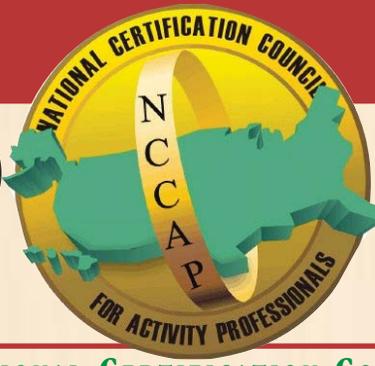


NCCAP NEWS



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL CERTIFICATION COUNCIL FOR ACTIVITY PROFESSIONALS

A Most Memorable Week

By Pam Bailey, BA, ACC

For those of you who do not know me I have been an Activity Professional for 36 years. I teach the MEPAP, attend National and State Conferences, have spoken throughout the U.S. and have been politically active for the betterment of the Activities Profession for a decade. I have read many of the articles generated recently on the State of the Profession, the “Universal Worker”, Culture Change, MDS 3.0, etc. Like many of you, I have attended many education sessions on a great variety of topics, but I can tell you now that NOTHING compares to the Education one gets by being “THERE”!

On November 3, a terrific orthopedic surgeon replaced my left knee. The operation itself is a few hours long and you spend 3 days in the hospital, mostly on morphine, and it’s all a big blur. However, when that’s over, you

INSIDE THIS ISSUE	
A Most Memorable Week.....	1
Call for Action	3
Getting to Know Michael Ann Bower.....	5
NCCAP State Representative News	6
The Official NCCAP Facebook Site	6
The Role of a Spouse of an Activity Professional	7
I am an NCCAP Certified Activity Professional	7

have a choice to make...either go home or spend up to a week in rehab...more specifically a nursing home. I had talked to many knowledgeable folks prior to the surgery, and decided up front that I would go to rehab. Two reasons were most compelling. It seemed that the intensive rehab would make for a faster recovery, getting me back to work sooner, and “curiosity”. After all those years working in nursing homes, I had a LOT of curiosity. What would it feel like to be one of “THEM”? What would the activity department have for a “50



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something” resident to do? What kind of auxiliary services would be available and obvious? And most curious, what would appear to be a result of “Culture Change” and the “universal worker”?

I have to tell you up front that the overall experience was quite positive and I will do it all over again for my right knee in 2011. Let’s break it down and answer the before mentioned questions. The first challenge was finding a facility that would accept an under 65 post op patient on the private insurance most of us carry through our workplace. I had a really good policy, but the pickings of nursing homes were very lean indeed. The place I ended up in was probably my third choice. It was a 123 bed mixed facility with Alzheimer, long term, and rehab units in a quiet town on Cape Cod. I had taught one Basic Education Course there ten years back and the Activity Director in that class was still there, though close to retirement. I also knew the Executive Director.

The ambulance wheeled me in to the rehab unit and the charge nurse greeted me with a wonderful smile of recognition. We had worked together for 3 years in another facility. That set a positive tone. First impressions are so important. I lucked out and landed a private room. It was a Saturday, so I did not see any department heads. Next a charming young man, a male CNA inventoried my possessions and gave me a list of important names and phone extensions. The Activity Director’s number was missing! I asked the Activity Director about it later that week; she didn’t care. So I guess that answered my first burning question. I told her I would mention it to the Executive Director anyway. Nobody greeted me from Activities until Monday morning. Not one single

CNA or Nurse even mentioned activities to me the entire week. I decided then that I would not lose any sleep over the universal worker concept, at least not in my lifetime. I did look for evidence, however, of culture change, and was rewarded by the Dietary department. There were menu alternates for all 3 meals posted and an “anytime” menu for hunger cravings. I liked that and checked the alternate board religiously every day. I found I could get ginger ale anytime from the unit staff, but I sure would have liked a vending machine. I grew up with those.

