

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



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## **FKCC Holds First Fall Nursing Graduation and Pinning Ceremony**



FKCC nursing graduates recite the Nurses Pledge, committing themselves to the profession and to their patients.

Key West, FL, December 11, 2009—Florida Keys Community College’s Nursing Program held a pinning ceremony for graduates of the Associate of Science in Nursing program today, Friday, December 11, 2009 at 4:00 p.m. on the Grand Lawn of the college’s Key West Campus. This nursing class was the 43<sup>rd</sup> to graduate from FKCC, but the first to do so in the fall semester, as FKCC recently started enrolling nursing students twice a year.

The intimate ceremony for the group of eight students, attended by approximately 60 family members and friends, was full of inspirational stories that evoked laughter and tears throughout. Professor Debbie Alish opened the ceremony with a spoof of a conservative nursing job description from 1887. FKCC’s Dean of Allied Health and Nursing, Norman Olsen, followed by speaking about how the nursing profession has evolved and the important role these graduates will have in our community. FKCC President, Dr. Larry Tyree, congratulated the graduates and saluted the support of the students’ loved ones in the audience.

Student contributions included a moving farewell address from Florida Student Nursing Association President Tiffany Guerra, who shared an emotional story about the event that inspired her to pursue nursing. Guerra, a mother of four, urged her fellow graduates to always remember the reason they decided to become a nurse. Graduate Dave Foster recited a comical

poem and shared a photo slide show, both documenting the group's 22-month academic journey.

The highlight of the program was the traditional pinning ceremony, which symbolically welcomes graduates into the nursing profession. The rite dates back to Florence Nightingale, who honored nurses with war medals during the Crimean War. Professor Penni Wise read a personal note from each graduate as each was presented with a pin by a special family member or close friend.

These graduates, having completed two-years of rigorous curriculum, are now prepared to take the NCLEX-RN state exam to become registered nurses. FKCC boasts one of the highest NCLEX-RN pass rates in Florida, 92.3%, which is also considerably higher than the national average of 86.73%.

Many of these graduates will immediately enter the workforce, staffing hospitals, doctor's offices, and health clinics throughout the Keys and elsewhere. Some of the graduates will continue their education and begin working toward a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. To aid these graduates, FKCC recently contracted with St. Joseph's College of Maine to offer a 3-1 program, in which FKCC nursing graduates can complete a bachelor's degree without leaving the Keys. The students will spend a third year at FKCC, taking general education classes, and then complete their fourth year through online distance learning.

For more information about FKCC's Allied Health and Nursing program, visit <http://www.fkcc.edu/academics/as-nursing.da>.

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