

# School of Nursing

# NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2025



**THOMPSON  
RIVERS  
UNIVERSITY**



*As we approach the end of another busy and fulfilling year, we are delighted to take this opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the remarkable accomplishments of our students, faculty, and staff. This year has been filled with hard work, dedication, and numerous achievements that have made us all proud, for example the Simulation Team's successful conditional approval for Healthcare Simulation Standards receiving the designation of Conditionally Endorsed for the International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning Cornerstone Standards.*

*We are especially thrilled to celebrate the inaugural graduating class of our Master of Nursing - Nurse Practitioner program. This milestone signifies a significant step forward in our efforts to enhance nursing education. It reflects our commitment to providing advanced training and preparing nurses for specialized roles in healthcare. Recognizing this inaugural class contributes to the legacy of the TRU School of Nursing, marking a new chapter in our history and setting a precedent for future achievements.*

*Additionally, we are honored to acknowledge and celebrate the 50th anniversary of the School of Nursing's first graduating class. This momentous occasion allows us to reflect on the rich history and enduring legacy of our institution. It pays tribute to the first graduates who laid the foundation for the School of Nursing. Their achievements and contributions have paved the way for future generations of nurses, showcasing the long-standing commitment to excellence in nursing education and practice. Celebrating this anniversary can inspire current and future students by demonstrating the lasting impact of a TRU nursing education and the potential for long-term success in their careers. While reflecting on the past, this celebration also allows us to look forward to the future, setting new goals and aspirations for the next 50 years.*

*We look forward to seeing everyone at the SON 50th Anniversary Open House and Social on May 10th. It will be a wonderful opportunity to connect, share memories, and celebrate the achievements of our community.*

*Warm Regards,*

**Tracy Christianson**

INTERIM ASSOCIATE DEAN

# BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH WELLNESS

The TRU School of Nursing's Wellness Committee is dedicated to fostering a strong, supportive community. Through creative campaigns and monthly themed events, the committee promotes health, connection and well-being.

"It always inspiring to see how incredibly creative and dedicated our team is to improve the experience of everyone here in the School of Nursing," says Maggie Shamro, chair of the wellness committee.

At the CIBC Run for the Cure in Kamloops, the team raised more than \$1,200 for breast cancer research, earning the top school fundraising award. For Bell Let's Talk Day, the committee hosted Nursing, Let's Talk, an event focused on mental health awareness, distributing \$500 in food and prizes to students and posting encouraging messages throughout the school.

Other community-building activities have included a Halloween costume contest, wellness kits for exams,

Valentine's messages, a blood donation drive, financial literacy training for students and mindfulness and self-compassion meditation sessions at NUS/CNSA study nights.

To wrap up the semester, the committee is hosting Colour Your World Paint Night, an opportunity for attendees to unwind and express their creativity after an intense school year.

"With the world feeling heavy and uncertain, our team's efforts to bring a little joy and compassion are so necessary," says Shamro.

For more information, contact [mshamro@tru.ca](mailto:mshamro@tru.ca) and follow [@trunursing](https://www.instagram.com/trunursing) on Instagram for updates.



# Celebrate 50 Years of Excellence in Nursing at TRU!

Fifty years ago, the Thompson Rivers University School of Nursing began shaping the future of healthcare—one dedicated, passionate nurse at a time. Now, we invite you to join us in celebrating this incredible milestone!

On **Saturday, May 10**, we will honor our rich history, celebrate our present achievements and look ahead to the future of nursing. The celebration will include a historical exhibit showcasing the evolution of nursing education at TRU, inspiring keynote speakers and discussions led by leaders in the field. Current students will present their innovative research and projects, while attendees will have the chance to reconnect with classmates, faculty and industry professionals.

## Event details:

- Open house and tours: Chappell Family Nursing & Population Health Building, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Social networking and keynote speeches: OLARA, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

This is more than a celebration—it's an opportunity to reflect on the remarkable impact of TRU nurses, reconnect with our community and be inspired by the future of health care.

We can't wait to celebrate with you!





## 50 YEARS, TWO STORIES, ONE LEGACY: Celebrating TRU nursing alumni

Fifty years ago, the first cohort of nurses at Thompson Rivers University (TRU), previously Cariboo College, embarked on a bold journey into healthcare. Today, a new generation continues that legacy with fresh energy, innovation and commitment.

As we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the TRU School of Nursing, we highlight two remarkable alumni—one from the pioneering class and another who reflects the bright future of nursing. Their journeys, though separated by decades, share a common thread: a deep passion for caring for others and a commitment to excellence in healthcare.





# Sue Carpenter

## A TRAILBLAZER IN NURSING

TRU nursing alum Sue Carpenter is a trailblazer at heart. She graduated from TRU's first nursing diploma class in 1975 and later received TRU's Distinguished Alumni Award in 2006, a testament to her passion, drive and resilience.

"Thompson Rivers University was one of the first community colleges in British Columbia to offer an education-based nursing diploma program," Carpenter said. "This marked the end of a hospital-based nursing program at Royal Inland Hospital, which had been in place for 70 years. We thought of ourselves as trailblazers. The faculty, students and administration were all committed to making the program successful."

