin Decorating Contest.



Students enjoying the annual Thanksgiving luncheon....



Whew...glad that's done!