

NEWS RELEASE



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Contact: John Cappiello, 203-384-3637
John.Cappiello@bpthosp.org

Bridgeport Hospital School of Nursing graduates 86

BRIDGEPORT, CT (May 3, 2013) – Eighty-six students from across Connecticut marked the completion of their studies during the April 30 Bridgeport Hospital School of Nursing commencement ceremony at Fairfield University’s Regina A. Quick Center for the Arts. Half the students were in the school’s traditional two-year diploma program and half in the 16-month accelerated program.

The commencement speaker was Lucille Gambardella, PhD, RN, professor emeritus at Wesley College in Dover, Delaware.

“Today you celebrate the fears, the tears and the stress you’ve gone through to get here—but above all you celebrate the perseverance to achieve success,” Gambardella told the graduating class. Continue to believe in yourselves.”

The class message was delivered by Lori Rupp of Brookfield, recipient of an Alumnae Association Summa Cum Laude Award for highest grade point average in the two-year class. “It’s time to do what we love—go forth and heal,” Lori told her fellow graduates.

The Bridgeport Hospital School of Nursing’s diploma programs qualify graduates to take the state nursing licensure exam. All the graduates of the December 2012 accelerated class have already passed the exam and are working at Bridgeport Hospital or other area hospitals and healthcare agencies. A number of graduates elect to continue their nursing education in bachelor’s degree or specialty certification programs, even as they begin working.

Bridgeport Hospital President & CEO Bill Jennings, Senior Vice President & Chief Nursing Officer MaryEllen Hope Kosturko, and School of Nursing Director Carol Papp, were among the many hospital officials who took part in the ceremony, which included award presentations to 24 outstanding students. Students also recited the Florence Nightingale pledge and lit ceremonial lamps to honor the 19th century nursing pioneer.

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Jennings recalled the quote from PBS children's show host Fred Rogers (*Mister Rogers*) that has been repeated often in the wake of the December Newtown school shootings and Boston Marathon bombings: "When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'"

"Don't just look for the helpers," Jennings added. "Be the helpers. Be the ones to run toward the hurt with compassion and hope."

Kosturko congratulated the graduates for earning their diplomas and welcomed them as colleagues into the nursing profession. "There's a lot more to come," she said. "The possibilities for you are truly endless. Stay involved and grow every day."

"I could not be more proud of our students and faculty," said Papp. "We have made this journey together. Speaking for the rest of the staff, we are honored to contribute to the education of a new generation of nurses."

Established in 1884 by then president of the hospital board P.T. Barnum and other leaders, the Bridgeport Hospital School of Nursing is the longest-operating nursing school in Connecticut. In addition to its registered nurse diploma programs, the school offers a surgical technology program and a sterile processing technician program. For more information, visit www.bridgeporthospital.org/bhsn.

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