I wanted to get my hair scrubbed really well. You have to use that rinse free NASA stuff for days, and evidence of an early shower was nowhere to be found. I was offered one the following Friday (that’s 9 nine days following surgery) no culture change there! Fortunately, I was independent with ADL’s and could manage through bed baths daily. I was rewarded with a great hairdresser at the facility, but I had to look for her. There was no mention of it from staff or on the Activity calendar. I felt bad for anyone with memory deficits and passive family members. They would have waited the nine days for any relief.

I was warned by the hospital about pain management techniques in nursing homes before I went. They cautioned me to stay ahead of my pain and not to let the nurses convince me otherwise. I was pleasantly surprised there. The nurses were good about it, keeping me pain free enough to enjoy the sociability of the nursing home while I was there. Now the best part about activities was the provision of casual supplies throughout the facility, spacious day rooms and visiting areas, computer, games, televisions, etc. That is what short term folks really appreciate. I did

also check out the activities calendar posted in my room as well. However, I did it all on my own. I don't think anyone in Activities was assigned to that short term unit, a real shame, but typical from some of my previous experiences. Where's the universal worker now?

The most intriguing element of my experience was the part of "being one of them". Would I be accepted by the residents all around me? I expected to share camaraderie with residents doing daily rehab therapy, but I was not prepared for the beautiful feeling of belonging with everyone else. Even the long term somewhat confused resident who sat next to me at church service on Sunday asked me "what I was in for" and laughed when she told me her ailments. I sat out in the lobby with the greeter, one of the resident council members, who

welcomed me readily, wanting to know how my rehab was going. I felt loved and pertinent as a human being. Nobody cared how old I was, and believe me I was probably the youngest one there. I even appreciated the coffee socials, never was a fan of them as a Director, but I have a new outlook now. I did not mind being read to from "Chicken Soup" either. When you are recovering from major surgery, it is difficult to focus on much of anything intellectual yourself. I volunteered to play piano on Veterans Day for a group in the dining room. The residents there didn't care that I was introduced as an Activity professional who trained their Director. Instead, they thanked me for playing and asked about my knee. What an eye opener!

Lastly, I will take with me good memories of staff that really belonged there, those with the potential to become

more "universal". I will continue to snicker about those who really need to get different jobs. There will always be some of them, no matter where you go. I will appreciate those activities and supplies that I could access at my age and I will continue to teach all of you about broadening your generational appeals. I went home on my birthday with a new knee and new appreciation for the profession to which I have dedicated my life. I even cried a bit when I got home, because I missed all the freedom of movement along the many hallways, all the new people I could visit, and the caring dedicated staff. But guess what...I got over that quickly enough and went back to work two and half weeks early, in total amazement of my surgeon. I did that well because I made the choice to go to a nursing home. Imagine that! **NN**



Call for Action

By Kathy Hughes, ADC, NCCAP Vice-President

NCCAP held it's first "Call for Action" meeting this past November. The meeting is posted on YouTube for those that could not make the meeting. As a follow through we are looking for you to assist with taking the information gathered and researching it, formulating the results, developing an action plan and then making recommendations on the information at the NCCAP Symposium.

You can make a difference and we will provide the resources that you and your committee would need to accomplish the task. This could be a great project for individuals who would like to volunteer to promote the profession,

MEPAP classes who are interested in research projects and doing a project that would recognize and promote the profession, as well as local or state organizations who would like to assist with creative solutions to the promotion of the profession.

NCCAP has invested in the growth of the Activities profession and it's unique contribution to the Quality of Life for thousands of individuals living in the Continuum of Care. Activity professionals from all backgrounds with a passion to improve the delivery of person-centered experiences can contribute to this project. We recognize that the activity professional has always

been and will continue to be the people who meet the needs and interests of the individual in any setting that they currently live in. We have always embraced the need of the individual in our settings and have strived to advocate for their quality of life experiences.

Your participation in the growth of the activities profession, your passion for providing for an understanding of what we do and your unique talents will contribute to the profession, and along the way you may find out that you have the skills and the talent for assisting all activity professionals to move forward.

