

# Reflections on NURSING

This spring, for the second year in a row, *Registered Nurse Journal* asked RNs to tell us about their practice. We asked you to describe the knowledge and skills you bring to your work, and how you make a difference in patient care. The stories were first published on our website during Nursing Week to help fellow RNs, the public and the media better understand the important role nurses play in the health-care system. A selection is re-printed here. Thank you to everyone who took the time to write. We hope these stories will inspire every RN and fill you with pride for the profession.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY  
JANICE KUN

## probing for answers

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While working on a hospital's general surgery floor three years ago, I began to notice the startling incidence of cancers and major illnesses in young people. It piqued my curiosity. Why were these individuals grappling with health concerns commonly thought to afflict older adults? I remember one man in particular. In his 30s, he was diagnosed with colon cancer. Although there was a family history of the disease, he was the youngest ever diagnosed in his family. A father of two small children, he now had to undergo a colostomy and chemotherapy. His story prompted me to think about preventive health screening programs available to Canadians.

Last winter, I applied for a position working for an organization I hope will help people like that man. I now work for Bayshore Home Health on a new research project called The Ontario Health Study. This project follows participants at scheduled intervals over 20 years to look for chronic-disease risk factors. Each day, I'm involved in nursing research in a way I'd dreamed of as an undergraduate, and I use my nursing skills in a variety of ways. I interview study participants, collect physical measures data, and review results with participants. I have also worked in the study's call centre to provide information on the study and medical knowledge to future study participants. As I continue to gain experience in this role, I look forward to the future, and a career in nursing research, with a renewed sense of enthusiasm and wonder at all the things I have yet to discover.