

Local nurses gather in spirit of health care ministry

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LANTANA | Faith community nurses associated with Catholic Charities Interfaith Health and Wellness Program met in July at Holy Spirit Parish to hear a presentation from medical professionals about cancer and the importance of screening and early detection of the deadly disease. Organizers also opened the meeting to the public.

"Not only did we want our nurses to take advantage of this program, we wanted to get the word out to everybody," said Trish Weaver-Monahan, Holy Spirit Parish's nurse who helped organize the Interfaith Health and Wellness program at her parish in Lantana.

Nurses from various parishes and faith communities traveled to Holy Spirit for the gathering, and lunch was provided as part of the afternoon of education, information and fellowship. Catholic Charities held its annual "Foundations of Faith Community Nursing" preparation course in June, which

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provided basic education and standards of practice for establishing a parish nurse or health ministry.

A key component of Catholic Charities Interfaith Health and Wellness ministry is its Faith Community Nursing program. The licensed and registered nurses in the program do not perform any invasive procedures that home health agencies or hospitals provide, but they strive to raise awareness to care for the whole body, mind and spirit through initiatives including education, counseling, visitation, health screenings, referrals, advocacy and support groups.

FYI

Faith Community Nursing meeting: Aug. 26, noon, Holy Name of Jesus Parish, 345 S. Military Trail, West Palm Beach. Featured speaker: representative from Alzheimer's Community Care discussing free bracelet program, 24-hour nurse helpline and safety tips. Open to the public. Reservations: 561-345-2000, ext. 256; or wellness@ccdpc.org.

In the Diocese of Palm Beach, part-time parish nurses work at Holy Name of Jesus in West Palm Beach, St. Jude and Ascension in Boca Raton, and Holy Spirit in Lantana. Each parish nursing program is different, but in all the parishes, health ministry flourishes and there is a sense of community among volunteers and participants, according to Bernadette Macy, program director. She explained that the parish nurse ministry helps congregations build truly caring communities. ■

Faith community nurses from various Christian denominations and faith traditions gather in ministry spirit and fellowship during a meeting and presentation July 29 at host parish Holy Spirit in Lantana. (LINDA REEVES | FC)

