



# How About It?

## Engage Members Now to Build for the Future

By actively engaging our Local leaders and our grassroots members, we expose them to the work of our Union and the numerous ways in which we support our members.

One of the key strategic outcomes identified by ONA's Board of Directors for our organization is to build a "thriving Union achieved through active informed membership participation."



To support this outcome, a particular strategy was identified that has now become a fundamental part of ONA culture. It is called "succession planning."

You can see elements of "succession planning" in a vast range of activities currently percolating throughout our Union, from a concerted effort to "engage" through a variety of means ONA leaders and both active and inactive grassroots members at the Local and Bargaining Unit levels, and our efforts to foster our future membership base through "student engagement."

This builds on another key strategic outcome of our Union, "member engagement," to ensure "Local Executive and Bargaining Unit Leadership are actively involved and knowledgeable regarding the work of the Union."

By actively engaging our Local leaders and our grassroots members, we expose them to the work of our Union and the numerous ways in which we support our members. This means involving them in our many activities, whether it is attending regional

or provincial meetings, joining provincial teams, attending rallies and public forums, reading our publications and communications, and visiting our website.

Why is this important, and what exactly do we mean by succession planning from an ONA perspective?



To understand why we need to engage in this long-term planning, one need only look at demographics for registered nurses working in Ontario, which mirror what is happening across Canada.

According to the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO), there was a 1.3 per cent increase in the number of RNs working in Ontario in 2009 compared to the year before, and an increase of 15.8 per cent since the low point of 2001. While increases were seen in the 18-29 and 55+ age groups, the majority of RNs currently working in Ontario are in the age range of 40-59. In 2009, the average age for RNs working in Ontario was 46.3 years old. (From "CNO Member Statistics 2009": [http://www.cno.org/docs/general/43069\\_stats/43069\\_MemberStats2009.pdf](http://www.cno.org/docs/general/43069_stats/43069_MemberStats2009.pdf).)

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In a nutshell, this means more than 25,000 or 27.6 per cent of working Ontario RNs in the 55+ age range will soon be eligible for retirement.

So not only will the nursing shortage worsen in the coming years, particularly if Ontario health employers continue to lay off nurses in order to cut budgets, but the gap left by retiring nurses will mean a whole new set of challenges for the next generation of nursing leaders. For ONA specifically, this means losing a significant number of experienced “seasoned” leaders and union activists.

In view of this trend, ONA is devoting considerable energy to “succession planning” – planning for the eventual emergence of a new generation of leaders.



“We are working to ensure we can smoothly pave the way for a new generation of leaders, passing the torch from our retiring leaders and grassroots membership to the next generation, for the long-term sustainability and continued provision of high quality services to our members,” said ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud, RN.

“We not only are striving to identify and prepare the leaders of tomorrow, but to transfer the knowledge and experience of our long-standing leaders and front-line members to take our Union into the future.”

According to member research, membership engagement is important to ONA not only for its current well-being but for its sustainability into the future.

“Engaging all our members, not only the core of active members who emerge as



leaders but also the ‘non-actives’ who tend not to be involved in union activities, is absolutely critical to building a thriving and healthy union now and into the future,” said Haslam-Stroud.

“In that regard, we have embarked on a number of strategies to build on our future, including: education (leadership conferences and a workshop specific to succession planning); increased reliance on electronic communication, such as our enhanced user-friendly website, social media networking like Facebook and Twitter, and an expanded e-mail system that includes more and more Bargaining Unit Presidents; our membership publication *Front Lines*; comprehensive dissemination of information through mailings; and more direct contacts between the Board members and front-line members at their worksites.”

Add to that the whole range of tools at leaders’ fingertips, such as the Mentorship Toolkit to assist leaders in mentoring their members, the New Member Orientation Guide that encourages new members to become active participants of ONA, CEO Monitoring Reports, Board Meeting Highlights, and Provincial Coordinators Meeting (PCM) and Biennial Convention Highlights and Action Plans distributed post-PCMs and Biennials.



Further to that, former Canadian Nursing Students’ Association (CNSA) national President Tyler Kuhk has developed a toolkit of “Effective Mentorship Tools” for front-line RNs to utilize in their workplaces. The project was part of his six-week clinical placement with ONA, where he worked at our provincial office in Toronto under Haslam-Stroud’s guidance and mentorship.

Haslam-Stroud says she sees these efforts at succession planning beginning to bear fruit.

