

RAMAPO COLLEGE AND JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE OF NORTH JERSEY LAUNCH INTERDISCIPLINARY INITIATIVE TO ASSIST HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

MAHWAH, NJ – Ramapo College nursing students are receiving first-hand training in how to deal with the special needs of Holocaust survivors who may exhibit symptoms of late-onset Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD). The new initiative is a collaboration among Ramapo College's Gross Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, the College's Nursing Department and Jewish Family Service of North Jersey, Wayne, N.J.

The 10 students participating in the program will work with experienced social workers to recognize, understand and deal with PTSD sufferers in a caring and effective manner.

"Participating in this project will hopefully afford students skills that may be transferable to other situations and groups as they continue their careers in the nursing field," said Dr. Kathleen M. Burke, assistant dean of nursing at Ramapo.

Late-onset PTSD is an affliction that may be experienced by the survivors of genocides, wars, civil turmoil, sexual abuse, and other forms of human distress. The goal of the initiative is to expose students to a population with very diverse experiences and to better prepare the students for situations they may encounter in their professional lives.

The shift of nursing into the community requires an interdisciplinary focus and a broad knowledge of the diverse populations being served, said Michael A. Riff, director of the Gross Center.

"This interdisciplinary team formed to serve Holocaust survivors is an example of responding to the changing demographics and special needs of an aging population," said Riff.

Ramapo nursing students are participating this semester in several other community-based programs, said Dr. Burke, including creating specialized recipes and preparing meals for Meals with a Mission in Garfield and performing various duties at area hospitals and medical centers.

Photo information

Pictured in photo back row, from left are: Jacqueline Franklin, Mahwah; Jillian Firth, Glen Rock; Justin Barredo, New Milford; Katie Balsamo, Berkley Heights; Mollie Dlugasch. Front row, from left are Dona Cyril, Bergenfield; Judith Dauer, Andover; Karen Comiso, Union; Cathleen Carbillas, New Milford; Marissa Gentile, Wood-Ridge.

