

The 2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

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Why I Chose the Career of an Athletic Trainer

Growing up in a family of seven, I was a born competitor. I participated in many sports throughout elementary and high school and took that sense of teamwork and energy and goal-orientated dedication into my career as an athletic trainer. I attended Minnesota State University-Mankato and graduated with a Bachelors of Science Degree in Athletic Training.

After graduating from college I obtained my first job at Mercy Sports Medicine Center in Janesville, WI. My job consisted of spending half of the day in the sports medicine department rehabilitating a variety of injuries and the second half of my day working with three area high schools evaluating athletic injuries and providing treatment and game coverage. It was here that my love for working with high school students began. While working at Mercy Sports Medicine Center I helped develop and implement a High School Student Athletic Training Program. High school students spent a week during the summer learning about the profession of athletic training and then were able to mentor an athletic trainer throughout the year at their high school.

After the birth of our first child, my husband and I decided to raise our children in a smaller community and move closer to my family. I took a job at Richland Medical Center and developed and coordinated the first ever sports medicine program.

In July 2002 I joined Prairie du Chien Memorial Hospital. Part of my day is spent in the hospital physical therapy department rehabilitating various injuries. I spend the afternoons and evenings at Prairie du Chien High School. A typical day at the school may include: preparing athletes for practice or competition which may include taping or bracing, evaluating injuries to determine their management and possible referral, develop conditioning programs and implementing treatment and rehabilitation programs. I also provide game coverage in the evenings. In addition to my above responsibilities I have also developed and implemented a female ACL injury prevention program, educated the ER staff and local EMS on proper spine injury management of athletes and inservice hospital employees also present at industrial health fairs on Choosing Proper Footwear and Back Safety.

Being an athletic trainer I have the unique opportunity to follow the injury through from beginning to the end. From seeing the injury occur on the field to evaluating the injury and making the referral to the physician to rehabilitating the injury and then seeing the athlete back out on the game field.

After 10 years of being an athletic trainer I've learned that no two injuries are ever the same and the speed of their recovery depends on how hard they're prepared to work. There is a tremendous amount of gratification in helping other people get better. I like the challenge of having to balance all my different responsibilities. I feel that every athlete or patient is worth 100% of your effort and if you're going to help them, you have to do whatever it takes. At the same time, it's important to find a balance so that you can enjoy your family, friends and your life. The best advice I could give to a new grad is to be proud of what you do in your profession and attack every day with everything you have.

Penny Grassel
Athletic Trainer
Prairie du Chien Memorial Hospital, Prairie du Chien, WI

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Dreams Can be Reality

Nursing has always been in the back of mind. I can remember telling my future husband that I wanted to be a nurse to help people. As my life path changed, I found myself in the food industry working in marketing. It was a fun job and I met wonderful people but it ended with budget cuts and “by the way... your job is eliminated.” During that time I also worked as an EMT. I knew it was time to accept that nursing was my life’s work.

Do you know how hard it is to interview for a certified nursing assistant position in a hospital when you have a Master’s degree in Food Science and an EMT license? With many bumps in the road to my goal and being told I am overqualified to work as a CNA, I hear my mom’s words, “don’t give up, you can do anything you set your mind to.” By the grace of God, Baldwin Area Medical Center gave me that opportunity to work as a nursing assistant. I have had many positive experiences working with the patients and staff in the medical/surgical unit and emergency room.

This adds up to one thing, thank you to the director of nursing in believing in me and allowing me to pursue my dream. Today, I am five months from continuing on with my nursing dream. I have been accepted to start the core associate of nursing program this fall at Chippewa Valley Technical College. In two years my dream will finally be realized.

In conclusion, “don’t give up, you can do anything you set your mind to.” Thank you Baldwin Area Medical Center for allowing me to be a part of the solid medical team that serves our community.

Christine Cobb-Sauer, CNA
NREMT-B IV Tech
Baldwin Area Medical Center

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The Heart and Soul of Nursing

I am a certified nursing assistant, and I'm also currently enrolled in the Registered Nursing program. I'm going to school not because I don't love my job now. I just need to be more financially secure in life for my family. I will still be doing what I love, helping and teaching others.

Nursing is a broad subject. Being a health care professional you learn something different everyday. You get the opportunity to work with and to meet different people all the time.

Not many jobs offer you the pleasure and gratifications that nursing does. It is an amazing feeling to know that just being there with someone could make him or her feel better. You teach and sometimes re-teach patients how to care for themselves or loved ones. Health care professionals have to be the most patient people I know.

To be able to provide care and comfort to someone who is ill or dying is probably the biggest reward for me. To know that the patient and their family trust in me to take the very best care of them is a true reward for me.

I feel that it takes a special person to do the job that I do, but I also think my job has molded me. I always try to put myself in their shoes. I never assume anything without asking. No matter how bad my day may have been, it is all worth it if I made it a little better for one person.

I am proud to be a health care professional. I am proud to be who I am. I would encourage anyone to choose a career in health care, whether it is a registered nurse, certified nursing assistant or any other kind of career in health care. If they are willing to dedicate their time and energy to making someone else's life better, and feeling the reward that I feel everyday, I truly love what I do!

Tonya Deisinger
CNA/Ward Secretary
Langlade Memorial Hospital, Antigo

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If you are a caring, compassionate person that enjoys being around elderly people, this is the job for you.

When I get home from work, I know I have made a difference in someone's life. I have made it possible for them to stay in their home. With a little help, to keep their independence.

With this job you have the ability to make your day (and the client's day) a warm, pleasant experience, with your first "Hello" or "Good morning," with your first gentle touch, your first smile. It all paves the way your day is going to be.

Leave the problems of your life at home, because NO ONE likes to be around an angry, unhappy person. Your clients deserve more from you, and certainly your employer deserves more from you.

When I was a little girl, I was fortunate to have a nursing home on the same street I lived on. I spent many afternoons listening to the elderly people talk about when they were young and all the changes they have seen over the years. The elderly are so openly trusting and loving. Accept their love and return their love - - in gentle gestures, a hug, a touch to their hand, a pleasant word, and especially your SMILE.

Every client I deal with reaffirms my decision to work in health care.

The words from my class instructor come into my mind when I have a difficult moment with a client, "treat your patients as you would want your mom, dad, grandma, or grandpa treated, and you'll be just fine.

I'm very proud to be a CNA, and I'm proud to work for Moundview Memorial Hospital and Clinics.