“When I stood and looked at Local leaders at the March 2010 PCM, I was thrilled to see young and new leaders in attendance, as well as a contingent of nursing students, joining forces with the stalwarts of our long-standing veteran leaders. I’ve been hearing reports about a new enthusiasm at the grassroots level and I could see it by the warm and enthusiastic response at the PCM. It gives me hope that we are paving the way to a strong future,” said Haslam-Stroud.

“And so we are continuing to actively engage with our leaders and grassroots members to ensure our Union not only thrives, but builds on a solid foundation. ONA leaders tell us their workloads are heavy and that they need support. That support will come from the grassroots membership, and to that end ONA will continue to find new ways to engage them.”



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# Ontario's Changing RN Workforce

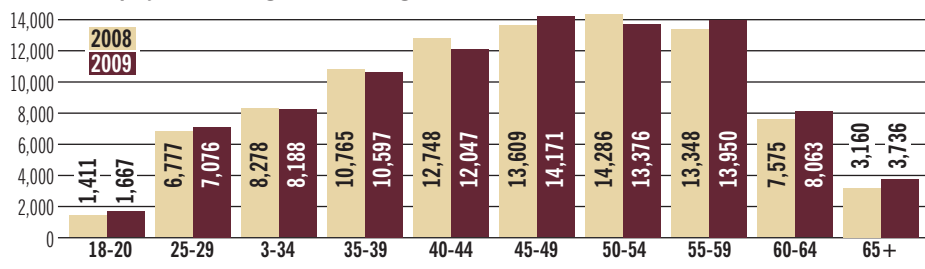
The following statistical information paints a picture of a changing RN workforce in Ontario, in which many of our seasoned, experienced RNs could retire in the next few years. These statistics clearly demonstrate the need for succession planning to ensure ONA's long-term sustainability.

- The average age of RNs for 2009 in Ontario was 46.3 years. The distribution of RNs by age group in 2009 was similar to the distribution in 2008, though increases were observed in the 18-29 and 55+ age groups. In 2009, more than 25,000 or 27.6 per cent of working Ontario RNs in the 55+ age range are eligible to retire in the coming years.



ONA members participated in a rally in Hamilton.

RNs Employed in Nursing in Ontario - Age Distribution 2008 and 2009



Source: College of Nurses of Ontario  
"Member Statistics Report 2009."

[http://www.cno.org/docs/general/43069\\_stats/43069\\_MemberStats2009.pdf](http://www.cno.org/docs/general/43069_stats/43069_MemberStats2009.pdf)

- In 2009, there were 6,552 new members in the General Class: 3,611 RNs and 2,941 RPNs. The average age of new RNs for 2009 in Ontario was 26.7 years.

Source: College of Nurses of Ontario  
"Trends in General Class New Members 2009."

[http://www.cno.org/docs/general/43011\\_TrendsNewMembers.pdf](http://www.cno.org/docs/general/43011_TrendsNewMembers.pdf)

- If the health needs of Canadians continue to change according to past trends, the shortage of RNs in Canada will increase to almost 60,000 FTEs by 2022. If the health needs of Canadians remain as they are today, the gap will be smaller, at approximately 54,000 FTEs. Thus a failure to account for the changing health needs of Canadians could result in an

underestimation of the future shortage of RNs by approximately 6,000 FTEs. The results suggest that the gap will grow under both scenarios. This is because while the supply of RNs in Canada will increase over 15 years, the number of RNs required will increase at a higher rate over the same period. This is due at least in part to a growing and aging population and an aging RN workforce.

- Of all the sectors, acute care has the largest RN workforce, both in number available and number required. In this sector, the number of RN FTEs will increase from about 131,000 to 179,000, or about 37 per cent, by 2022. In long-term care, the number of FTE RNs required will increase about 36 per cent, from 27,000 to 36,000, over the same period, while the number of community RNs required will increase 12 per cent, from about 25,000 to 28,000.

Finally, the requirement for home-care RNs will increase by roughly 29 per cent, from about 6,900 to 8,900 FTEs, by 2022.

Source: Canadian Nurses' Association, "Tested Solutions for Eliminating Canada's Registered Nurse Shortage," summary.

[http://www.cna-aic.ca/CNA/documents/pdf/publications/RN\\_Highlights\\_e.pdf](http://www.cna-aic.ca/CNA/documents/pdf/publications/RN_Highlights_e.pdf)

- Data from the CNA's Nursing Education in Canada Statistics, 2006-2007 report indicate that the number of RN graduates in Canada nearly doubled between 1999 and 2007, increasing from 4,833 to 9,447. The average age of these graduates was approximately 26.

