

Early Signs of Success with Chicago Schweitzer Fellows for Life Mentoring Project

(May, 2009) To help address the nation's serious and growing shortage of nurses, Fellows for Life and Rush University College of Nursing are collaborating on a pilot project to provide mentoring support for underrepresented student nurses. The project matches Fellows for Life Mentors who are in the nursing field with underrepresented student nurses, whom they offer guidance, encouragement and support, and help with developing their leadership capabilities.

The first group of 10 student nurses was matched with Schweitzer mentors in December 2008, and they met for the first time at an orientation dinner at Rush University.

"Many of the Schweitzer Fellows are themselves from diverse backgrounds, they understand the challenges of successfully completing a prelicensure nursing program," said Lisa Rosenberg, Director for Academic Advancement at Rush, and also a member of the Schweitzer Advisory Council. "Rush University College Of Nursing's strong relationship with the Chicago Schweitzer Fellowship provides a unique opportunity for relationships to be forged between our Generalist Entry Masters (GEM) students and dedicated role models."



(Nursing student Mitesh Patel and his Fellow for Life mentor, Eileen Kane Dollear)

she has been through the same process. "

So far, informal feedback has been very positive.

"I was in regular contact with my mentor about my academic progress and role development in nursing," said Mitesh Patel, one of the nursing students. "She gave me very good guidance about time management, organization, active participation in learning (in class and clinical) and being focused on goals... I think she is a great resource for me in my educational experience. " Nursing student Nichole Wilson also appreciated the relationship she had with her Schweitzer For Life mentor. She remarked: "It is great knowing that not only do I have this support system, but also that she is knowledgeable about experiences and or problems I may be having, because

A second cohort (also 10 nursing students) will be matched with Schweitzer mentors in June, 2009. We hope that this pilot can become a successful model that other Schweitzer Programs as well as other organizations might follow.