Phyllis Deutsch
CNA, Home Health
Moundview Memorial Hospital, Friendship

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

It was June of 2002 when I re-entered the workforce looking for something more than a job. I was in search of a way to make a difference in peoples' lives. I enrolled in a course to become a Certified Nursing Assistant, and from that point on, I knew that health care was exactly where I was supposed to be. I realized that I had been taught the technical skills necessary for the job, but my instructor informed me that qualities such as integrity, compassion, and pride were things that I would have to develop on my own. When I went to work as a CNA on the 3-11 shift at Memorial Medical Center, all of these facets were brought home to me in a significant way. Each shift is like a family, with its own personality, but we are all united in our endeavor to provide a better quality of life to our residents. Whether it's something as simple as offering a drink of water, or something more complex such as assisting a client with their physical therapy, the satisfaction that we feel in our work is one of the greatest rewards that anyone could ever hope to experience. While some of our tasks are accomplished alone, the overwhelming majority of them require some degree of assistance from our colleagues, bringing home what I believe to be our shifts' strongest asset, that of teamwork. A simple word to be sure, but one that we take with the utmost seriousness. It's a reassuring feeling of knowing that if you ask for help, you will get it, and in a timely manner. If you bring together all of the qualities of our shift, you will find that one simple word that exemplifies what we do and how we do it. Pride.

Frank Johnson, Jr.
Certified Nursing Assistant
Memorial Medical Center, Neillsville, WI

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In 1970, I decided to supplement our family income so I took a job as a CNA in a nursing home in Janesville, Wisconsin. After a couple of years I could no longer work and care for my eight children at the same time. I was hooked. I made up my mind that someday I would be back in a nursing home setting.

I relocated to Woodruff in 1979. Dr. Kate's opened in 1980. My husband found out about my dream and desire and he said, "go for it." One of my friends was the Director of Nursing at Dr. Kate's. She learned what I wanted to do, so in November of 1983 guess what! I had a job. The joy it brings to me to care for these people cannot be described and I have some of the best co-workers in the world. The older I got the harder the work became. One day the DON asked if I would like to go to Nicolet College and become a medication assistant. It was an answer to my prayer.

This has been the most rewarding job ever. Just being able to bring a smile to someone is a joy and they bring many smiles to me. God put me here for a purpose. In January 1999 my husband was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and by December of that year he was living at Dr. Kate's. It was my privilege to be able to help care for him every day until he passed away in September 2003. There is purpose and meaning to my life. As long as God allows, I will be here to bring joy and happiness to our residents. This job is highly recommended by me for any young person who has a loving heart and a lot to offer.

Shirley Larsen, CNA
Medication Assistant
Howard Young Health Care – Dr. Kate's Convalescent Center

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Today We Celebrate Nurse's Day With Some Remember Whens:

REMEMBER WHEN: I was little and trying to decide what shall I be, what's really out there for me.

REMEMBER WHEN: One day you woke up and said I know what it will be. I'm going to be a nurse; I think that's for me.

REMEMBER WHEN: I got accepted in the Nursing program, that I chose just for me. How exciting, I think this is what I really want to be.

REMEMBER WHEN: I went out the night before that big exam, and I thought for sure I would fail, but it wasn't so bad, I decided yes this is really what I want to be.

REMEMBER WHEN: Then graduation got closer, I thought where is it I want to be, is it in a hospital, clinic, nursing home, home health, or private care. What is really out there for me?

REMEMBER WHEN: Graduation is here and how proud my family was for me. And I thought YES THIS IS REALLY FOR ME.

REMEMBER WHEN: My first day as a RN, I was as scared as I could be, now I have so much responsibility, is this really for me.

REMEMBER WHEN: I was scheduled for maternity, I saw that first baby come into the world, and how happy that made the family, you wipe away the tear, YES THIS IS REALLY FOR ME.

REMEMBER WHEN: I got a patient up after being in bed a few days, you looked at he, he was green and in agony. He said I'm going to, it was too late. I said OH LORD HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN TO ME.

REMEMBER WHEN: I sat and comforted the family of my first dying patient, what a difference you made with the family. I thought YES THIS IS REALLY FOR ME.

REMEMBER WHEN: You are a CRNA, and you go visit a patient having surgery, and the patient has no neck, you say OH LORD WHY ME.

REMEMBER WHEN: I went to start my first IV, oh no that vein rolled away from me. I thought did this really happen to me.

As you remember all the remember when's, you should be as proud as you can be. Enjoy the day, hold your head up high and say YES, A NURSE IS WHAT I REALLY WANTED TO BE.

HAPPY NURSES DAY

Diana Mielke
Certified Nursing Assistant
Sauk Prairie Memorial Hospital, Prairie du Sac

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

As a sophomore in high school, I made one of the most important decisions of my life. I did not know at the time that going into a youth apprenticeship program would guide a path to my future.

At 16 years old, through my apprenticeship program, I became a certified nursing assistant. I used my certification as a nursing assistant while rotating in various Memorial Health Center departments. This opened my eyes to great possibilities.

I worked in the nursing home, radiology, emergency department, laboratory, medical/surgical unit, surgery and the pharmacy. As I went to each department, I soon realized why or why not those careers appealed to me and which ones would fit my personality. I continued to work hard in all the departments and was willing to learn all I could. I learned to appreciate each and every single person that worked there and how each person was vital to the functioning of the hospital. I especially enjoyed working in the pharmacy. Who would have known that four years later they would remember me and want me to be a part of their department?

After graduating high school, I decided to go to technical college for health unit coordinating. After completing the course, I was unable to find a job that fit what I was looking for. Then, out of the blue, I received a call from the pharmacy director from Memorial Health Center wondering if I would be interested in a pharmacy aide position. I eagerly accepted, knowing this was the perfect job for me. I used my knowledge from the things that were taught to me at Memorial Health Center and my various courses in technical college to excel at my new career. Now, five years later, I still work for Memorial Health Center and took the steps to become a certified pharmacy technician.

I mostly would like to encourage high school students to take any opportunities available to them in high school and college. I am glad I did, even though at the time I wasn't sure where I was being led. I know I would not be where I am today if it wasn't for those major key factors in my life. I couldn't imagine my life any different.

Christina Schilling
Certified Pharmacy Technician
Memorial Health Center, Medford

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

Why did I choose to work in health care?

As a teenager, my mother was diagnosed with advanced breast cancer. This is a life-altering event for any person given this news, but when it's your mom, your world spins out of control. I remember after my mom's radical mastectomy and lymph node resection, the surgeon came from the OR, in his scrubs and blood-speckled shoe covers. He told us that the tumor in the breast was the size of a baseball and 12 of 18 lymph nodes taken were positive for cancer. He gave my mom less than a 20% chance of surviving 5 years.

As Mom recovered and began chemotherapy, I learned a lot about the inner strength of people faced with cancer. I also had the very positive experience of supporting her through her cancer treatments. Many would find this role uncomfortable. I find it shaped my future.

