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Rappahannock Community College

Michele Inderrieden

Media Services Manager

minderrieden@rappahannock.edu

(804)333-6824

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**Rappahannock Community College Holds Combined Nurse Pinning and Health Sciences Commencement Ceremony for Fall 2023 Graduates**

Rappahannock Community College (RCC) introduced 29 nurses to the community at Commencement exercises on January 11 at the White Stone Church of the Nazarene. The graduates earned an Associate of Applied Science in Nursing (ADN), and one graduate also earned an Associate Degree of Arts and Sciences Pre-BSN.

The nurse pinning ceremony is time-honored tradition where the nursing profession declares, in a public fashion, that the graduates are ready and prepared to enter the profession. In a symbolic welcoming, one nurse pins the next generation of nurses. Many students selected someone who inspired and encouraged them through their journey as their “pinners,” including family members and faculty who are nurses themselves.

The Fall Class of 2023 nursing graduates are Veulah Alvarado, Kelsi Ashburn, Tanya Bentick, Jenna Burns, Jasmine Conlan, Courtney deCheubel, Ashley Dickerson, Hunter Dunlevy, Madison Gaskill, Koolapramote Grabosky, Amber Headley, Helen Hebbons, Victoria Kohles, Alexis Little, Sophia Luzier, Rebecca Newsome, Kelsea Nichols, Elizabeth Norton, Brittany Ottarson, Abbagale Perez, Colin Robison, Eaden Sill, Lauren South, Natalie Stevens, Blaire Sydnor, Savannah Walker, Molly Weston, Rebekah White, and Kendra Yates.

Nursing Program Head Dr. Becky White addressed the graduates, “You are all kind and compassionate. You will always care for others in this very same way. Never would I expect you not to hold a hand or offer a prayer. Each of you in this small group has that very same mentality, you love people and they merely only need to “Come.” Come for your care, your compassion, and love. And that is what makes a great RCC nurse. From your faculty and all of the leadership here that have been blessed by your light, we wish you all the very best.”

Several students received awards. Tanya Bentick and Mae Alvarado received the *Perseverance Award*. This award recognizes students who have demonstrated the highest level of perseverance in pursuit of their degrees and showed courage to ignore the obvious wisdom of turning back.

The *Preceptorship Award* is given to students who are recognized as having excellent clinical performance during their final experience in the nursing program. Sophia Luzier and Rebekah White received the *Preceptorship Award*.

Brittany Ottarson and Alexis Little were awarded the *Outstanding Clinical Achievement Award* These students were selected by faculty as having demonstrated excellent clinical practices.

The Catherine Courtney Award is given in honor of Professor Emeritus Mrs. Catherine Courtney, the first nursing program faculty member who dedicated 32 years to teaching at RCC, and continues her commitment to RCC as a member of the Educational Foundation board. The award recognizes students who demonstrate all-around leadership and achievement in academic, clinical, and interpersonal excellence with patients, peers, and faculty. Winners are chosen by the nursing faculty. This year’s recipients are Molly Weston and Kendra Yates.

Dr. Shannon Kennedy, president of RCC, conferred the degrees and presented the graduates to the audience. “Compassion, empathy, attention to detail, patience, understanding, not to mention the ability to withstand the sight of blood and a myriad of bodily fluids – these are the characteristics of a nurse. Not everyone has those characteristics. You have proven, through an incredible amount of hard work and perseverance, that you have what it takes.”

“Always remember that your work is noble and essential and you make people feel hope. I would be honored to have you as my nurse if the need ever arises. Congratulations fall class of 2023,” concluded Kennedy.

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Since 1970, Rappahannock Community College has been breaking down barriers to education in the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck. Five degrees, 6 certificates, and 26 career and workforce studies programs are offered through RCC, in addition to nearly 40 guaranteed admissions agreements with colleges and universities across the state and region. For more information, visit rappahannock.edu.