Here are some of the topics for you

to consider. If you or your local/state associations are interested in assisting us, we will be honored to have you on the Call for Action Team. We will list two groups here and on our Facebook page (Official NCCAP) in the coming weeks. We would like to know if you are interested in forming a committee to assist with these projects, the deadline for forming a committee is **March 1, 2011**. E-mail us at info@nccap.org, place "Call for Action Team" in the subject line. The deadline for **the final report will be June 3, 2011** at the NCCAP Symposium.

We have this winter and spring to gather information, research various topics and formulate our next steps. You can be a part of it! NCCAP is looking for you!

Universal Worker Committee

1. Research various facilities that have instituted the "Universal Worker" concept to ascertain if the leisure needs and interests of individuals are being met.
2. Research the levels of activities education that the "Universal Worker" is receiving and make formal recommendations for activities education if needed.
3. Clearly define "Activity Skill Sets" as needed to meet the leisure needs and interests of individuals.
4. Develop a survey that can ascertain if Activity professionals are being recognized in facilities that have embraced the "Universal Worker" concept.
5. Develop a job description that can be available for Activity professionals that is specific and reflects the activities philosophy.

Recognition of the Activities Profession/Professional

1. Research the various titles that activity professionals currently work under and then define one title that reflects the Activity Profession.
2. Develop a National Activity Professional Week packet of ideas and programs that can be distributed to enhance the recognition of the profession.
3. Identify specific organizations and specific individuals who should be educated as to the Activity Profession; develop a brochure that tells our story.
4. Make recommendations for developing consistency in federal regulations, MDS and other regulations that impact the activities profession.
5. Research specific contacts in each state who can assist with requiring the MEPAP as the "State Approved Course"

These are just two projects. There are many more that need to be addressed and we will post them on the "Official NCCAP" Facebook page as well as on the NCCAP Bulletin Board. Please consider this challenge! It will make a difference in the lives of many activity professionals as well as the individuals we serve. **NN**

Official NCCAP | Facebook

The screenshot shows the Facebook interface for the Official NCCAP page. At the top, there's a search bar and navigation tabs for Wall, Info, Discussions, Photos, Video, and Events. The main content area displays several posts:

- A post by Jennifer Nichols for a Wellness Assistant position in North Carolina, responsible for planning and participating in recreation programs.
- Another post by Jennifer Nichols for a Recreation Assistant position, full-time, for a 134-bed facility.
- An event listing for "NCCAP Free Chats! Strating January 16 continuing until January 23" on Sunday, January 16, 2011 at 12:00am.

On the left sidebar, there's an "Information" section with a description of NCCAP as the National Certification Council for Activity Professionals, recognized by federal law.

Send NCCAP your activity photos with captions and details. Photos must be for public release. Send your pics to info@nccap.org



<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=313502822941>

GETTING TO KNOW

Michael Ann Bower

This is the fourth in the 'Getting to Know Your NCCAP Board of Directors' series.

Although she was born in Phoenix, Arizona, Michael considers Reno, Nevada, where she was raised, to be her home town. It was in Reno that she landed her first activity job – at the age of five! After her grandmother became a widow, she came for long visits twice a year, and, as the very much youngest child, it became Michael's job to "keep Grandma from driving Mama nuts!" It was from this beloved Grandmother that she learned to embroider, quilt, crochet, and sew – and heard all of the family stories and wisdom. Without being aware of it, Michael's feet were set on the Activity Trail!

Of course, a few years would go by. She attended school in Reno & Sparks until the end of her sophomore year, then moved to the California side of Donner Pass, graduating from Colfax High School. For two years she attended Sierra College, near Rocklin, CA and then transferred to Fresno State College (now California State University at Fresno). Her main focus at Sierra was the life sciences – and fun! Hey - it was the 60's! At Fresno she majored in English and Education, but left at the end of her junior year. Marriage and work took her to Columbus, IN for 3 years. She returned to California in 1973 with two Hoosiers in tow – ages 3 months and 3 years. After her husband completed his teaching degree – back at Fresno – the family (now increased by a second son – the Prune Picker) moved to Idaho for 3 years, then to Whidbey Island, WA where her spouse took a job at the Naval Air Station.