Source: Canadian Nurses' Association, "Nursing Education in Canada Statistics 2006-07," summary.

[http://www.cna-aic.ca/CNA/documents/pdf/publications/Education\\_Statistics\\_Report\\_2006\\_2007\\_e.pdf](http://www.cna-aic.ca/CNA/documents/pdf/publications/Education_Statistics_Report_2006_2007_e.pdf)

- The number of nurses graduated in Ontario increased from 4,184 in 2003-04 to only 2,776 by 2007-08 – clearly not enough to make up for population growth and RN retirement.

Source: College & University Data, Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.



Nursing leaders from left to right: ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud, RN; Canadian Nursing Students' Association (CNSA) Ontario Regional Director Jamie Kyriacou; National CNSA Director Branden Shepitka; ONA Chief Executive Officer Lesley Bell, RN; and ONA First Vice-President Vicki McKenna, RN.

## Student Outreach:

# The Leaders of Tomorrow

At the Biennial Convention in 2008, ONA membership decided to reach out to nursing students by voting to incorporate a student affiliate membership into our Constitution.

This brought into the fold some 12,000 nursing students from the Ontario Region of the Canadian Nursing Students' Association (CNSA). We also liaise with the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario's (RNAO) nursing student group, the Nursing Students of Ontario (NSO).

It has created a two-way flow of contact between ONA and nursing students that includes: ONA's ongoing commitment to talk about our Union's role and our many activities in presentations at nursing schools; our provincial leaders attending CNSA regional conferences and annual meetings; and CNSA leaders attending our Provincial Coordinators Meetings (PCMs), Area Coordinators Conferences (ACCs) and Biennial Conventions, as well as attending ONA Board meetings as observers.

"This connection with students has enabled ONA to take nursing student issues forward to government and nursing stakeholder discussions," said ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud, RN.

"With their status as ONA members through the student affiliate membership, nursing stu-

dents can also take advantage of ONA's excellent education services at no cost by attending our workshops."

ONA encourages all Bargaining Unit Presidents and Local Coordinators to link with their CNSA official and associate delegates at each of the CNSA schools across Ontario, inviting CNSA delegates to their Bargaining Unit and Local meetings, as well as ACCs.

Some Bargaining Units and Locals have provided funding for students to defray costs in attending PCMs, ACCs and our upcoming 2010 Biennial Convention, as well as the CSNA national conference.

A vital component to the success of our student outreach is what happens at the Local level. To that end, ONA strongly encourages leaders to engage their student members in numerous ways, such as inviting them to attend Bargaining Unit and Local meetings and ACCs, and to participate in political action activities, such as rallies, information pickets and public forums.

Also, leaders should encourage nursing students to access ONA's website, which contains a wide array of information on our Union, including information on the critical work we do for our members.

# View from the Front Lines

*ONA leaders are taking many different approaches to succession planning at the Local and Bargaining Unit levels. For some, strong potential leaders are emerging, which makes the future look bright for their Locals. For others, things are moving forward in a slow but steady manner, and for others, it's a work in progress. All are dedicated to finding a way to ensure the long-term growth and success of our Union. Why? Because our members depend on us!*



**Debbie McCrank, Local 20**

**DEBBIE MCCRANK, Local 20 Coordinator/ Bargaining Unit President for Kirkland and District Hospital, Kirkland Lake. Debbie has been an active member of ONA for 25 years and is planning to retire in the next five years.**

We hold our Local and Bargaining Unit elections in June, mid-way through the year. This allows us more time for mentoring our potential leaders before they assume office in January, involving new leaders in the grievance process, getting them involved in our Local and Bargaining Unit work earlier, and allowing more time to access ONA education.

This helps familiarize them to the whole process of running a Local or Bargaining Unit, so that they are prepared when they take over an Executive position. What holds people back from taking on roles within the Local or Bargaining Unit is feeling that they aren't prepared and don't understand the nature of the work involved. But the more knowledgeable they are about the Union, and the more prepared and comfortable they are about the work, the more likely they are to successfully take on positions within the Local and Bargaining Unit.

The process we are using to try and entice them into becoming more active is by offering them ONA education. We currently have young members who have volunteered to sit on ONA committees and they put in a lot of effort to come out to meetings. Some members have natural leadership abilities and it's really exciting to watch them strive

to learn and become more familiar with the workings of our Union.

