

High School Offers Nursing Skills Class

Torrance Hospital Becomes Classroom



Checking Linen Closet

Student Sandy Wandbaugh checks the Torrance Memorial Hospital linen closet for clean sheets as she prepared to begin her morning duties.

When the 8:30 a.m. bell signals the start of class on the Torrance High School campus each morning, nine students head away from the classrooms and down the tree-lined streets of central Torrance.

Dressed in crisply starched green and white striped dresses and accompanied by a woman garbed in the white uniform of the nursing profession, they head for Torrance Memorial Hospital.

The girls are members of a novel class, nursing skills, and their companion is their teacher, Mrs. Virginia Lavanis, school nurse and originator of the unusual vocational course.

Begin last Spring as a pilot program aimed at training students for positions as nurses aides, the class stepped out of the classroom and into the hospital corridors this fall.

Hospital experiences are geared toward practical application of their studies. Each girl works as part of a nursing team under supervision of a professional nurse in the hospital's surgical ward.

At the beginning of each week she is assigned a patient for the week. She is given his chart and assigned to write a case study. Homework consists of researching the illness for group discussion at the weekly Friday morning conference. She is concerned with the diagnosis, treatment, drugs, and recommended care for the particular illness.

Each morning when she arrives she receives a morning report on her patient. She checks the patient's chart to see what has been prescribed for him that day by his physician.

During the morning she will make his bed, bathe him, and see that the doctor's orders are carried out. If the patient requires exercise, she will take him for a walk down the corridor. If the doctor has ordered bed rest, she will see that those instructions are followed.

The entire time she is at the hospital she is under close supervision by a licensed vocational nurse or a registered nurse. When she has finished her morning's work in the ward, she turns in her work sheet with a

record of what she has done and her comments. After the instructor goes over her paper and visits the patient, she receives her grade for the day.

Although nursing skills is a new course for high school students, similar courses have been taught on the college level. Mrs. Lavanis a registered nurse who will receive her master's degree in nursing next June, formerly taught a course in nursing at Harbor College.

The program at Torrance High came about as a result of a letter she received from the National League of Nurses and the American Nurses Association which urged upgrading the training for beginning nurses.

After receiving the letter, the high school nurse visited a program being conducted at a Los Angeles high school and, calling on her experiences in junior college, outlined a tentative program for a nursing skills class. The program differs from after-school hospital volunteer programs for teenagers in that it focuses on patient care rather than service activities.

Once the program was approved in principle, the school district applied for funds from the California Vocational Act, and set the wheels in motion.

In the pre-hospital semester of classroom experience, students study the human body in health and disease. They learn about food, nutrition, prevention of illness, and such hospital procedures as principles of sterilization, how to give a bath and massage and care for the bedridden. Students get experience practicing nursing techniques on a life-size hospital doll which is built like a human being both inside and out.

Upon completion of classroom instruction, they receive a Red Cross first aid and home nursing certificate.

Following completion of the classroom and hospital phases of the program, students are qualified to either work in a hospital as a nurses aide, seek employment in a doctor's office or as an airline stewardess, become a homemaker, or take further college training in these professions.



Plan Nursing Skills Program

Dr. Kurt Shery, staff physician and a member of the Torrance Board of Education, and Mrs. Virginia Lavanis, Torrance High School nurse, discuss plans for the Nursing skills program with Leonard Ensinger, Torrance Memorial Hospital administrator.



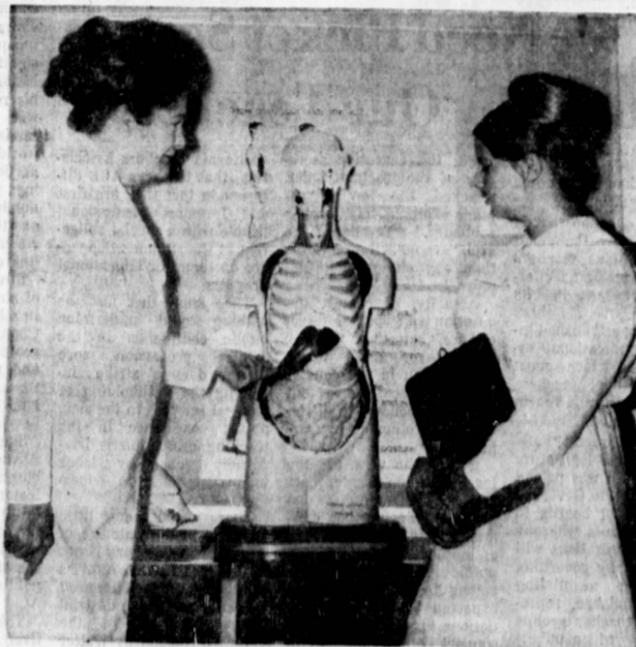
Morning Massage

Erwin King, a patient at Torrance Memorial Hospital, gets his morning massage from Lucinda Bailey, one of nine Torrance High girls participating in the nursing skills program.



Everything on a Tray

Kathleen Alexander prepares supplies for use in giving one of her patients a massage during hospital duty as part of the nursing skills program.



How the Body Functions

Functions of the human body are explained by Mrs. Virginia Lavanis, Torrance High School nurse, to student Sandra Geiger. The lesson is part of the nursing skills program.



For a Stroll

Jacqueline Weisman prepares a walker in order to exercise a patient assigned to her care through the Torrance High nursing skills class.