we may face and experience many defeats...

but we must never be defeated!!
you WILL make it through!
In February 2017, members of the Student Nurses Association (SNA) stayed after their monthly meeting and wrote “Open When” letters to target students during particularly stressful times in their nursing school journey. The goal was to provide a new way to support students who might be having a difficult time balancing the rigors of nursing school.

The letters were located at one end of the third floor student lounge, placed against the window so that students could easily access the words of encouragement. From inspirational quotes to more serious words of advice, students were sure to find letters that could relate to them in some way.

“I think every one of us struggles at times and we need to remember that we’re all in this together. We’re here to support each other,” says Lindsey Snider, traditional BSN student and service coordinator for SNA. “Anything you can do to make someone’s day even a little bit better is always a good thing.”
The University of Kentucky College of Nursing has continually strived to create a safe and inclusive space that prepares students to work in what can be challenging environments by prioritizing mental health and wellbeing. As the Dean of the College, I have the privilege of watching our students grow to reach their full potential in all of their academic and professional pursuits within the College and beyond.

The demanding nature of health care environments today means higher burnout rates for practicing professionals. In *A Roadmap to Decreasing Clinician Burnout* published in *Hospitals and Health Networks* on May 15, 2017, authors Paulus and Strand reported that more than 50 percent of nurses are emotionally exhausted and 25 percent are clinically depressed.

These alarming numbers are also present within our health care student populations. The *American College Health Association 2015 Annual Report* found that 17 percent of college students are depressed, 50 percent of college students who seek mental health counseling have been counseled before, 34 percent of college students are on mental health medication(s) and 25 percent of college students have self-harmed.

Our students here in the College of Nursing realized that they and some of their classmates were struggling.

As health professionals, our work to care for patients is too important to undermine the influence of our own mental wellbeing. Although our primary obligation is to those we serve, we also have an obligation to address our own self-care and to commit to a lifestyle of resiliency and gratitude.

I am proud of SNA for going above and beyond the call of duty to wrap a layer of support around their nursing colleagues. In the next few pages, you’ll read about this support and see firsthand the resiliency that is built inside these walls so that they may succeed beyond. I hope this booklet may serve as a reminder that *what these students do to inspire one another can also inspire us.*

Health and Happiness Always,

Dean and Warwick Professor of Nursing
Open when...

You don’t think you will make it through nursing.
Remember... You got admitted to not just any nursing program... You got admitted to UK's nursing program (one of the best in the country, literally!) just that fact proves that you are more than capable of getting through this program! Sure, it's completely tough, but it won't last forever. And once you've graduated, you are set with tons of wonderful job opportunities in an awesome field to work in!

It's easy to feel down and feel like quitting, but don't ever let that get the best of you! Keep persevering, and you will be so proud of yourself in the end!

"Winners are not people who never fail... but people who never quit."
Open when...

You just passed an exam, and you didn’t think you would.
Proud of you!

You deserve a nap!
Open when...

You’re having a bad test day.
Just remember you can bounce back from this. I got a 68% on a med-surg exam and at the end of the semester I was only 1 point away from a B. Ask for help, nobody will think you are weak. Don't dwell on the past. Start now and create a better and brighter future!

Hugs and Kisses & Best Wishes on the next exam!
Open when...

You think your instructors are out to get you!
Remember we want you to succeed! We are rooting for you. You may very likely be caring for us in the very near future.

I think sometimes we worry more about you than what you realize!
Open when...

You’re struggling to write a care plan or paper (seriously, open this).
Take a break.

How you ask?

Sí se puede.

- Go for a walk
- Treat yourself to a yummy snack
- Take a shower

Then, get back refreshed to studying. Then, get back refreshed to studying. Then, get back refreshed to studying.
Open when...

You’re questioning your major.
First off, we've all been there. Doesn't matter if you are "ace"ing every exam or just failed MedMath for the 2nd time. Every now and then doubt creeps into your mind and you begin to wonder why you chose this path. It's okay!

Remember who you are doing this for. Imagine all you have overcome and accomplished to get here. Picture your future patients -- they will be better off because of you.

And if that's not enough, just know you aren't alone. Trust me, it gets better!

-A fellow nursing student
Open when...

You are feeling overwhelmed.
You can do it!
You are a Pink Starburst!
Open when...

You’re scared about your future.
"Success does not lie in the "results," but in the "efforts."

"Being the best is not so important, "doing" the best is all that matters."

You can do it! You're going to be a great nurse, just do your best.

❤️