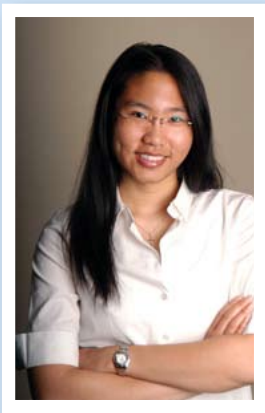


PROFILE

Undergraduate Nursing Student; Philiz Goh



Philiz Goh never expected to be studying to become a nurse at the University of Toronto. Growing up, Philiz dreamed of becoming a physiotherapist and attended the University of Waterloo to major in Kinesiology. It was not until she encountered a personal tragedy during her third year of University that made her reconsider her career path. I spoke with Philiz about her nursing stud-

ies, her desire to encourage others to consider oncology nursing and her personal mission to become an oncology nurse.

You received a degree in kinesiology in 2007 and now are studying to become an oncology nurse, what made you reconsider your career path?

I had completed four out of six co-op placements in physiotherapy settings before my father was diagnosed with brain cancer. Five short months later, he passed away. I was devastated but determined to finish school.

During this time, applications for the next co-op placements were taking place. By what I'm sure is the work of a greater being, a computer glitch placed me in an interview for a palliative radiation research position at the Odette Cancer Centre. I took the position and realized I found my niche and passion in oncology!

What made oncology nursing so appealing to you?

Through my co-op placement I have met some great oncology nurses who really help and support each other. I want to be a part of this inspirational group and help others.

You are very involved in extra curricular activities; why is this important to you?

I have several roles that I take a lot of pride in. I am President of my nursing program's Nursing Undergraduate Society, a Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology (CANO) student representative, and member at large for the Toronto CANO chapter. These roles are important as they allow me to expose students to different nursing areas.

What do you hear most from your student peers about oncology nursing?

I think the general consensus is that they've had little exposure to the field of oncology. Most of them have dreams of working in paediatrics, cardiology or emergency. They also worry about the oncology stereotypes such as patients die everyday and there is nothing nurses can do to help them. This is why I've worked hard to bring oncology nurses and organizations like de Souza Institute into our school to do student presentations.

When you're not promoting oncology, how do you like to spend your time?

I am a foodie! I enjoy making meals and eating them with friends and family. I also enjoy watching movies, painting and skydiving.

On January 18th 2010, de Souza Institute Director, Mary Jane Esplen spoke to over 200 nursing students at the University of Toronto about the possibilities of an oncology nursing career. We would like to thank Philiz for helping to organize such a successful event.

OUR STORIES

Oncology Nurses Inspire Undergraduate Students

"Oncology nursing is not an area for everyone, but for many it is an extraordinary place where you have the privilege of working with the strongest, most inspiring individuals everyday."



Romeo Cruz

That is how Romeo Cruz, a nurse coordinator at Toronto General Hospital, described oncology nursing in a new booklet aimed at undergraduate nursing students entitled *Make a Difference: Oncology Nursing*. Cruz was one of seven Canadian nurses profiled by de Souza Institute in an effort to inform nursing students about the various roles and opportuni-

ties available in oncology nursing.

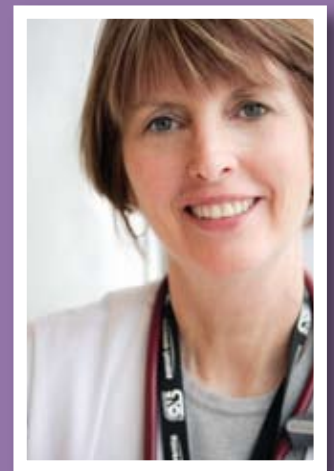
"Talking to students we realized that many had little exposure to oncology nursing and weren't sure of the possibilities," said Susan Clarke, de Souza Institute Clinical Manager. "We wanted real Canadian nurses in different career roles and stages to tell their story about how this career has benefited them."

The featured nurses shared inspirational stories of choosing oncology, what makes their current role special and why cancer care is an important and fascinating area. The six other nurses who shared their story include:

- Heather Robson – Public Health Nurse – Genetic Nurse Counsellor, Algoma Public Health
- Stephanie Burlein-Hall – APN and Program Coordinator, PYNK Program – Odette Cancer Centre

- Jennifer Wiernikowski – Chief of Nursing Practice, Juravinski Cancer Centre & CANO President
- Lynne Penton – Acute Care Nurse Practitioner, William Osler Health System
- Deborah Mcleod – Clinician Scientist, QEII Health Sciences Centre
- Erika Kukucska – Registered Nurse, Princess Margaret Hospital

In addition to the booklet, de Souza Institute is also informing students about oncology nursing possibilities through undergraduate information sessions. Most recently, the Institute hosted a session in January at the Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto. Over 200 undergraduate nursing students attended the afternoon session presented by de Souza Institute Director, Mary Jane Esplen. More information sessions are being scheduled at Universities across Ontario in the upcoming months.



Lynne Penton

The booklet *Make a Difference: Oncology Nursing* is available free on the de Souza Institute website at http://desouzanurse.ca/resources_nursing.shtml. Undergraduate information sessions can be scheduled through apugh@desouzanurse.ca. Visit the de Souza Institute website for upcoming undergraduate information session dates.