

## IN THE SPOTLIGHT: SONJA “SUNNY” NEWHOUSE SPADACCINO SEMIDEI BSN, RN



On August 2019, I started my 3rd year as a school nurse at Saint John’s School in Puerto Rico. We currently have just over 900 students in Pre-K to 12th grade. There is never a dull moment and I enjoy caring for those in our community while collaborating to support health. Students that visit my office receive education on proper hand washing, ways to decrease the spread of germs, adding fruits and vegetables to one’s diet, and thinking about health as a life-style. Education is key. In preparation of flu season, we held our 3rd “Wellness Clinic” sponsored by San Jorge Children’s Hospital and the Kmart Pharmacy. We increased the number of vaccines given over four times the amount given in 2018 and expanded services to include vision screening and optical exams.

We each have a short time to positively influence those in our care and as nurses, we need to take it very seriously. My goal is to treat each member of the community with respect, dignity, and the highest ethical standard of care. It is imperative that cultural diversity is acknowledged and we learn from each other. I strongly believe that we must be cognizant of our global community and seek ways to expand basic human rights to all people, especially children. Water, food, education, access to health care, and feeling safe: regardless of our gender, sexual identity or sexual preference or skin color, is paramount to equality and a healthy world community.

On a recent Sigma Theta Tau international, Upsilon Rho chapter conference call, I was excited as I was reminded that nurses are in a unique position to address international issues and support goals such as those noted in the Upsilon Rho Strategic Plan 2020. I realize that nurses

must support nurses to promote change for a better, healthier tomorrow for all. We need to get involved to be the change we want others to support.

*Sunny traveled to Zambia in July 2019 with Orphan Medical Network International (OMNI). She shared some information about her adventure with the organization on our December 2019 conference call:*

On this two-week medical mission, we were a team of 17 who offered triage, OB/Gyn, dental, wound care, repurposing eye glasses, hydration, humanitarian food aid, spiritual support, lab tests, respiratory therapy, and pharmaceutical aid.

We administered care to over 2,200 adults and 337 orphans who currently attend the OMNI School. We set up our clinics in 7 remote locations where care is otherwise not available.

Working in the pharmacy, I started “public service announcements” educating those waiting for medications on how to stay healthy. The information included: how to keep antibiotics cool (without electricity), breast feeding to decrease worms in infants (many moms are children themselves), using breast milk rather than water to mix cereal, hand washing, coughing into one’s elbow to keep the community safe, and cutting down on salty foods (common to the diet) for those with hypertension. We also supply birthing kits because most babies are delivered at home.

For more information about this humanitarian effort, please visit: <http://omnimissions.com/site/>