The medical personnel we met showed me the true heart of health care. Through every step of my mom's treatment, caring, exceptional people cared for her. They attended to her physical needs with speed and professionalism, while holding her hand. They talked to us about what was happening at that moment as well as what to expect in the future. Through 9 months of treatment, I learned that I wanted to impact people's lives in the same way these incredible people impacted my family's lives. I wanted to become a nurse.

My mom lived 11 years cancer-free, beating that surgeon's prediction. I will never forget the lessons taught me from her experiences. Lessons about living life to the fullest every single day, about finding the positive in even the most negative situation and about how providing care and education to people makes the difference between feeling lost, alone and frightened or feeling informed, empowered and safe.

Jerri Ustby-Cruz, RN
Clinical Coordinator, Health Promotion
Fort HealthCare, Fort Atkinson

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

I take pride in the position that I hold at Memorial Hospital of Lafayette County (MHLC). I don't think of my position so much as a job, because I absolutely enjoy what I do. Taking the Community Outreach Director position almost three years ago was the best decision I could have made for myself!

One reason that I have so much pride for Memorial Hospital of Lafayette County goes back about 12 years ago when I delivered my first of four children here. I was treated with so much kindness and had been shown the family atmosphere first hand. Before I even worked at MHLC I felt an affection for the Hospital.

After I started working here, through my association with the Memorial Healthcare Foundation, it was decided that the Hospital would add new services, such as the Dialysis Unit and Birthing Suites. I was able to be involved from the beginning of the capital campaign until completion. My pride also has to do with the way the community has embraced the Hospital and dedicated themselves to this recent project. If you drive by 800 Clay St. in Darlington you can't help but see and feel the success and pride in our community hospital.

I am fortunate with the responsibilities that I have. I always say, "I have the best job at the hospital." They include advertising our wonderful services; planning events, such as health fairs, golf outings, home tour, annual dinners, blood drives, and everything in between. I also publish the monthly newsletter, am the Auxiliary President, a Chamber member, and attend many hospital and community meetings. Even though I don't deal with direct patient care, I feel that I make a difference with our staff, patients and their families.

I hope that my pride shows in everything that I do at Memorial Hospital of Lafayette County, because I certainly feel it everyday when I unlock my office door!

Tammie Evenstad
Community Outreach Director
Memorial Hospital of Lafayette County, Darlington

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

I work as a clinical social worker for the Sexual Assault Treatment Center at Aurora Sinai Medical Center in Milwaukee. Our center provides medical, forensic, and counseling services to victims of sexual assault. I provide crisis intervention at the time of an initial hospital visit and also offer follow-up services and ongoing counseling to our patients.

I appreciate working in a hospital setting because sexual assault is a crime that affects a victim's physical *and* emotional health. The impact of sexual assault is complex, as patients often disconnect from their bodies and emotions in efforts to cope. By being able to attend to their physical and emotional needs at the same time, we begin assisting clients in integrating traumatic experiences.

This work has changed my view of the world in a way that others may not expect. While it is difficult to regularly hear experiences of horror and violation, more profound is the resilience evident in each survivor I meet. Despite the many challenges victims encounter as they work to rebuild their lives, they exhibit amazing strength as they face overwhelming and frightening issues. I continue to be surprised as a victim feels as though she or he is not "being strong enough" or they don't understand why they "can't just get over it." As they make these disparaging statements that are unfortunately common, I sit in my chair in awe of the process that is unfolding. I watch as they face life-changing fear with grace and courage and overcome obstacles that seem unmovable. It is inspiring to see someone begin from a place of vulnerability and shame and move towards empowerment and acknowledgement of their accomplishment of survival. I am honored to walk along with patients through this process of moving from victim to survivor.

Serena Clardie
Crisis Counselor
Sexual Assault Treatment Center
Aurora Sinai Medical Center, Milwaukee

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

Health Care Chose Me

My story is one that is a little bit different from the rest. I did not choose a career in health care. A health care career chose me.

During my high school years, I never really gave much thought as to what I was going to do after graduation. I remember not being too interested when career day would roll around, and I remember not receiving any career guidance from the school. My folks didn't talk about college or offer any plans as to further education. I did secure full time employment at a filling station and quickly traveled up the ladder until I reached a manager's position. I felt I had achieved a great accomplishment, a manager at the age of 19.

Then it all came to a halt. The company I was working for was sold and the stations were closed. I had absolutely no idea what to do next. After pounding the pavement for a few months and not being able to secure a suitable job, I enlisted in the United States Air Force.

I saw a recruiter and took the examinations required for enlistment into the service. When my recruiter sat down with me to discuss my career options he informed me that my test scores were at a level that allowed me to choose any job offered to the enlisted core. He then asked what my priority was for my career in the service. At this point in my life I still had no idea what I wanted in a career. All I knew was that I was joining the service. My response was "I want to leave for basic training as soon as possible. After hearing this and tapping on his computer keyboard for a few minutes he said to me "I can guarantee you Radiological Specialist and you can leave in three days." I took it not even knowing what a Radiological Specialist was.

That was over twenty-two years ago. I discovered that health care was rewarding, challenging, and ever evolving. I have gained such a great sense of personal pride and satisfaction from my career in health care that I cannot imagine doing anything else. Every day I meet interesting people who brighten and enhance my life. I share in my patient's triumphs when their illnesses are resolved and share in their grief when the news is not so good. I go home each night knowing that I made a difference in someone else's life.

This last line is what a rewarding career is all about whether it is in health care or construction. I consider myself most fortunate and blessed because I fell into my career by pure luck.

Mark Prohaska RT(R)(CT)
CT Technologist
Flambeau Hospital, Park Falls

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

Just the other day I was talking with a patient who comes in frequently for labs and I feel during the time he is here, we connect as friends. We talk briefly about his sons and of his frequent travels to a neighboring state. When he leaves, we smile and wave, wishing for good days ahead. I thought of him recently and the many other 'friends' I've made here.

I have met many people and have heard many stories. Some are about grandkids, vacations, some talk of the anticipation of a new baby, some discuss losses of family or friends and a few tell of their aches and pains. I love to listen and I think they like to share. To them I am a familiar face in a place that can sometimes seem scary. I have seen pregnant women return as moms. I have seen patients with cancer get better and some that have not. I can't heal people with medicine or miracles. I can only lend an ear and share a smile. I'd like to think I've made a difference in some and I'd like them to know they have made a difference in me.

I take pride in the connections I've made and the people I may have helped with only a smile. I think we all hold vital roles in this hospital, from the clean rooms, fresh beds to hot healthy meals, a doctor's wisdom and a nurse's care, the quickness of our ER staff and the efficiency of our lab and x-ray technicians, the patience of a rehabilitation aide and many, many more.

