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**On this day**

In 1972, China sent President Nixon two giant pandas as a gift.

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**On a mission: Nurses With A Purpose set to spread healthcare around the globe**

It's no secret that nurses have to fight burnout. Balancing heavy patient loads, working with difficult coworkers, and maintaining a life outside of the hospital can all take their toll. Many facilities fight these stressors by offering nurses flexible hours, roles in shared governance structures, and various other retention methods. Now, they can add a nursing expedition to the list.

"It helps me enjoy and appreciate the rest of my life," says **Jane Bower, RN**, a travel nurse who has gone on medical journeys to South Africa and Costa Rica. "It helps renew and refresh me [as a nurse]."

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Bower is hoping to take a future trip to Ethiopia with Nurses With A Purpose, a nonprofit organization created by **Patricia Guenther, RN**, in November 2006. This year, the organization is helping to fund trips to Biloxi, MS, Ethiopia, and India. Each of the trips will help deliver healthcare to an area of the world in dire need.

"It is mind-boggling how much poverty there is, and how little delivery of healthcare there is," Guenther says.

### Realizing the role of retention

In addition to providing healthcare to those in need, a core aim of Guenther's organization is to give hospitals another tool for retention.

Facilities can sponsor staff members who want to undertake a Nurses With a Purpose trip, which she says serves the following two purposes:

1. When a hospital offers a benefit such as this, it shows that the institution understands what is important to a nurse. "It's coming up with a new way to recognize workers," Guenther says.
2. It helps prevent nurses from burning out. "We are all stressed out," Guenther says. "We have incredible schedules, incredibly taxing jobs; we're always missing meals. So instead of burning [nurses] out, support them in doing something that is refreshing and revitalizing."

The cost for a nurse to go on a trip is between \$1,500 and \$2,500, depending on the location, as Nurses With A Purpose pays half of the costs with help from its many fundraising efforts.

*Editor's note: For more information or to get involved, go to [www.nurseswithapurpose.org](http://www.nurseswithapurpose.org).*

Source: **The Staff Educator**, HCPPro, Inc., April 2007

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