



203 Churchwardens Rd.
Baltimore, MD USA 21212
office 1.410.323.1100
fax 1.410.510.1790
info@truthaboutnursing.org
www.truthaboutnursing.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FOUNDER and EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Sandy Summers, RN, MSN, MPH,
Co-author: *Saving Lives: Why the Media's
Portrayal of Nursing Puts Us All at Risk*

CHAIR
Gina Pistulka, RN, PhD, MSN, MPH

VICE CHAIR
Richard Kimball, RN, PhD, MSN, MPH

TREASURER
Kelly Bower-Joffe, RN, PhD, MSN, MPH

SECRETARY
Paul Sacco, PhD, MSW

ADVISORY PANEL

Claire Fagin, RN, PhD, FAAN

Barbara Chamberlain, RN, PhD, MBA

Carolyn Yucha, RN, PhD, FAAN

Sean Clarke, RN, PhD, MSc

Tony Allen, Public Affairs Specialist

Shawn Pohlman, RN, PhD

Carole Bergeron, RN, PhD

Stella Fitzgibbons, MD

Christine Stainton, RN, MSN

Diane Carter, RN, MSN

Fhaied Almobarak Alotaibi, RN, BSN

Christopher Ward, PhD

Patricia Woods, RN, MScN

Mona Shattell, RN, PhD

Milka Stojanovic, RN, BSN

Rodrigo Cardoso, RN, MSC

Tyler Kuhk, RN, BSN

Frances Ward, RN, PhD

THE TRUTH ABOUT NURSING

is an international 501(c)(3) non-profit organization working to challenge stereotypes. We show that nurses are autonomous, college-educated science professionals who save and improve lives. Each year, the undervaluation and underfunding of nursing leads to millions of needless deaths across the globe. Better understanding of the profession will allow nurses to save all the lives they are capable of saving.

February 11, 2016

Christopher Halpayne, Principal
Gloria Van Exel, Assistant Principal
Amy Yearwood, Assistant Principal
Gateway Middle School
1307 Gowen Drive
Killeen, TX 76543-5289
Christopher.Halpayne@killeenisd.org
Gloria.VanExel@killeenisd.org
Amy.Yearwood@killeenisd.org

Dear Mr. Halpayne, Ms. Van Exel and Ms. Yearwood,

I am writing to express my dismay that you allowed your student, Anthony Ruelas, to be suspended from school for his brave and quick actions that saved Tishica Fisher's life.

I understand from Rissa Shaw's reporting on KCEN-TV <<http://bit.ly/1o6W3u2>> that Mr. Ruelas's teacher stood idly by for three minutes waiting for an email response from the nurse while Ms. Fisher's life deteriorated. Some people check their email accounts every 2-6 months. No one who would think email was an appropriate way to sound an alert for a health care emergency should be caring for children.

Mr. Ruelas showed great courage and foresight to carry Ms. Fisher to the nurse in spite of his teacher's command to do nothing while Ms. Fisher deteriorated. When a person with asthma collapses to the floor, the situation is very dire. Even when such a collapse happens in a hospital emergency room, the patient is often too far gone to save. The two reasons Ms. Fisher lived are the actions of Mr. Ruelas and your school nurse. I do not believe that Ms. Fisher would have recovered if Mr. Ruelas had not taken command of the situation.

In her reporting, Ms. Rissa Shaw quoted the teacher's words on the disciplinary form:

"During 5th period another student complained that she couldn't breathe and was having an asthma attack. As I waited for a response from the nurse the student fell out of her chair to the floor. Anthony proceeded to go over and pick her up, saying 'f--- that we ain't got time to wait for no email from the nurse.' He walks out of class and carries the other student to the nurse."

From what I understand from several sources, the school has since tried to cover up the fact that Mr. Ruelas was suspended for saving Ms. Fisher's life, claiming he was suspended for some other mystery infraction.

I am trying to imagine the motivation behind your school's administrators for suspending Mr. Ruelas. It seems that the school is trying to teach students to obey the orders of authorities at all costs, even if that means others die. This is a very poor life lesson.

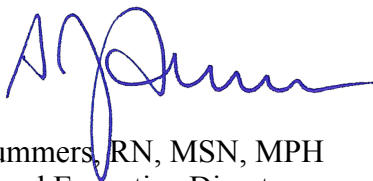
I am delighted that Congressman Henry Cuellar has invited Mr. Ruelas for a Congressional internship this summer. This is fantastic and well-deserved. But this is not enough. At the very least, Mr. Ruelas's record of suspension should be expunged from his record. You should also issue a public apology to Mr. Ruelas and his family for treating him like the enemy instead of a hero. In addition, I believe you should issue an apology to Ms. Fisher and her family for placing such a low value on Ms. Fisher's life so as to make it disposable—the necessary by-product of a lesson that students must follow commands at all costs. The school and city of Killeen should also be giving Mr. Ruelas a community hero award for being a stellar role model on the benefits of questioning authority.

In addition, I want you to know that our organization is giving Mr. Ruelas a Citizen Hero Award. We already sent the award directly to Mr. Ruelas, but I am also sending a copy of it to you, so you can hang it in a prominent place on the walls of the school. Please be on the lookout for it in the mail.

We have reported on the situation on our blog here http://blog.truthaboutnursing.org/2016/02/anthony_ruelas/

I am confident if you set to work on doing the right thing from the perspective of the students, you will be able to transform your school district into one where every student succeeds. I will look forward to hearing of your transformation and good acts.

Best regards,



Sandy Summers, RN, MSN, MPH
Founder and Executive Director
The Truth About Nursing

Co-author: *Saving Lives: Why the Media's Portrayal of Nursing Puts Us All at Risk*
ssummers@truthaboutnursing.org