Together we have created a hospital that not only cares for its patients, but also shows compassion and understanding for those needing our services.

For that we should all be proud.

Kate Nelson
Customer Service Assistant, Laboratory
St. Clare Hospital & Health Services, Baraboo

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

I grew up in a world of dysfunction—alcoholic parents, younger siblings to raise, and a yearning for an education to remove me from the dysfunction that enveloped my life. I raised my younger brothers and set out on my own to find anything but the life I had been exposed to as a child. After putting myself through college, I entered the workforce as a responsible adult, hoping to have put the past behind me. Recently, I witnessed a mother and her five children, filthy and barefoot, standing in line waiting to speak with the cashier at a local gas station. Her turn came and I overheard her request two cases of the bananas that were on display. Rudely, the attendant spoke over the crying baby in her arms, and gave her the total. She dug into her coat and pulled out crinkled dollar bills, only to find that she was 11 cents short. The attendant informed her that no sale would be made unless she had enough money. I excused myself to the front of the line, placed a \$50 bill on the counter, and sternly informed the attendant that we would take ALL the cases of bananas in the gas station.

After witnessing the woman struggle, I vowed to make a difference, each and every day of my life, from that day forward. In my position at the Madre Angela Dental Clinic, I am able to do that each and every day. My position allows me to interact with the homeless, the sick, and the desperate people who simply need to be comforted, spoken to with respect and, most importantly, treated with dignity. The best of who I am as a person can be seen as a reflection in the eyes of my patients.

Donna Zacharias-Kempf
Dental Assistant
Columbia St. Mary's

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

Being a part of a health care team is the most rewarding career I can imagine. Be it patient care, billing, transcription, dietary or housekeeping, knowing that you can make a difference in people's lives is a wonderful feeling. I work in Health Information and find that a day doesn't go by where I don't learn something new. With things never staying the same from day to day, it provides me the opportunity to keep learning and growing in my profession, as well as my personal life. It is this never-ending cycle of growth that got me interested in Health Information.

I started out at Boscobel Area Health Care in transcription and, after doing that for six months, decided I had to learn more. I then learned how to code and eventually went back to school to earn my RHIT and am now the Director of the department. I have worked in health care for ten years this year and can't imagine doing anything else. Even though I don't have direct patient contact, I feel a sense of pride in the services and personal care that the patients receive here from every employee.

I enjoy being part of a team of people that, no matter what the day brings, always do their best to provide quality care. I also thrive on learning new things and that certainly is something that will never change at Boscobel Area Health Care. I think that anyone interested in a career that never stops growing should choose health care. I often take the opportunity to take students in the department from area colleges or high schools. It is nice to be able to show that that no matter what your job function is at a health care facility, you still make a difference.

Toni Brown, RHIT
Director of Health Information
Boscobel Area Health Care, Boscobel

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

I have been in health care for 18 years and I can honestly say that a day has not gone by that I have wished that I had chosen another career. In high school when I was deciding on a career path to take in college I knew that I wanted to help people. I considered a doctor but I did not know if I could commit to the length of schooling. I had some experience with physical therapy as an athlete in high school so I chose to go that route.

My motivation every day in health care is simply to help those I serve. Whether it is through direct patient care or as a manager I wake up every morning praying that I will be able to share the talents and gifts I have been given with the people I meet that day. The rewards have been tremendous. Knowing that you can help someone walk again, return to their job, or function the way they are used to is an incredible feeling. The little things are just as important as the big things. Helping a patient go up and down steps that allows them to go home opposed to a nursing facility has been just as rewarding as helping a professional athlete get back to their sport.

I have found that in health care there are so many people that need my help but quite often what they need is a loving touch and a listening ear. I know that I have helped as many people over the years by simply being there for them as I have because of the skills I have as a therapist. At times that seems odd but I have always thought that whatever it takes to get the job done is what I must do. Getting the job done means helping those I meet to be healed. I can't think of anything else I would rather be doing.

Mark Hillesheim
Director, Rehabilitation Services
St. Nicholas Hospital, Sheboygan

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

I am an EMT/CNA at Eagle River Memorial Hospital. I work in many different departments, med/surgical floor, emergency room, 1st out ambulance, transfer crew, and I am on the rescue squad. I am also a CPR instructor and at times help teach EMT-B classes. I helped set up the "File for Life" and I speak at meetings about safety, EMS and when to call 911. My job is trying mentally and physically at times but heart felt and rewarding to me.

When I was a child my family and I lived in southern Wisconsin. We lived in a two story house on a very dangerous intersection of two major highways. There were on average four accidents a month. When we'd hear the screeching of tires and the crash of the vehicles there was always the same response from my family. My father would stop whatever he was doing and run out the front door. My mother would race to the phone to call emergency numbers and us kids would run to my bedroom window to watch our father spring to action. My dad was never formally trained in medical emergencies but he would tell us kids "you just use the common sense God gave you and help people." Back then EMS and ambulances were something new so it would be 20 to 45 minutes before anyone would arrive to help.

I saw my father do some really amazing things through my window. One time a vehicle burst into flames, a young man trapped inside. Like a trooper, with no fear, my dad ran into the car and pulled him to safety. Later I asked my dad if he was scared and he said that he was, but what would the outcome have been had he not got him out. One cold rainy night a car went through the stop sign and hit a person on a motorcycle. The person in the car took off and my father tended to the cyclist who was all twisted up. The ambulance took record time getting there that night and the young man died in my fathers lap. That one took a big toll on my dad and we later found out that we all knew the young mans family, who were extremely thankful that my dad was with him and that he didn't die alone.

My father never got many thanks for all that he did, but always told me "just knowing he helped some one or changed the outcome of what could have been a disaster" was enough thanks in his mind. At times I was angry with people for not thanking him, but now doing what he used to do; I know what he meant and how he felt. My father lived on that corner for 17 years and he doesn't regret one minute of it. He still lives his life helping people every chance he gets.

I can't begin to tell you how proud I was and still am of my father and how he put his own life in danger to help people he didn't even know. I admire his strength and his huge heart and I wanted to be just like him. That is why I became an EMT-Intermediate. I am proud to tell people what I do for a living and I am extremely proud of where I work.

Theresa Meisenburg, EMT-I, CNA
Eagle River Memorial Hospital/Ministry Health Care

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

Why I Chose an Occupation in Health Care

I would never say that I set out to work in health care. In fact, growing up, I stayed away from anything that had to do with science or the health care field. The sight of blood has always made me queasy, I did everything I could to avoid taking science classes in college, and I get sick when my husband flips the television to a surgery channel.