One of the other things we try to do is encourage more grassroots membership attendance at our education sessions, and I have noticed an increase in the numbers of attendees. As a Local, we also budget so we can provide full funding for all our Bargaining Unit Presidents to attend the Biennial Convention if they want, and most usually do. We also consider sending anyone who is going to take over a Bargaining Unit President's role so they can be familiar with what goes on at the provincial level. Our key objective is to transfer our experience and knowledge to potential leaders.



**Judy Carlson, Local 81**

**JUDY CARLSON, Local 81 Coordinator, Lake of the Woods Hospital, Kenora. Judy has been actively involved in ONA for 36 years and is planning to retire within the next three years.**

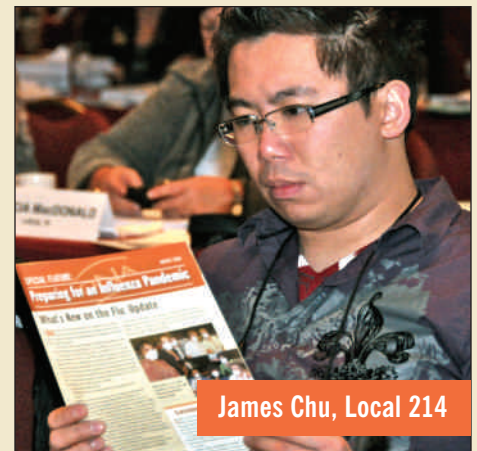
This year, we made available the ONA Executive Skills I workshop for our members, primarily for those who have recently taken on Bargaining Unit President positions and also grassroots members who are interested in becoming more involved in their Bargaining Units.

I was really impressed with how well the new people grasped all of the information provided at this workshop. Most had no background in ONA or unions, and this was their first involvement in ONA education. They left feeling they had a pretty good grasp on what they needed to do at the

Bargaining Unit level.

We have one health unit with 14 separate offices, which means the membership base is spread out. In the north it can be very difficult and isolated, but we still have a very cohesive Local Executive with many years of experience. We welcome in new people and work well together. They look forward to Executive meetings, discussing issues and problem solving, so they don't feel like they're out there on their own.

We have a number of Bargaining Unit Presidents getting ready to retire, but we are planning for that. Our Local Treasurer has expressed an interest in becoming the Local Coordinator after I retire, so within the next few years she'll start coming to provincial meetings with me to get some provincial experience.



**James Chu, Local 214**

**JAMES CHU, Local 214 Coordinator, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, Ottawa. James is only in his second year as an ONA member, assuming the role of Local Coordinator not long after joining ONA.**

Due to my prior experience as a student leader, I felt taking on a leadership role in ONA after I graduated was a natural step. I was an official delegate for two years with Humber College in the Canadian Nursing Students' Association (CNSA), Ontario Region, and also was involved with the Nursing Students of Ontario (NSO), which is the RNAO's nursing student interest group. I also served as the Secretary for RNAO's Region 10 chapter.

# View from the Front

I was very active as a student nurse, but I had planned to take a break for about a year after I finished school just to step back a bit and concentrate on nursing. It didn't quite work out that way. Things happened at work and I realized I wanted to be part of making changes happen. I didn't want to be the person sitting on the sidelines.

Now my passion is looking out for the rights of my members and I really enjoy mentoring students and new staff. I understand their concerns. I do think you need a transitional period when you take on a nursing leadership position, and I didn't really have that, so it was quite stressful to start. A large portion of our Local Executive had changed and so there were many people coming into new roles. It's quite difficult when you yourself are new.

I'm quite comfortable in my role as Local Coordinator, and enjoy working with my Executive to find different solutions. The biggest challenge is that there is just not enough involvement from our members, especially because our workload as nurses has increased. The solution to getting more of them involved is education, bringing issues forward and having them take ownership of them rather than relying on others to solve problems for them.

I also try to encourage them to participate in different events. Nursing Week is a huge one for us. We get a good turnout and members enjoy it. The key is visibility, so our members know who we are and how to reach us. We also encourage members to attend more of our meetings, and we increase the flow of communication to them so they are more aware of issues around them in the workplace.

They tend to get isolated by personal problems and forget that it may be a collective problem with a collective solution. I just try to ensure they know they are being heard.