Over the next 9 years Michael worked with people with developmental disabilities, divorced, graduated from Western Washington University with a BA in Recreation Administration (emphasis Therapy), and added a wonderful, supportive gentleman to her life – Rick. In 1987 she began working in skilled nursing facilities, and eldercare has remained her specialty area since then. She became a CTRS and NCCAP certified as an ADC in June 1990. In 1992 she dropped the CTRS because of the lack of support that certification gave to those working in retirement or long term care. 1995 she level changed to ACC. She also joined the NAAP in 1990 and attended her first conference in Seattle.

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She served as the NAAP Resource Review Chairperson for two years and taught the MEPAP 1 & 2 for the Resident Council of Washington for several years, while also serving on their advisory board.

In 1999 Michael helped to found the Hearing Loss Association of Washington and has served on its board since then. She became involved with this organization and its parent, the Hearing Loss Association of America because of Rick's severe hearing loss, and has combined this mission with the her calling to serve elders, many of whom have a hearing loss.

After unsuccessfully running for the NCCAP Board of Directors in 1997, in 1998 she was appointed to the board to fill a vacancy; another board member had resigned due to moving to a different country. She was elected to two full terms, racking up a total of seven years, and then left the board due to term limits. In 2008 she was again elected to the board. During her time on the board she has served as secretary, vice president, and president; she is currently the president - again.

Michael worked many years in skilled facilities, most with memory care units, and became a corporate consultant for a retirement company in 2008. In 2009 she left the company and started Bower Life Enrichment Consulting Services. In January 2010, she added a position as the Lead Trainer for the Alzheimer's Association of Western/Central Washington to her resume. Michael also travels about the country presenting on dementia, hearing loss, and a variety of activity-related topics at state and national health-related conferences.

Michael tells us: "I truly believed the Activity Profession is a Calling. We don't seek fame or fortune. We work with

small budgets and little recognition, but generate great programs and happy residents regardless. Nothing is safe from our resourcefulness and creativity!

We love and honor the people that we serve and we have an enduring belief that we can, and do, bring joy and meaning to their lives; *we make a difference*. Activity Professionals constantly seek answers and improve their knowledge and skills with those goals in mind. While a “Thank You” is appreciated, we can live without it – we thrive on smiles and a foot tapping to the music!

I have been blessed to find a profession that has allowed me to pay back the love and kindness that has been given to me. Through my service to NCCAP, I’ve had the opportunity to help move our young profession forward, and, most importantly, to help develop a cadre of professionals who fulfill the goal of improving the lives of our elders.” **NN**

NCCAP State Representative News

Active communication continues amongst the state reps via e-mail. Ideas for promoting NCCAP certification and professionalism have been readily shared. Five new state representatives have volunteered for Colorado, Oregon, Georgia, New Hampshire, and Oklahoma. You can find the contact information for these representatives and all the other NCCAP state reps on the NCCAP web site. There remain only four states without representation, including Alaska, Arkansas, Montana, and South Carolina. If you live in any of these states and would like volunteer to be the state contact for your state, contact debbiehommel@comcast.net or the NCCAP office. As the NCCAP state representative, you share information about NCCAP certification with activity professionals in your state, assist those needing assistance in completing the application and promote NCCAP certification within your state. **NN**

To find the name of your state representative, visit the NCCAP web site at <http://www.nccap.org/about/state-reps/index.shtml>

The Official NCCAP Facebook Site

By Michael A. Bower, BA, ACC

As many of you are aware, NAAP has recently taken actions that have upset their membership. Many of the concerned activity professionals are also NCCAP members, and as such, have posted comments about NAAP’s actions on the Official NCCAP Facebook page. Although the comments are on our site, we have no control over them, and their appearance there should not be taken as being sponsored or condoned by NCCAP. NCCAP has never interfered with the operations of other organizations, and will not do so now.

We on the NCCAP Board of Directors and in the NCCAP Office have always concentrated on the opportunities and challenges for the future of the activity profession. With that in mind, we have several projects in the works, including more “Call to Action” meetings, the development and implementation of the ideas that came from the November “Call to Action” meeting, the 2011 NCCAP Educator Symposium, and celebrating the NCCAP 25th Anniversary, to name a few.