But I guess it was fate or possibly genetics that eventually pulled me into health care. In one shape or form most of my family is involved in health care. I have a father who is a registered nurse, a mother who is a pharmacy technician, a sister who is a surgical technologist, my grandfather retired as the assistant administrator at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Appleton and my grandmother retired as a nurse from St. Elizabeth's. My parents even met for the first time at a function at St. Elizabeth's Hospital!

I knew that I was never going to be a nurse or anything that involved bodily fluids (or something even more gross!), but I always knew I wanted to have a career that involved helping people. I wanted to do something that would allow me to be creative, but would also allow me to make an impact on people. My majors were political science and communications, so my initial thought was that I would work in the political arena. However, it did not take me long to realize I was not going to make the right kind of impact, if any, while working in politics. As I went into the workforce it seemed that working for a non-profit organization would fit my goals and objectives the best and I have not worked in the "corporate world" or "politics" yet.

After a few years at the American Cancer Society, I came to Community Memorial Hospital because the organization and the people who worked here seemed to share the same vision and goals that I had set for myself. CMH was on the brink of growing and becoming an even more valuable resource to the community with additional services and specialists and I wanted to be a part of that journey.

My job as the Foundation and Marketing Manager allows me to work with all types of people who work at the hospital, collaborate with the hospital, or need the resources of the hospital. When I plan community health events, free preventative health screenings, health seminars, or create and distribute guides that provide the community with health care information, I am assisting them to make an informed decision about their health care and the health care of their family.

While I may not save lives, perform surgery, help someone learn to walk, or recover from an illness, I believe I am making a difference in their health and that of their family. If one of my fliers prompts someone who would have otherwise ignored a critical health issue to seek medical assistance, then I feel that I am doing my job.

So, I remind myself that, even though I did not intend to have a career in health care, I am fulfilling my personal goal of making a positive impact and I could not ask for anything more rewarding. I can't imagine feeling this type of fulfillment with any other type of job than the one I have in health care.

Diana Hucek
Foundation & Marketing Manager
Community Memorial Hospital, Oconto Falls

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

As a Health Unit Coordinator in the NICU at St. Joseph Regional Medical Center, I find that this is a very rewarding and exciting place to be. I have worked here at St. Joe's for over 26 years. I also worked during high school as a dietary aide at Northwest General Hospital. I have never thought of doing much else but work in a hospital. My mother was a ward clerk (now what is known as a HUC), and then a pharmacy tech.

My years here in the NICU have been very life-enriching. While we have some sadness when we might have an infant die, we have so many more that go home after some very difficult struggles. While I don't directly "save lives," I know that I am an important part of the health care team in my unit. Most of what I have learned skill-wise I have learned here – even much of my computer skills! There are always new things to learn. There are many experiences that just can't be put into words. Families sometimes become part of our personal families as well.

While many people say I'm smart and should become a nurse, I'm quite happy in my role. I have even picked up on things that I have brought attention to a nurse or social worker that they weren't aware of just from interacting with families on a different level. I would like to tell young people that there are many facets to health care and while not everyone can be a neurosurgeon, there are many great opportunities to be had. Education is always important, and always strive to be your best... I try to do mine. And while this is certainly not a stress-free job, I usually go home and feel good about the day.

Renee Neal
Health Unit Coordinator
St. Joseph Regional Medical Center, Milwaukee

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

When I'm asked what I do for a living, my answer most often generates a response of "I could never do that, " or "Isn't that terribly sad?" I always reply, "I can't imagine doing anything else."

I had worked for 16+ years in the food industry and enjoyed the interaction with people, especially the elderly. This led me to pursue a certification as a nursing assistant. I was hired by Lakeview Medical Center to work within the home health care department during the time the hospice program was being developed *and this is where I found my niche.*

I coordinate the hospice volunteer services as well as bereavement support provided to families for 13 months after the death of their loved one. I have the opportunity to visit with the patients and their families in their homes and talk about how our hospice volunteers can lighten their load in a multitude of ways. After the death, I offer continued support through phone calls, grief literature and home visits. During those home visits I have the privilege of hearing the life stories; how they met and fell in love, about their family, the hobbies they enjoyed, as well as the story of their illness. I am invited into their private circle during a very difficult and stressful time and allowed to catch a glimpse of who they were before they became "a patient."

Each hospice situation is different, everyone's dying experience unique. But every family leaves an impression that stays with you always. I will never forget standing bedside watching an elderly gentleman gently tend to his wife's needs in her final days. Even in the midst of physical and emotional exhaustion, this man showed endless patience, even when his sweetheart of 30+ years wasn't sure who he was. He never approached or left her bedside without reminding her how much he loved her.

"Isn't it sad?" Yes, at times. But over the past eight years that I have been involved with hospice, I have had the privilege of seeing amazing hope, courage and love that rises above the sadness. I can't imagine doing anything else.

Tammy Koger
Hospice Volunteer/Bereavement Coordinator
Lakeview Medical Center, Rice Lake

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

I may not be a nurse, an LPN or aide,
I may not be the lab tech who applies you with Band-Aids,
I may not take your x-rays, or take you to O.R.,
And I may not be the volunteer who takes you to your car

From Administration, to Central Service, to handing out one's pills,
The health care field has many jobs of variety to fill,
Some work dayshift, some work swing, and some even work on call,
But, it all comes down to patient care, which matters to us all

My job is called a Hostess, and some of what I do
is to go and get our patients trays of dietary food,
I answer call lights, stock the rooms, and help out where there's need,
I'll help change beds, get I.V. poles, and the helpless I'll spoon feed

I've held hands with some patients, who have had a lot of fears,
I've rubbed their backs, given hugs, and wiped away their tears,
I've tucked them in, said goodnight, trying to take away their sorrow,
Knowing for some there is that chance there won't be a tomorrow

To me, this is my calling, as I love just what I do,
To help those who can't help themselves, there's always something new,
Everyday it changes, as it never is the same,
And that's what makes it challenging, as each day's a brand new game.

You learn a lot about your patients, from all they share with you,
And that's the part you take to heart in all you say and do,
My pride is at an all time high, everyday and every night,
With the hope I've made a difference in at least one person's life.

Pam Taylor
Hostess
Beloit Memorial Hospital

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

I Came For All The Wrong Reasons... But Stayed For The Right Ones!

In 1979 I went to the local teacher's college with every intent on becoming a special education teacher. I had a strong desire to serve others, especially those less fortunate than myself. At that time I had one sister in medical school and another in nursing school. I recall badgering my nursing student sister, questioning why anyone would consider being a nurse – if you were interested in health care why not go all the way and be a physician? I also recall the stress my physician-to-be sister faced with endless amounts of reading, sleepless nights, and her necessary growing distance from individual patients in order to accomplish the myriad of tasks required in a day.