Carpenter credits TRU's School of Nursing for instilling values of self-direction, ambition and commitment to lifelong learning. This has been clear in her career journey, earning a Bachelor of Nursing in 2001 and graduating from the first TRU-hosted University of British Columbia Master of Science in Nursing cohort in 2005. She attests to this being the same for many of her colleagues followed similar paths, pursuing additional degrees and specialty programs.

Yet, being a trailblazer came with challenges. Carpenter recalls initial skepticism from hospital administrators about the capabilities of TRU-trained nurses compared to those trained at Royal Inland Hospital.

"Things eventually changed, but it took a while. And it was tough work building relationships along the way," she said.

Before TRU established its nursing school, many nurses struggled to find jobs in Kamloops and had to relocate for work. Carpenter moved to Williams Lake after completing her nursing diploma, as did several of her colleagues. One thing she fondly remembers about the School of Nursing is the strong mentorship she received, particularly from Sharon Simpson, who taught her in both her bachelor's and master's programs.

"Since 1975, there has been a continuous supply of nurses graduating locally, many of whom have stayed in our communities or across the province," she said.

A career in nursing makes a difference in people's lives - it's meaningful, rewarding work. There are so many opportunities to work in different areas so explore as many but finding happiness in your work is the most important thing, said Carpenter.

Now retired from her 46-year career, Carpenter spends her time in Kamloops and winters in San José del Cabo, Mexico, as a snowbird.



# Megan Funk

## A NEW GENERATION OF LEADERSHIP

When Megan Funk was accepted into the Master of Nursing program at TRU in 2022, writing a thesis wasn't part of her plan. Yet, she ended up doing one—and is glad she did.

"I was fortunate to have a supportive and knowledgeable supervisor who guided me through academic challenges," Funk said. "Their mentorship helped me navigate research complexities and supported me throughout the program."

Despite initially dreading the thesis, it became the highlight of her studies. Her research focused on falls prevention from the perspectives of older adults in rural communities, exploring a topic of personal and professional interest.

"My supervisor and I visited rural communities, where I conducted interviews to understand the unique challenges and perspectives on falls prevention," she said. "Getting out in the field, collecting data and bringing it back to analyze was such a great experience."

Funk completed her thesis in December 2024 and will officially graduate this June.

Born and raised in Kamloops, she began her nursing career in 2017 in the operating room at Royal Inland Hospital after earning her Bachelor of Nursing from the University of Northern British Columbia.

"The Master of Nursing program was an enriching experience that provided me with the theoretical knowledge and skills to excel in the nursing field," Funk said. "Throughout the program, I had the opportunity to collaborate with peers and faculty from diverse backgrounds, which enhanced my learning experience."


Her advice to current and future nursing students? Keep an open mind and stay curious—nursing is an ever-evolving field.

Currently, Funk is an operating room clinical mentor at Royal Inland Hospital, where she supports and trains staff new to the unit.

*The evolution of nursing is a testament to the resilience, adaptability and dedication of those in the profession.*

*As we celebrate 50 years of nursing education at TRU, we honour the pioneers who paved the way and the rising stars who will carry the profession forward. Their shared passion is a reminder that, while times have changed, the heart of nursing remains the same.*

*Join us in celebrating this incredible milestone. Whether you're a seasoned nurse, a recent graduate or someone who believes in the power of healthcare, this is a moment to reflect on our shared journey—and look ahead to the next 50 years of nursing excellence.*



# ADVANCING SIMULATION-BASED LEARNING AT TRU'S SCHOOL OF NURSING

The TRU School of Nursing Simulation-Based Learning Centre continues to set the standard for high-quality simulation education. By collaborating with programs across British Columbia, the centre is enhancing simulation delivery, sharing resources and exploring AI-driven learning.

Beyond nursing, the centre supports simulation training across TRU, working with Interior Health, law enforcement and the justice sector to provide immersive, hands-on experiences. With the recent launch of a **mobile simulation lab**, this expertise is now reaching outlying communities, expanding access to cutting-edge learning opportunities.

## Investing in faculty development

Supporting professional growth is a key priority. The centre offers workshops and sponsors training in simulation-based teaching, including a **two-day workshop open to all educators** and support for faculty completing the Cornerstones of Best Practice modules.

## Save the date: 2025 B.C. Simulation Network Conference

Looking ahead, TRU's School of Nursing is proud to host the 2025 B.C. Simulation Network Conference on June 5 and 6. This event will bring together leaders in simulation education to exchange ideas, spark innovation and advance the field.

For more details, contact  
[simulationteam@tru.ca](mailto:simulationteam@tru.ca)



# Exploring pathways:

## TRU HOSTS DISCOVERY DAYS FOR SD73 STUDENTS SHOWCASING CAREERS IN HEALTHCARE

SD73 Trades and Transitions, in collaboration with Thompson Rivers University (TRU), hosted Discovery Days, providing grade 10-12 students across the district with the opportunity to explore and experience various career areas. Discovery Days aim to support students in making informed decisions about their future careers by offering hands-on experiences. On February 21, the Nursing and Respiratory Therapy programs hosted 56 students for an engaging day, including advanced simulation lab experiences, conversations with faculty, and a comprehensive overview of the diverse career and educational opportunities in healthcare.

