

The Idaho Nurses Foundation

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Trustee of the INF

With contributions by Grace Jacobson, PhD, RN and Verlene Kaiser, RN, NP

This article's purpose is to update INA members and Idaho nurses about the existence, history and activities of the Idaho Nurses Foundation (INF). The INF is owned by the membership of the Idaho Nurses Association (INA) and is governed by an executive board composed of elected members of the INA Board of Directors and appointed trustees. The trustees are Grace Jacobson, PhD, RN, a retired faculty member from Idaho State University and long serving administrator of the Florence Whipple Education Fund, and Randy Hudspeth, Director of Advanced and Specialty Practice at Saint Alphonsus, a former INA treasurer and current member of the Idaho Board of Nursing.

Historically, the INF was formed because of a 1983 recommendation by legal counsel. Prior to the establishment of the INF, the INA held dedicated monies in individual accounts for the purposes of education, scholarship and research. These funds needed to be recognized and protected under law as a separate charitable corporation to avoid tax liabilities. Verlene Kaiser, RN, NP, the INA president at the time, along with Rosie Acton, MSN, RN and Nancy Leslie, INA Executive Director, met with the Florence Whipple Fund committee because that fund held the major fund source. Other educational or research funds in the account were small and consisted of monies from memorials, a few estates, and dedicated funds collected by nurses.

With the Florence Whipple Educational Fund Committee's agreement, Rosie Acton prepared the INF by-laws for INA membership approval. Once the INA House of Delegates approved the by-laws, the INF was registered in 1985 with the Idaho Secretary of State's office as a 501(c) 3 corporation, organized exclusively as a charitable, philanthropic, literary and educational organization, with funds held separately from the INA's general account.

The following established funds were moved from INA to the umbrella of the INF and, for the most part, exist today.

The Florence Whipple Education Scholarship Fund (FWESF) is the largest and best known fund. [Florence Whipple](#), BS, RN, [originated from Minnesota](#) with a degree from [Mount Holyoke College](#) and also from [University of Minnesota](#). She [attended Teachers' College at Columbia University](#) and later [graduated from Massachusetts General Hospital Training School for Nurses in 1919](#). She [worked as a visiting and public health nurse in Connecticut, New York, Virginia and Montana before coming to Idaho](#). She [served as Director of Public Health Nursing for the Idaho Department of Health from 1946 until her death on December 31, 1955](#). She is buried in [Duluth, Minnesota](#). In her

obituary the Whipple family requested that instead of flowers, donations be made to the Idaho Nurses Association for a memorial fund to be used by Idaho colleges for RN education.

The INA passed a resolution to establish The Florence Whipple Educational Fund in February 1956. Eloise Davis, RN was appointed to establish fund policies and procedures. In August 1956, Doris Kelly, RN, became the first chairman of the Florence Whipple Educational Fund. After the initial memorials were received, the INA held an annual raffle, usually at the convention, to support the Fund. In the intervening years, the basic source of the funds has been nurses themselves who consistently donate. The Fund balance grew through good administration and investment and today the interest is used to fund one scholarship at each Idaho school preparing RNs.

There are currently ten Associate Degree and BSN programs in Idaho, with the amount of annual scholarship varying from \$600 to \$1,000 per student (the funds are dependent on the market and the amount is divided equally). Faculties choose the student recipient and forward this name to the Chair of FWESF.

Over the years the name of the Fund changed from educational to include loan and then scholarship. Originally established as a loan fund, whereby students could borrow from the fund at a reduced interest rate to pay education costs and then repay the loan plus interest after they graduated, non-repayment of loans became a problem. Beginning in the mid 1980s, nurses began to default on loans made over the years. By 2002 many loans were in default more than 10 years. Students were no longer interested in "borrowing" money from the fund because other loan sources had lesser interest rates, the loan amount was small considering contemporary education costs, and younger generations lacked engagement with the nursing association to even generate interest or awareness of the fund.

The uncollectible loan balance of more than \$24,000 appeared as an asset on the books even though it did not exist. The INF board, based on recommendations of the treasurer and accountant, determined to convert the Florence Whipple Loan Fund to the Florence Whipple Scholarship Fund and convert all outstanding loans to scholarships that would not require repayment.

The Helen A. Smith Fund was established by INA District 31 in 1958 and transferred to the INF in 1994. In 2004, in accordance with the original fund charter, all funds were given to Boise State University.

Helen Ada Smith, RN, was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, December 10, 1894. She graduated from Worcester City Hospital Nursing School and served 2 years in France as a navy nurse during World War I. She served as the operating room and nursing supervisor, as well as assistant superintendent, at St. Luke's Hospital in Boise for approximately 22 years (1919-1941). She served terms as president of the Idaho State Nurses Association, Secretary of the State Board of Nurse Examiners and Chairman of the Idaho Red Cross Nursing Committee. At St. Luke's she conducted the

chapel service each morning and sang in the choir of St. Michael's Cathedral. She was an athlete who loved skiing, tennis and fishing and was a charter member of the Boise camera club.

In early December 1941, Miss Smith became very ill with pneumonia. In an effort to save her, physicians negotiated with the Veteran's Hospital to borrow a newly developed oxygen tent for her treatment. Miss Smith reached through the port hole in the oxygen tent, shook hands with Dr. Swindell to assure him she appreciated all he was doing for her. Unfortunately efforts failed and she died December 16, 1941, at age 48. After services in Boise, her body was taken to Worcester, Massachusetts for interment.

To honor her memory, a dedicated loan fund was established that could be used by INA District 31 member RN's who were returning to school to complete a BSN. The fund charter specified administration by the INA or INA district and should the fund become dormant or insolvent, that the fund balance be given to Boise State University for nursing scholarships. In 2001 the fund had not been accessed in more than 10 years. The balance was being diminished by auditor and administrative fees, so the INF Board, based on recommendations of the treasurer, determined to implement the fund charter instructions and give the balance of \$6,000 to BSU. However, BSU did not have a mechanism to facilitate this, so the Boise based "Friends of Nursing" organization, an educational fund raiser that supports BSU nursing, accepted the funds and contributed the needed balance to establish a \$10,000 dedicated "Helen A. Smith and INA" educational endowment. In the future, income from this endowment will support scholarships.

The Vivian Lee Fund was donated by her estate. She was a patient of the Boise Visiting Nurses Association and when she died she left money to the VNA. That organization ceased to exist and thus the funds were transferred to the INF.

The Nursing Research Fund was established in 1986 through an INA endowment to stimulate nursing research, but the fund has seen little activity.

The Educational Fund was also established in 1986 through an INA endowment and has almost depleted over the years.

Current INF activities focus on the annual Florence Whipple Fund scholarship award. For more information on these funds, or to make a tax-deductible donation, please contact an INF board member or trustee.