After 2 years of classes and student teaching I recognized that I wasn't finding special education exciting enough for my taste. I did not know what to do with myself and decided I would transfer to Loyola's nursing school, mostly because my sister seemed to enjoy it and her stories of clinicals were enjoyable, plus, she had a car and public transportation was getting old. I thought I would probably work for a year as a nurse, then get an advanced degree and perhaps teach.

When I graduated I went to work at a Chicago VA medical unit and found everything I had ever hoped for in a job and in a life experience. I loved the multitude of patients and related illnesses that I got to see – never allowing for boredom to set in. I loved the option that if one area “got old” I could stay in my profession and try another area. In my first year I realized why nursing is not a profession to be compared to the medical profession. I relish the opportunity to truly share patient's experiences, to be involved in intimate cares that required the building of a trusting relationship that brought so much to each of us. I met people from all walks of life and learned to find and value something wonderful in each person. I remember how grief stricken I was when faced with the deaths of some of the patients I had come to know well. After much thought I realized without having been a nurse, I would have never met these individuals and connected in that special nurse-patient way. What a loss that would have been to me.

I have seen nursing change so much over the years, but the core remains the same. Although there may be additional machines, tasks and documentation requirements, the joy of nursing can still be felt in that time when you hold a hand during a bone marrow biopsy, wish a pre-operative patient the best of luck, provide pain relief to a patient in need, wipe the forehead of a dying patient, listen to the stories of patients and their family members and finally, recognize your own self-worth through the service you provide to others.

My role has changed over the years. I now work in a supervisor capacity but can take great pride in helping other nurses to recognize the privilege they have in the ability to take part in the caring experience. I seek opportunities to assist in the most basic of nursing tasks to keep my “nursing fix” satiated. I cannot imagine any other profession I would have enjoyed so thoroughly.

Karen Miller
House Supervisor
Aurora BayCare Medical Center, Green Bay

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

It all started when I was three. My beloved mama died at the early age of 30 and I thought my life would be over for sure. Throughout the years it seems like every time I turned around a health issue in one way or another affected someone I knew or loved.

In 2000 I lost a very good friend to cancer. It was six years earlier, 1994, and I noticed a lump in his neck. I encouraged him to go to the doctor and have it checked out. Many times I went with him to his doctors appointments and I saw first hand how caring and compassionate health care workers really are. I admired their patience and expertise during a time when my friend was ailing.

When an opening became available at Riverview Hospital in the housekeeping department, I applied for it right away and so hoped I would be chosen for it. Well as luck would have it, I was. That was in October 2001. In 2002 the UW Cancer Center Riverview was built and because I lost my friend to cancer, I've made donations in his name every year.

Now that I am 70 years YOUNG, I hope to stay healthy and fit and work for another five or more years so I can continue to be around people who genuinely enjoy their work and being part of the Riverview Team.

Elisabeth K. Ruzicka-Zurkowski
Housekeeper
Riverview Hospital Association, Wisconsin Rapids

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

I am so proud to be part of the Sacred Heart Hospital family. I strongly believe in the Core Values of Respect, Care, Competence and Joy. These values are consistently at the forefront of all job duties and expectations.

Sacred Heart Hospital demonstrates **RESPECT** by meeting the needs of patients, families, visitors and staff. Sacred Heart Hospital is committed to serving the sick, the aged, the poor and the terminally ill without regard to race, color, creed or national origin.

Sacred Heart Hospital demonstrates **CARE** by offering quality health care by staff members who are genuinely concerned about the patient's well being, offering a warm smile and a skilled hand. Each year employees demonstrate unselfish devotion to their patients, families, and co-workers by anticipating and assisting their needs.

Sacred Heart Hospital demonstrates **COMPETENCE** by allowing employees to develop and establish more efficient and effective work practices by completing all mandatory education requirements. This allows employees to perform work at the highest level of skill and ability.

Sacred Heart Hospital demonstrates **JOY** by communicating positively and effectively with people, taking time to offer reassurance, assistance, and comfort to everyone whenever the need arises.

Sacred Heart Hospital makes a difference in patients, families, visitors and staff lives by upholding standards of professionalism and exceeding their expectations. That's why I'm proud to work at Sacred Heart, a hospital that has achieved and maintains top rankings in patient satisfaction.

Debbie Stanton
Human Resources Assistant
Sacred Heart Hospital, Eau Claire

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

My career in health care began at a military hospital in Florida. It was exciting to learn how to care for sick and injured patients. As time went on, I was discharged and returned home to decide what my life's work would be. Of course it was easy to continue in the same field and I chose medical laboratory work. It helps to have an interest in science and biology when in high school. And the learning process never stops. Medical research is a great field to consider.

My mother was diagnosed with cancer and that proved to cement my desire to work in a health care setting. It seemed that if I could take care of my mother, who did recover, then I could help others too.

Over the years I have worked in military hospitals (Air Force and Navy), various medical clinics, community hospitals and the Veterans Administration Healthcare System. I am constantly amazed by people I work with – for their concern, professionalism, dedication and knowledge. I have met people from many countries and it is a great pleasure to be exposed to different cultures – a byproduct of working in this field.

The most difficult jobs for me have been those that deal with suffering children, elderly and veteran populations. However, there are countless rewards in everyday duties, when patients are made to feel comfortable and cared for, but the best occasions are when people are cured of their illnesses – that becomes a miracle of medicine.

Mary A. Aina
Laboratory Secretary
Memorial Medical Center, Ashland

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

As a child I was interested in why people were sick and what made them better. Science and math were of interest to me in my school years. I think the chemistry room in my high school still had a smudge on the ceiling from an experiment that didn't work quite right.

Laboratory testing was a life focus and technology has surely changed the way that happens in my 38-year career in the hospital lab. In the early years we mouth-pipetted blood samples, mixed them on a mixer, and counted them on a chamber under the scope. Today an analyzer reads them with improved accuracy and precision. We always have the opportunity to read slides for unusual cells and flagged abnormal by the analyzer. Chemistry has gone from boiling tests and reading them in a spectrophotometer to analyzers that run large numbers of multiple tests in a short time frame. Yet all the changes have not taken away the challenges in the laboratory. New analyzers and new tests afford you the opportunity to work on the cutting edge of technology. Seeing critically ill patients having sophisticated tests run and returning to a healthy stage in a short time is very rewarding. Having a child wave goodbye with a smile after a serious illness reaffirms your commitment to do your best. Working with doctors, nurses, and other ancillary health departments makes you a part of the health care team.

If you have compassion for people, consider a career in the laboratory. Whether you choose a two or four-year degree, the lab field offers you an opportunity to be a team player in a very challenging career.

