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Experiencing a Month of Poverty in Two Hours

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- Cedarville University's School of Nursing will hold a Community Action Poverty Simulation (CAPS) on Wednesday, April 17, at 8 a.m. in the Stevens Student Center. The poverty simulation is part of the Care of Children course taken by nursing students to learn how to overcome bias toward individuals in poverty.

According to Marcia Williams, clinical placement coordinator for Cedarville's Master of Science in Nursing program, 15 percent of the patients that nursing students will encounter are below the poverty line. "One thing that we've found is that they're really encountering their own bias and exploring their own stigma associated with those who they're going to be caring for in their careers," she said.

During CAPS, students and faculty members role play as members of a community. Each student is assigned a unique role in a low-income family and limited resources for day-to-day living. According to the CAPS website, these family roles are based on real-life profiles of people in poverty. The faculty members act as members of the community — bankers, teachers, law enforcement officers and medical professionals — who are gateways to important resources.

The simulation represents a month of living in poverty and runs for one hour split into 15-minute segments. Throughout that time, the students are challenged to maintain their basic needs, such as food, shelter, medical assistance and transportation.

The students take a standardized pre- and post-assessment to measure the simulation's effectiveness in changing their perception of low-income families.

Recent M.S.N. graduate Geneva Neupauer participated in CAPS last year and found it highly valuable. "As I played my role, I found emotions rising in me that I normally don't feel," she explained. "Dislike for my elders, a desire to get away, feeling stuck, helpless and willing to do whatever it took to get out of feeling the way I did. I have a heightened awareness that patients who live in poverty are operating in survival mode."

"We hope to help our students identify their own bias or stigma toward those living in poverty, increase awareness of local resources and means to assist these people and inspire our students to take action in helping those in our communities," said Kristine Kidder, assistant professor of nursing.

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,193 undergraduate, graduate, and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health

science offerings, and leading student satisfaction ratings. For more information about the University, visit www.cedarville.edu.