Lisa Ladouceur, Local 92

**LISA LADOUCEUR, Local 92, a Nurse Practitioner (NP) at the Georgian Bay General Hospital and an active ONA member for over 20 years, was formerly the Local 92 Coordinator. She had left ONA when she became an NP because the position was outside the Bargaining Unit, but rejoined ONA in 2009 when NPs were brought in. She became interim Local Coordinator for a year to cover a sick leave, until Vice-Coordinator Sandra Tansley took over the role.**

I became involved in ONA in 1989 as a new grad when I filed the first professional responsibility complaint in my facility for caring for a ventilator patient. The grievance was successful and I got conscripted into the Bargaining Unit. I've held every position within the Bargaining Unit and Local since, except Treasurer (I can't balance my own chequebook!).

I thought I wasn't going to be back in ONA, but that's how it worked out. Now I'm very involved again, supporting the Bargaining Unit President and helping ONA around NP issues. I plan to be involved in leadership roles within ONA in the future. I think it's important to have that continuity.

Some grassroots nurses seem to have forgotten about their passion for education and advancement, and if you can instill that in them, you can show them

the path to get there – be a role model for them. They have to look outside their department to get a better perspective though. There are all kinds of nurses out there with different needs and challenges, and we can inspire each other and be the best champions for our profession.

I still fundamentally believe in the whole premise of a union and what it stands for, although there is a trend among NPs thinking they don't need a union. The fact is, they don't have the expertise to be at the bargaining table nor do they have the political experience. There clearly is a place for NPs in ONA, and I hope I can help them see the opportunity there. In terms of planning for the future, I'm not close to retiring and I think we haven't seen the best of nursing yet. We still have a lot of room to grow, and I want to be part of that as a leader within ONA.

We've been lucky in our Local. We have a couple of young members who have taken leadership courses, and part of our planning yearly at the Local and Bargaining Unit level is to identify who is close to retirement and who we can bring along and start preparing to be eventual replacements. We're doing a lot better than we did 20 years ago, when if you missed a meeting, you got nominated to a position on the Executive! Now there's more planning and mentoring of potential leaders into positions.

Mentoring includes having them assist at Labour-Management Committee meetings, attending ONA education, joining committees, etc. We help them through the whole process. We have someone with no experience sit with someone with lots of experience. But still, they have to want to learn.

And we start 'em young. Last week I attended a Grade 10 class to talk about nursing and my work as an NP. We try to take advantage of every opportunity.

# Lines



Carolyn Edgar, Local 6

**CAROLYN EDGAR, Local 6 Coordinator/Bargaining Unit President, North York General Hospital – Carolyn has been an active ONA leader for 19 years.**

We address succession planning in every meeting, as well as discussing member engagement. I was very moved by the discussions on succession planning and empowering Bargaining Unit Presidents following the 2008 Biennial Convention. It has triggered an enthusiasm at our Local that is very exciting.

We meet four times a year for the Local Executive and we hold two more open meetings where grassroots members can attend, plus we meet once a month as a Bargaining Unit committee. In each meeting, we address succession planning in one form or another. We don't just talk about it – we look for tangible actions.

We try to identify from each person how they see themselves within the Local and what they need to enhance their role, such as education.

For instance, one of our Executive members wanted to go to the ONA Leadership Conference in June, and so the Local supported her application wholeheartedly. That is an example of a tangible strategy for succession planning and building capacity within our Local. She will enhance her leadership skills, and the expectation is she will come back and talk about what she learned and “debrief” us on how it is

all connected to the work we do in supporting our members and running our Local and Bargaining Units.

Attending workshops, Board meetings or provincial meetings have a tangible benefit of bringing information back to the members, but also provides experience and enriches the skills of the members attending them. We currently have a stable Executive with not many thinking of retiring in the near future, but succession planning and building capacity are long-term endeavours – preparing for the future while finding solutions and improving your work processes now.

We ask our members at each level to identify what they're looking for and then try to see what we can provide for them that will support that, whether it's ONA education, mentoring or expanding their knowledge base. We try to identify opportunities for them to be leaders, such as following through on a grievance or attending provincial meetings, and then we have them talk about it at our meetings.

The other thing we're working on and plan to have out this year is a kit that basically provides a description of the functions of our Local and Bargaining Units, and talks about the specific accountabilities of each Executive member or Unit Rep, and will include some tools like an organizational chart. It will be there to utilize when someone is called on to act in a leadership capacity and it will really be helpful for new Executives down the road.

The most important thing is that we are always thinking succession planning. It's always on our agenda and part of our mindset. Out of the whole process, leaders will emerge. You're not only planning for the future, but helping your Local and Bargaining Unit run more efficiently and effectively, and engaging members at the same time.

