

Student Life

Nursing is about more than service. It is about courage and sacrifice.

Saving Katrina's VICTIMS

Few know this more than **Gretel Jugl '07**, a junior in the School of Nursing's R.N. to B.S. program. Horrified by news reports of the suffering caused by Hurricane Katrina, the home health care nurse left her job at North Shore Long Island Jewish Health Care System, school, and two-year-old daughter and drove to Baton Rouge, Louisiana to assist with the recovery effort. Experienced in surgical and emergency nursing, she volunteered for two and a half weeks, first at the makeshift hospital at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge and then in downtown New Orleans.

Ms. Jugl knew she had the medical skills that were so desperately needed, and wasn't interested in "wasting" them by staying home.

She was not the only one who felt compelled to help. Doctors, nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists, and chaplains from across the country had also answered the call.

Despite the outpouring of assistance, the need was overwhelming. Ms. Jugl worked frantically for thirty-two hours straight treating critical care patients suffering from fractures, dehydration, diabetes, trauma, and respiratory complications. She faced up to fifty to sixty patients at a time as helicopters flew in with critically ill nursing home evacuees.

Her patients' stories helped her keep her own hardships in perspective. One patient, a woman in her 30's, had lost two family members in the flood, was evacuated in the convention center shelter, and suffered from a fractured ankle.

As the days passed, the floodwaters gradually withdrew from New Orleans revealing the depth of their destruction and allowing help to reach the survivors trapped in the devastated city. Ms. Jugl knew that it was time to leave Baton Rouge.

Once in New Orleans, she and eight fellow volunteers established a makeshift hospital at a Sheridan Hotel gift shop. They were without electricity and running water. Food rations were limited to what had been on sale in the gift shop.

"We were there for a week," she says. "The first day, there were twenty-five people to treat. We started doing rescues out in the field, and then in two days, there were a thousand people in the Sheridan."

As Ms. Jugl waded into the toxic water to search for survivors, she encountered residents who, despite grave



First to Aid, Nursing '07 student Gretel Jugl administers first aid to Katrina victims.

medical conditions and evident health hazards, were unwilling to evacuate without their pets. Concerned for them, she recruited a special agent from Homeland Security and a group of national guardsmen to help. Ultimately, fifty people were rescued, along with eighteen dogs, a boa constrictor, and a lizard.

Ms. Jugl's own resolve in such adverse conditions surprised her. "I realized that I'm a stronger person than I originally thought," she says. "I have a lot to offer as a nurse, and I realized that working together we can achieve amazing things."

As painful as her memories can be, the experience gave her a greater appreciation for the power of the human spirit. "I met the most amazing and beautiful people, and I'll never forget them." **A**

Student Government Association President Robert Meekins '06 gives first State of the Student Union address.



Suited for CHANGE

On Thursday nights in the University Center, **Robert J. Meekins '06** can be found impeccably dressed in full suit and tie, presiding over a room packed with student senators and club members during weekly meetings of the Student Government Association. But it is his dedication to change, rather than his professional garb, that distinguishes him as a leader for his generation.

As president, Rob has faced the usual S.G.A. responsibilities, including allocating the \$700,000 student activity budget among Adelphi's many clubs. No mean task, but he feels strongly that S.G.A. must do more than represent and govern student clubs and organizations. He wants S.G.A. to be a voice for all students, to speak for the student union.

One tactic for engaging students and "getting them interested" has been to expand S.G.A. participation by bringing in more representatives. He points out that with fifty senators, S.G.A. is almost four times larger than when he joined in 2003. But more than beefing up S.G.A., he wants his fellow students, and University administrators, to understand that "we are clients, customers, stakeholders, and beneficiaries of Adelphi University." He admits that students do require some guid-

ance, but expects that students will be "active participants at every level" of decision-making.

Rob cites some of the ways he and his colleagues have been successful in inserting student voices into campus issues. For the first time, two representatives from S.G.A. will sit on the Board of Trustees Student Life Com-

mittee, and a new Student Technology Advisory Committee enables students to air their views about campus technology resources and policies.

"I started out as someone who came here in the morning and left after classes were done," he says about his experience as a new transfer student in 2003. A friend eventually roped him into serving as an S.G.A.

commuter student representative. He initially found the meetings "boring." "It took me a while to realize that if you want to change something, you have to be part of it," he says.

What's next after graduation? Rob says that he plans to pursue a graduate degree in history as well as a law degree and hopes eventually to work in international relations. **A**

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- Robert Meekins '06