I take great pride in being a part of a team that helps people in our community every day. The laboratory truly was the right career choice for me.

Lorraine Dalberg
Medical Technologist
The Richland Hospital

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

Nourishing My World

My job as Late Cook/Supervisor in the Dietary Department of Tri-County Memorial Hospital and Nursing Home is a very good match for me, combining different elements of nurturing the body and encouraging wellness in spirit and soul. I know I don't have a direct impact –contact with patients, such as a nurse or doctor, but I feel I have a strong supporting role affecting to some degree the physical, as well as mental and emotional health of the patients and residents and even some co-workers!

Going to work is like an extension of myself at home ... I help feed our calves and cows, chickens, sheep, cats and kittens and our old dog, Maggie, on our small organic farm. Being a mother of eight, I enjoy feeding and nourishing all living creatures within my sphere of influence. My own parents are long ago deceased, but it's a natural outlet for me to relate to the residents as many are the age that my father and mother would be.

There are some challenges involved in my work, too, such as making a "smilie-face" plate to entice a toddler to eat and at the same time distracting her from her physical discomfort, reminding a resident of his dietary restrictions, "Of Course you may have the kielbasa, as long as your realize that it's against the low sodium-low fat diet that your doctor wishes you to follow."

Most importantly, I've found the secret to what makes a wonderful job...It's a job that you enjoy going TO in the morning, as well as coming home FROM at night. It's working FOR people who need you (patients and residents) as well as working WITH people of the same mind-set (life goals of helping humanity in some small way). How can anyone achieve employment satisfaction? I like what Helen Keller said, "True happiness...is not attained through self gratification, but through fidelity to a worthy purpose." I find it supremely satisfying to work for Tri-County Memorial Hospital and Nursing Home.

Wendy Krump
Late Cook Supervisor
Tri-County Memorial Hospital, Whitehall

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

A Passion To Serve

My perspective of working in health care is different from what most would expect. I'm not a clinician, nor technician, nor do I have direct patient contact. I'm one of hundreds working "behind the scenes;" doing jobs we love with pride and knowing that together we impact our community. There's no better profession than one that offers lifesaving health and wellness to others. This is my motivation.

I work in Marketing/Community Relations. I use my skills to support others in their efforts to educate, treat and cure. I choose to work in health care because I believe a job is just a job until it involves passion. When there is passion – a relentless energy to produce and fulfill – it's not just a job, but an opportunity to truly make a difference. Health care is filled with passionate workers, each using unique skills to help others.

Health care surrounds me with people who demonstrate reverence for life. Daily, our passion is displayed through clinical expertise, devotion to excellence, and a conviction to treat others with dignity and respect.

Personally, I've experienced this amazing conviction. A few years ago, my six-year-old nephew tragically died from an unexplained, undiagnosed illness. It was a difficult and heart-wrenching time for me. Throughout his illness and to this day, my co-workers ask how I'm doing, how my family is coping. They offer support, advice and a shoulder to lean on. I see this compassion – their passion – displayed on a daily basis to our patients and to one another.

Some of us save lives. Some provide tools for this to happen. Some clean, others repair. Some use clerical skills while others practice clinical expertise. I'm proud to be a part of this community of caregivers. I encourage others to consider health care – a field driven by a passion to serve.

Susan Juntunen
Marketing Coordinator/Community Relations
Elmbrook Memorial Hospital, Brookfield

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

Pride

There have been many times in my life where I couldn't have done it alone. My name is Charli Smith and I am a medical technologist at West Allis Memorial Hospital. I firmly believe that you should love what you do and surround yourself with others that love what they do as well. When I took upon the project of writing this essay, I looked inside myself, and asked, "*Why do I work in the field of health care?*" The answer didn't come as easily as I would have thought. I asked others why they choose the field, and their answers were mostly the same – "I wanted to help people." Even though I had the same answer, I wanted to say more. This is when I realized that working side by side with my colleagues fills me with pride. I work with people that share the same goal as myself, which is giving patients the best care possible. As a laboratory technologist, I rarely get the opportunity to come into contact with patients, but my work is still crucial to their health. Everyone's role is different, but we all are instrumental to the care of the patient.

Being a soldier in the U.S. Army attached with 452nd Combat Support Hospital, I learned to appreciate the insight on what it takes to build and operate a hospital. It takes a group of highly trained individuals working together as a team to make a hospital function. Recognizing that I am part of this team grants me a great sense of pride.

The picture of a health care worker is defined by a sense of nobility and respect. These attributes are most commonly found in the health care worker who carries with him or her a great sense of pride.

Charli W. L. Smith, Jr.
Medical Technologist
West Allis Memorial Hospital

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I know this testimonial should be autobiographical, but the candidate I am writing about would never write such a tribute about himself. This gentleman did not start out with health care as a chosen profession. I think it came to choose him.

As a youth, Rich was unsure of his future. Secondary education wasn't appealing but on the other hand, super sizing a happy meal didn't scream lifelong commitment either. Bouncing from job to job he felt a nagging in his heart that all was not well – that his life path extended beyond what he was doing. Alone in the world he happened upon a mentor, a sense of sorts who challenged him, intrigued him and opened the door of opportunity. He found physics, nuclear medicine and radiation fascinated him, challenged him. He felt he could improve people's lives with the gifts and knowledge he had been blessed with. Rich began to look beyond himself and literally into the hearts of his fellow man. To this day Rich is like the North Star – a constant in the midst of change, something that can always be counted on, someone dependable, an anchor. Few of us see the North Star anymore. We live in urban centers and the city lights affect our vision. But, as it has been for centuries, a star like Rich is there in its place-a constancy.

Daily, Rich shows his love, his compassion for mankind. He takes his time with patients, simplifying the complex and easing the uncertainty with his charm and wit. He has grown into the funkmaster flex of Aurora-spinning CDs to relax his patients and help them forget their pain or worry during the time spent with him. So, you see, there isn't one reason Rich Jankovsky chose health care – there are innumerable ones. And we should be grateful he did.

Richard Jankovsky
Nuclear Medical Technologist
Aurora Medical Center of Manitowoc County, Two Rivers

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At the tender age of four, I aspired to become a tree surgeon. Somewhere around the age of eight, shortly after discovering my fear of heights while on vacation in the Badlands, I started looking for a new career.

Since childhood I have enjoyed bringing comfort, joy, smiles, and laughter to all that I meet. As Mother Teresa said, "We can do no great things; only small things with great love." From a candy striper, to a hospital volunteer, a medical explorer, and in a funeral home, I always enjoyed sharing the small things. Though my choices led me down several paths, medicine and patient care seemed to be the constants through them all.

