



Celebrate International Nurses Day – May 12

An open letter from CNA President Kaaren Neufeld

Dear Colleagues:

In 1971, the International Council of Nurses (ICN) designated May 12 as International Nurses Day, in honour of the birthday of Florence Nightingale. In Canada, this day also coincides with National Nursing Week. And the year 2010 is a special milestone for nurses across the globe as it marks the 100th anniversary of the death of “the lady with the lamp.”

To pay homage to the remarkable woman who laid the foundations for our profession, special celebrations and events have been scheduled throughout the year. For example, the Royal Mint (UK) has worked with ICN to produce a £2 coin to commemorate the life and works of Florence Nightingale.

I invite you to join CNA and your nursing colleagues of all nationalities on May 12th to celebrate the life of Florence Nightingale – and to take the opportunity to reflect on the myriad contributions that nurses make to the well-being of those around them. Through our clinical reasoning, professional judgment and experience, and persistent and creative advocacy for clients and populations, we continually prove our commitment to saving lives and acting as guardians of good health.

During this time, we also pay tribute to the lives of our colleagues around the world who died in the course of their work or studies to improve health outcomes. We think particularly of the nurses and people of Haiti, where our profession was struck a serious blow with the death of nurses and several hundred nursing students in the January 12th earthquake. We grieve with our Haitian colleagues as they deal with their personal loss and struggle to rebuild their profession and country.

Participation and contribution are two of the hallmarks of nursing. As we celebrate the life of one of nursing’s guiding lights, we should be mindful of her advice to “never lose an opportunity of urging a practical beginning, however small, for it is wonderful how often in such matters the mustard-seed germinates and roots itself.” In honour of Florence Nightingale and of our fallen comrades in Haiti, we will be taking this advice literally by planting a commemorative rose bush on the grounds of CNA house.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Kaaren Neufeld'.

Kaaren Neufeld, RN, MN
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