Student Spotlight

The AANA Foundation is pleased to present Student Spotlight, a feature that recognizes student registered nurse anesthetists who have captured attention through their dedication to education, professional excellence, and overall commitment to advancing nurse anesthesia.

Laci Severson Lynch, RN, BSN

Growing up in Cumberland, Wis., Laci Lynch experienced firsthand the important role nurse anesthetists have in a rural community. As a child, Laci required surgery, and she still remembers the skillful, compassionate care she received from her CRNA. Now Laci is in her second year at the Minneapolis School of Anesthesia, and she has gotten to personally know her childhood anesthetist, Jeff Kuehn, CRNA, MS. Laci mentions, “I love how it has come full circle. First he was my anesthetist, now he is my mentor and a guest instructor at my program.” Jeff is also a graduate of the Minneapolis School of Anesthesia, and he has mentored many students and CRNAs. Laci said, “Jeff is truly an example of how each individual person can make a difference.”

With that example in mind, coupled with her unwavering passion and determination, Laci seeks out opportunities for professional involvement. She began working with the AANA Foundation where she has served as a student liaison on several Foundation task forces. As student liaison, Laci has consistently advocated for students and fostered student involvement. It was through her involvement with the AANA Foundation that I first met her in Las Vegas at the 2013 AANA Annual Meeting.

Laci’s humble personality combined with her passionate, well-spoken delivery impressed many respected leaders within our profession. Watching Laci successfully convey her message and advocate for CRNA students across the country was impressive.

Laci’s ability to strike up a conversation and engage people has served her well when working with the AANA Foundation, but she says her “gift of gab” almost prevented her from considering anesthesia. She confided in me: “I thought you had to be quiet in the OR!” The nurse-patient relationship was something Laci cherished in the ICU, and she was worried about losing that in anesthesia. However, Laci says, “As a student anesthetist, I have found that no matter how short the interaction, I can still form a connection with my patients. I recognize that my ‘everyday’ is their ‘once in a lifetime,’ and I feel a great sense of responsibility to make those interactions count.”

When Laci is not studying or in the OR, she volunteers with LifeSource, an organ donation coordination center based in St. Paul, Minn. Laci’s brother was a tissue donor, and she uses this venue to educate students at local high schools about organ and tissue donation.

Rebecca Gombkoto, CRNA, DNP, director of the Minneapolis School of Anesthesia, describes Laci as “an exceptional student who has excelled in both the didactic and clinical curriculum.” Gombkoto said that “Laci is an exceptionally motivated learner who takes an active role in her education. Clinical faculty members have consistently commented that she formulates thought-provoking questions and solicits feedback regarding her practice and skills from both CRNAs and anesthesiologists. Soon after she matriculated, Laci expressed interest in becoming involved in the AANA. Since that time, she has sought out opportunities to serve her professional colleagues at the local and national level. I am certain that Laci Lynch will continue to be a strong leader following the completion of her educational program. I look forward to seeing all that she accomplishes as a CRNA.”

Emergency Educational Grants Available for Nurse Anesthesia Students

Initiated by a contribution from the AANA, the new AANA Foundation Emergency Educational Grant Program supports student registered nurse anesthetists (SRNAs) during times of financial hardship. SRNAs with unexpected or catastrophic situations can apply for a one-time grant, up to $5,000.

Applications must be an associate member of the AANA and have completed no less than one year of the generic curricula in anesthesia. The student’s program administrator must submit the application, along with his/her letter of support. Financial needs include unexpected medical expenses, either personal or family, and unexpected or catastrophic situations that have had a profound financial impact on the student. Evidence of requesting financial assistance from other parties is required.

For more information, visit the Applications and Programs section of the AANA Foundation website at www.aanafoundation.com.