

## Local nurse receives coveted education leadership award

By Joshua Santos

Bolton resident Brenda Orazietti received the coveted Leadership Award in Nursing Education (academic category) presented by the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (RNAO) recently.

"It's been amazing," said Ms. Orazietti. "It's really nice to be recognized and acknowledge for your contribution to nursing. I've been a nurse for 31 years and I've been always advocating for patients and teaching and students and health care in general. I work really hard teaching. I've been teaching nursing in different roles for 17 years.

The award is presented to a registered nurse or nurse practitioner who the RNAO finds practices excellence as a nursing educator in a college or university setting. The individual enhances the image of nursing by encouraging critical thinking, innovation and debate about important nursing issues, and acts as a role model and mentor in their work environment.

Ms. Orazietti teaches at York University, works in the intensive care units at Toronto Western Hospital and has her own business of medical aesthetics. Her specialty, however, has been in critical care nursing, which she has lectured on at York University for the past seven years. She teaches several nursing leadership courses and acute care courses.

"Most people go their whole life without winning an award or receiving any professional formal accolade," said Ms. Orazietti. "It's really nice to be acknowledged."

"You have to be able to demonstrate competency and good judgment and good skills in order to excel in the profession and do well," she said. "That led me to being the critical care educator for Etobicoke General, which was the first educator role at the time."

She went this route after receiving a critical care certificate while working in coronary intensive care at Etobicoke General Hospital. Prior to that, she was at the medical institution working at their surgical floor.

She was always interested in the human body, illness and wellness. She said nursing is a diverse field that there is something for everybody, from health, wellness, illness and birth and death.

"You can focus on the wellness part and work in public health, you can work in genetics which is huge and blowing up and there's a huge shortage of nurses in genetics expertise and then there's the acute care spectrum of birthing babies all the way through to palliative, oncology and end of life and how do you care for someone as they die. We even have organ donation nurses, like Trillium Gift of Life nurses that run programs."

Ms. Orazietti said that during her career nursing has become more complex. Acute care has exploded and become difficult for a nurse to remain astute, skilled and competent.

"The pace is so much faster and the push to discharge is so much quicker," she said. "The acute care, which I nurse in and which I have taught my nursing students in, requires an awful lot of knowledge and skills on a wide breadth of topics."

She said there is a lot more information now with evidence-based practices and good research to fall back on to treat a lot of patients, but going through all of it is daunting and difficult to keep up with new drugs for example.

"Pharmacology is exploding with hundreds of new drugs every year and formularies changing that quickly," she said. "There's hundreds of thousands of new research articles being deposited in databases."

Ms. Orazietti is now finishing up a master's degree in nursing science through Aspen University, having recently completed a

master's degree in education to start teaching in universities.