# Are You Interested?

**ONA has a wide range of supports to help leaders with their succession planning efforts, including numerous education workshops, guides and toolkits. The following is just a sampling of what's available to help you evolve into ONA's leaders of tomorrow. You can find more information on our website at [www.ona.org](http://www.ona.org).**

## Education

Among the many workshops available that can assist leaders in conducting the business of running a Bargaining Unit or Local and help them in succession planning, there is the *Local and Bargaining Unit Succession Planning* one-day workshop for Local Coordinators and Local Executive and/or Bargaining Unit leaders.

In this workshop, the learner will review the accountabilities for the Local Executive Team and Bargaining Unit leadership, and use them as a tool in the succession planning process, learn how to mentor members and how to have difficult conversations, groom for success using practical new tools, and build the confidence of future leaders.

Also check out *Executive Skills I and II*, *How to be the Best Bargaining Unit President* and many other workshops. Visit ONA's website in the Education Section for the complete workshop catalogue and the information you need to access ONA education.

Another workshop currently under development that will be very helpful is *Building Mentoring Relationships*, which will provide good foundational material to support leaders in their succession planning. This will be available in the last quarter of 2010.

To take advantage of ONA education, connect with your Local leaders, especially if you are expecting financial support to attend.

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ONA members participate in a Treasurers Workshop.

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## Leadership Development Program/ Leadership Conference

A leadership development program for ONA members from designated human rights and equity groups has proven a huge success. It is geared to preparing members from equity groups to take on leadership roles within ONA in support of the Union's commitment to provide a positive and inclusive environment for all members.

Building on the leadership development program mentioned above, there is a new general leadership conference that was launched in June 2010. This workshop is designed to engage emerging ONA leaders for the long-term and is geared to helping leaders (new Bargaining Unit Presidents, ONA representatives and potential new ONA representatives/leaders) improve mentoring skills, design strategies aimed at enlisting active Bargaining Unit representatives and develop a strong and cohesive Bargaining Unit.

Both programs are intended to help ONA front-line representatives develop the knowledge, skills and abilities to be strong ONA leaders.

## Toolkits and Resources

*The Minutes, Motions and Meticulous Meetings Toolkit* is available for download from ONA's website. This kit includes many tools to help leaders run effective meetings, including process descriptions, templates, checklists and samples in planning and executing meetings, minimum requirements, rules of order/parliamentary procedure and action plans.

There is also a *Mentor Toolkit* available to assist leaders in mentoring their members and potential future Local leaders, including steps to problem solving and key elements in a mentoring relationship.

The comprehensive *New Member Orientation Toolkit* supports leaders in integrating new members into their Bargaining Units and Locals. It also is a good springboard to involve them in Bargaining Unit and Local activities, leading to greater involvement in the Union. This toolkit was developed as a result of feedback from leaders who wanted consistent orientation information about ONA and guidance on delivering that orientation. The ultimate aim is to engage new members

in hopes of creating succession plans.

Former Canadian Nursing Students' Association (CNSA) national President Tyler Kuhk has also developed a toolkit for front-line RNs called "*Effective Mentorship Tools*." It is designed to assist with the mentoring relationship between experienced nurses and new grads in the workplace. The project was part of Kuhk's six-week clinical placement with ONA, where he worked at our provincial office in Toronto under ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud's guidance and mentorship.

Other extremely helpful guides include *Bargaining Unit and Local Accountabilities with Role Description*, the *Guide for Local Executives*, the *Guide to Local Elections* and the *Guide to Local Financial Policies*, and many more!

The above is just a sampling of what is available to assist leaders both in the administration of their Bargaining Units and Locals, and to facilitate their succession planning.

ONA has many more sources available, from our *Front Lines* membership magazine, our website (including sector-specific information), Board Highlights and Provincial Coordinators Meeting (PCM) and Biennial Convention Highlights and Action Plans.

Most of this information is available on the main website but there is also a secure area for Local Executives containing additional helpful supports.

So, how about it? Are you interested in joining with over 1,000 ONA leaders to make a difference? Contact your Bargaining Unit President, Local Coordinator or Board member to find out how!



Participants from the 2009 Ontario Leadership Development Program.



### Ontario Nurses' Association

85 Grenville St., Ste. 400, Toronto ON M5S 3A2

Tel: (416) 964-8833 - Toll-free: 1-800-387-5580

Fax: (416) 964-8864