We invite everyone to visit the
Official NCCAP Facebook page.

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=313502822941>

Announcements about NCCAP events and comments about issues can be found there. Use the word “official” when you enter NCCAP on the search line, as there is an NCCAP site that was started by someone and it is not the official site. You can also use the NCCAP Bulletin Board and Chat Rooms on the NCCAP Website. After a period of shut down, we have a brand new bulletin board. Registration is easy and the board has lots of room for comments! **NN**

Here’s to a great 2011 for the Activity
Profession and NCCAP!

THE ROLE OF A SPOUSE OF AN ACTIVITY PROFESSIONAL

By Connie Stephens, ADPC

The role of an activity professional is much diversified. They have to work long hours and hectic schedules. The spouse needs to be flexible, understanding, and supportive. They may have to help with the work at home, take care of the children, and sometimes get involved with the activity professional's work.

It makes things a little easier if the spouse is a volunteer or has an activity position as well. When they become an employee they come to know and love the residents as you do. This makes it a little easier to discuss the residents without breaking any HIPPA Laws. The residents like to hear about your family and it helps them identify who you are talking about when they can put a face with a name. I am an activity director for a small Nursing Home and needed some one to work as an activity assistant PRN to help with the driving of the facility bus for our outings. Even if we are a small facility we still have to comply with state regulations and offer different types of activities for all age groups and types.

I hired my husband and it has worked out great. He works as a minister for a church so his hours are flexible. It helps him to understand my reasons for not being able to work a set schedule and having to work different times from week to week. It helps him to understand how demanding the residents can be but also how sweet they can be. It also helps him understand when I come home tired and stressed that I need "me" time. And that with all that why being an activity professional is so rewarding. When one day you have worked long hours and you feel you are accomplishing nothing and a resident touches your hand smiles and says you are a nice person "I like you". Then he understands why you go that extra mile to do a little something to make their lives a little better.

Working as an activity professional is much more than just having a job you go to every day. Put your time in (9-5) and go home and forget your job. A job that your mind is constantly thinking of new things to do, places to go to help your residents lives be as rewarding as possible. It helps if they are involved in your life as an activity professional to help them to understand and be supportive of you. **NN**

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I am an NCCAP Certified Activity Professional

By Debbie Hommel, ACC/MC/EDU, CTRS

Even after 32 years in the "activity business", I find people still have difficulty understanding what we do. I have been teaching the MEPAP class since its inception as well as the 36 hour activity class prior to that, so I have no problem explaining the value of what we do and why to future activity professionals of America. It is the understanding of people outside the realm of long term care that remains the challenge. When someone says "I'm a



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teacher” or “I’m a nurse”, there is immediate understanding of the scope and purpose of that job. When discussing future occupations with children – does one ever hear them say “I want to grow up and help elderly people in a nursing home have fun”?

Recognition of the activity profession as a respected career was a topic of discussion at the recent “Call to Action” meeting, sponsored by the NCCAP in Raleigh, North Carolina. Approximately 88 activity professionals, representing 23 states, met to discuss gaining recognition and respect for the activity professional and more. The full report of the Call to Action meeting is being sent to all NCCAP certified individuals.

National Activity Professional’s Week is in January. This week is the perfect opportunity for our profession to communicate the value of what we do to fellow employees, family members, residents, and community at large. Once our special week passes, we must continue to “talk the talk: while providing quality of life opportunities for our residents.

Educate yourself and provide educational opportunities for your department. *The more we know about our jobs, our residents, our facilities, the business of long term care, the regulations, and future trends – the stronger we will be as a professional.*

Become NCCAP Certified. *NCCAP certification is recognized by the Federal Government and is included in many state regulations. For 25 years, NCCAP certification has been the standard to meet.*

Be a professional in appearance, through your actions, behaviors, and communication skills. *A professional is someone who has training, expertise, competence, and confidence in their vocation.*

Be an advocate for the profession. *Participate in career fairs, volunteer to speak at local school career days, and take the time to explain what you “do for living” to those that don’t understand our work.*

Become active in professional groups. NN