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**Phoenix Children's Addresses Nursing Shortage with Innovative Training Program**  
Hospital Adds 49 New Graduate Nurses by Bridging the "GAPP" Between School and Career

PHOENIX, Ariz. (May 24, 2006) – Health care providers across the country and here in Arizona are struggling with the nationwide shortage of nurses. In fact, Arizona ranked 51<sup>st</sup> in the nation in the number of working registered nurses (RNs) per capita last year, according to the Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association (AzHHA). Phoenix Children's Hospital has identified an effective strategy to address the demand: the GAPP Program, Graduate Advancement Program in Pediatrics, which offers a complete training program for new graduate nurses.

The GAPP program has been a success. Phoenix Children's will add 49 new graduate nurses to its staff this month, increasing the hospital's nursing staff to 607 men and women. The Hospital also aims to add another 80 nurses by July. In 2005, Phoenix Children's hired 158 new nurses total.

"GAPP encourages new graduate nurses to form bonds with colleagues from around the hospital, share experiences, and support one another," said Deborah Wesley, the Hospital's chief nursing executive (CNE) and vice president of clinical services.

GAPP is a 14-week curriculum designed to bridge the gap between school and bedside nursing for new graduate registered nurses (RNs). The program involves weekly classes on pediatric nursing topics, including lectures and mock scenarios, a mentor program, and a preceptor component where the new RNs are paired with experienced Phoenix Children's nurses for 396 hours of guided clinical experience. GAAP also provides "looping" between departments for nurses to understand what patients experience along the care continuum during hospitalization.

"This program keeps new nurses from being overwhelmed. The extra education, hands on training, and familiarity with hospital staff and procedures makes them feel comfortable and prepared for their first day of independent patient care," said Wesley.

The GAPP students are men and women are at different points in their lives – ranging from new graduates to those with a mid-life career change. But Wesley says they all share the passion to take on this challenging profession and the GAPP program aids in their transition.

Phoenix Children’s Hospital is Arizona’s leader in pediatric care and is one of the 10 largest free-standing children’s hospitals in the nation. The most comprehensive array of pediatric specialists in the State practice at this one organization. The outstanding clinical expertise, as well as high patient volume, and an unwavering commitment to caring only for children, all contribute to Children’s leadership position. For information about Phoenix Children’s, visit the Hospital’s award-winning website at [www.phoenixchildrens.com](http://www.phoenixchildrens.com).

**Editor’s Note: On May 25 at 6 p.m., the students graduate from the GAPP program at Phoenix Children’s Melvin L. Cohen Conference Center. The event includes a certificate ceremony, dinner with family, friends, and staff, key note speaker, etc. Available interviews include GAPP students and class instructors. Please RSVP with Jessica Wheeler, (602) 546-0824.**