

Jeanette Alexander, RN PHN oral history 2010

Interview with Jeanette Alexander (6:39-10:10)

AS: My name is Amber Shelton. I'm a nursing student at UNCW and we are here at the Public Health Association Conference in Wilmington, North Carolina to do oral interviews. Today is Thursday October 28th, 2010 and I have with me:

JA: Jeanette Alexander.

AS: Okay Ms. Alexander, when were you born?

JA: December 28th, 1960.

AS: And where did you grow up?

JA: In Morganton, North Carolina.

AS: Why did you decide to become a nurse?

JA: I always wanted to be one. My aunt was a nurse and she always sent me her nursing uniforms when I was little growing up. So I was pretty much groomed to be a nurse I guess.

AS: Where and when did you go to nursing school?

JA: I graduated in '82 from Western Piedmont Community College with an ADN.

AS: Please tell me a little about your nursing education, especially as it relates to community public health.

JA: Well ever since I came to work at the health department, that was in 1989, I've been in school. That's just something that public health nurses do. We go to school a lot.

AS: Why did you decide to become a community health nurse?

JA: It was just something I was interested in and I knew that nurses who worked at the health department always stayed there. Then an opening came up and I got a job.

AS: Please tell me about your first job in community health.

JA: I was a home health nurse.

AS: What is your current position?

JA: I'm over in maternal health at the health department.

AS: Please tell me your most memorable story about community health nursing.

JA: I think it would be when I was taking the management and supervision course. I went with another public health nurse named Julie Britain, she's also at the Burke County health department. We were there for a week and we were staying at a motel. We got up the next morning, we had stayed there the first night, we got up the next morning and someone had stolen the tires, all four tires off of the car. Here we are in Durham with no tires on our car. We pretty much freaked out. They were sitting on cinder blocks in front of the door of the motel. That was

pretty memorable. Then we got in a truck. We called the cops and they wanted to know how much weighed, which really upset us on the police report. Then we got in a truck with a guy who was going to take us to get tires. That cost twelve hundred dollars to get us home. So that's pretty memorable.

AS: If you had to do it again, would you be a community health nurse? Why or why not?

JA: Oh yeah, I would. There's so many avenues to take as a community health nurse. It's been very rewarding. I think that most nurses who do public health would agree that you're a nurse/social worker/jack of all trades (laughs).

AS: Is there anything else you would like to share with nurses in the future who are interested in community health for 2010?

JA: Oh, you need to get into it. It is so rewarding. It is. It's just so rewarding.

AS. Okay thank you for your time.