A special thanks goes to the following nursing faculty and staff who contributed to the success of this event: Kim Morris, Tracy Hoot, Devon Graham, Christina Hamaguchi, Lona Heinzig, Cassy Magliocchi, Aaron Weibe, Kiran Kaur, Jim Lomen, Joyce Adjei, Jessica Chardon, Maggie Shamro, Rani Srivastava, Elder Gwen Campbell-McArther, and Pinder Nagra. A particular acknowledgment goes to Pinder Nagra and Christina Hamaguchi for their exceptional leadership in organizing this impactful event. The day was well-organized and full of positive energy, creating a memorable and inspiring experience for all involved.

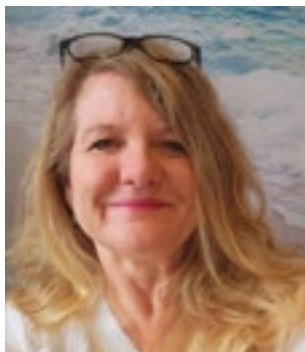
# PUBLIC INVITED TO MEDICAL CANNABIS FORUM ON APRIL 26

## How can medical cannabis be used as an alternate therapy for addiction and what does this mean to our community?

That is the focus of a free, public forum, Medical Cannabis and Recovery, hosted by TRU on Saturday, April 26. The forum is open to the **public, health-care professionals and researchers** interested in cannabis and recovery solutions.

**Florriann Fehr**, an associate professor in the School of Nursing and principal investigator on the Maverick Research Project, is leading the forum. Guest speakers are:

- Ian Mitchell, emergency physician at Royal Inland
- Michael Koehn, registered clinical counsellor and founder of the CannSolve Clinic
- Taylor Pridy, peer co-ordinator with Kamloops/Penticton-ASK Wellness Society
- M.J. Milloy, research scientist with the BC Centre on Substance Use
- Zach Walsh, psychology professor at UBC and director of the Therapeutic Recreational and Problematic Substance Use lab
- Bob Hughes, executive director with ASK Wellness



"We invite everyone to discover a novel approach to the toxic drug crisis with a team of lived-experience experts, physicians, researchers and health-care providers who study new ways to reduce harm and save lives," said Florriann (pictured left).

"The Maverick study was formed on the belief that

people matter and deserve robust and effective pathways out of addiction. This team has developed a unique approach to substance use and recovery which combines medical cannabis with supported recovery services."

"I'm deeply grateful to the lived experience experts on our team. These scientists are on the front lines of new advancements in treating substance use, working together to help everyone affected by the toxic drug supply. Leave a light on — there's more reason than ever to hold hope for those affected by the toxic drug supply," said Michael Koehn, Cannsolv Clinic founder.

The **Medical Cannabis and Recovery Forum** will explore the evolving role of cannabis in harm reduction and addiction care. Key topics include:

- **Dispelling myths:** Insights debunking misconceptions, including the sativa versus indica myth.
- **THC-CBD relationship:** How these cannabinoids interact and influence recovery outcomes.
- **Lived experiences:** Personal recovery stories and frontline insights from health-care workers.
- **Harm reduction and healing:** Using cannabis as a tool in addiction recovery.
- **Research and collaboration:** Cutting-edge studies, policy challenges and community partnerships.
- **New cannabinoids:** Emerging compounds like CBN, CBG and THCV and their therapeutic potential.

The event is free to attend, but registration is requested to accommodate seating.

- **What:** Public Medical Cannabis and Recovery Forum
- **When:** Saturday, April 26, 3-5:30 p.m.
- **Where:** Clock Tower building, Alumni Theatre

Register

[surveymonkey.ca/r/JMKFZ2W](https://surveymonkey.ca/r/JMKFZ2W)

# TRU NURSING STUDENT EDEN MCEACHERN-TOOMBS SHINES AT THE 2025 JUNO AWARDS

Thompson Rivers University nursing student Eden McEachern-Toombs brought national recognition to the TRU community with her recent performance at the 2025 Juno Awards. A second-year student in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, Eden was one of eight Indigenous dancers selected to perform in a high-profile collaboration with acclaimed artists Snotty Nose Rez Kids (SNRK) and Tia Wood.

The live performance, held at Rogers Arena on Sunday, March 30, was a vibrant celebration of Indigenous heritage, music, and dance. Both SNRK and Tia Wood were nominated in multiple categories at this year's awards, making their performance a highlight of the evening's broadcast.

Eden was away from March 24 to 31 to participate in rehearsals and the event. Her dedication and talent were evident as she contributed to an unforgettable showcase on one of Canada's most prestigious entertainment stages.

"We are incredibly proud of Eden and all that she has accomplished," said faculty from the School of Nursing.

"Her involvement in the Juno Awards highlights the diverse talents of our students and their commitments beyond the classroom."

The TRU community congratulates Eden on this outstanding achievement and thanks all who supported her journey. Her performance stands as a powerful example of student excellence, cultural pride, and artistic expression.