I derive my daily motivation for work, family, faith, and play through my own number one personal goal. My goal is to make one little positive difference in the life of everyone I touch, everyday. I reach my goal via smiles. The escalating cost of health care has only added to the already scary idea of having health problems, diseases, and unanswered concerns. If I can get just one smile out of every person, I know that at that moment of the day the world was a little less scary. I am only one person. One person cannot do great things alone, but the small things, like smiles, can bring love, hope, and courage to all people in the world.

Looking back, I am glad I did not become a tree surgeon. Being a nuclear medicine technologist has allowed me to continue fulfilling my goal through direct patient care. I love the contact with human kind. Every time I look at a sick tree, I smile and wonder if the tree surgeon, taking care of its patient, was afraid of blood instead of heights!

Rachel McConnell
Nuclear Medicine Technologist
St. Francis Hospital, Milwaukee

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I love being a nurse. I have never wanted to do anything else. This is my 30th year of nursing at Mercy Medical Center and I am proud to serve others in my job.

Nursing has given me many opportunities to care for others and thus to serve Christ as His hands. Each type of nursing that I have done over the years has been like a different job. The flexibility that a nursing career offers is unsurpassed. In 1975 I began my career as a young graduate nurse on a busy medical-neurological unit at Mercy. I took care of patients with brain tumors, strokes, MS and a variety of medical and cardiac diagnoses. I loved it! I then took over as the Head Nurse for that unit and eventually helped develop telemetry at Mercy in 1979-1980. I found that I also liked management and working with a staff of 51.

In 1981 I became a mother and decided to work part-time, which was possible because I am a nurse. I joined the staff of the OB unit, part-time, at Mercy and enjoyed helping other young mothers to transition into that important role in their lives. I also experienced a miscarriage and from then on took care of other mothers who were grieving over the loss of their baby. Once again, I could serve these women with Christ's love and compassion because I had been in their place.

In 1990 I joined the Outpatient Rehab Department at Mercy as Nurse Clinician for the Arthritis Program and eventually the Pain Management Program. Once again, God led me to this type of nursing because I had been living with rheumatoid arthritis since age 25 and could really relate to our patients. I have continued in this role to the present, and I still believe this was all part of God's plan.

I am proud to be a nurse and thankful I have been on staff at Mercy Medical Center where the Lord uses me every day!

Sarah Troxell
Coordinator, Outpatient Rehab
Affinity Health System, Oshkosh

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

I began my journey in the field of medicine at the age of 8 years old. I was called upon by my teacher to act as a “nurse” and assist a classmate having a nosebleed.

At the age of 13, I got my first part-time job working as a laboratory assistant washing and sterilizing glassware. This was my introduction to laboratory technology and the career I later chose to study in college. I worked in this field for a number of years until I started raising my family. During this time, my father developed ALS (Lou Gehrig’s disease). Seeing him deal with increasing debilitations with grace and dignity and watching my mother take care of him at home, inspired me to return to the medical field. I had been unable to help my father conquer the disease which took his life but I could embark on a career which would allow me to assist others as they regained their health or eased their suffering and anxiety as they approached death.

I took the first step and enrolled in a Certified Nursing Assistant course at MSTC. I have worn many hats in my career including laboratory technician, phlebotomist, nursing assistant, ICU monitor technician, EMT and currently an outpatient scheduler.

I went into this field to help others but I have also received many intangible rewards that nurture me. I feel fortunate to work in an environment that is stimulating, challenging and inspiring. It allows me to affect people’s lives in a positive way.

I will always be grateful to that second grade nun in New York who saw in me a caring, nurturing individual. She was the first to set me on this path and my journey is not yet at the roads end.

Joyce Waite
Outpatient Scheduler
Saint Michael’s Hospital, Stevens Point

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

I am responsible for entering the patient registration information at The Wisconsin Heart Hospital and what I enter is KEY information that is important to other entities within Covenant Healthcare. Part of my decision to leave banking and begin looking for other employment was my desire to work for an organization that is not only committed to the people and communities it serves, but an organization that values and respects its employee as well. I pride myself in knowing that I have made the right decision in joining The Wisconsin Heart Hospital and Covenant Healthcare. In becoming a Covenant Healthcare employee, I now can appreciate more the field I have chosen as a career. My choice to continue my education and finish my degree in nursing had a lot to do with joining The Wisconsin Heart Hospital. Watching the doctors and nurses care for each and every one of the people that walk through its doors is an amazing experience. They can be a little fanatical over caring for the patient but it is because they are compassionate and dedicated about what they do, I know because of first hand experience. My hat is off to them for doing such a wonderful job. If I were asked to speak to a group of students, I would tell them to do what they enjoy doing, whatever that may be, and do it well and you can't go wrong. I love what I do and I can't be happier here at The Wisconsin Heart Hospital.

Patricia Robinson
Patient Access Representative
The Wisconsin Heart Hospital

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

It was at the end of August when I had gone into work at the local bar. A job that I regretted having to go to but knew that it paid the bills. That night however turned out to be the first day of many good things to come.

A customer and good friend, who is a nurse for Ministry Medical Group had mentioned that she knew of a job opening at Sacred Heart Hospital. She was insistent that I was the perfect candidate for this job. So the very next day I had called to verify the position opening and qualifications. Later that day I had turned in my completed resume' and about one week later I had heard from Judy Waydick, supervisor for SHH/SMH Business Offices. My interview was perfect and I can't explain the happiness I felt in my life just knowing that I had a chance. The Monday after my interview Judy had called again to let me know the position was mine if interested. I almost screamed and cried all at once. I was an employee at Sacred Heart Hospital. I was so proud. I called all of my friends and family to tell them that I had been hired. I had a career, not a job! A few days later I met with the HR staff and they had issued me my ID badge, in the two weeks before I had started I proudly displayed that badge on the front of my purse, being sure that everyone would see it.

I started October 4th, 2004, a date I will always remember. The impact that this hospital has made on me will always be a lasting memory. I have seen this hospital pull together so many times for their staff and especially our community. Things like the Christmas dinner and Birthday potlucks may be minor to employees, who have been here for 10, 20, 30 years, mean so much to a person like me.

One thing that my supervisor had stressed to me was how important family values are to Ministry Health Care. I couldn't agree more. I have a 5-year-old daughter who had started kindergarten this year. As a bartender I didn't have much time for family, due to the fact that she was in school during the days and I was working evenings. Being at Sacred Heart has changed our lives. I am able to spend more time with my family. Who could ask for such a perfect situation and have their dreams come true? Well I did and thanks to that one customer on that August evening my prayers have been answered.

Dusty Schoone
Patient Accounts Coordinator
Sacred Heart-St. Mary's Hospital, Rhinelander

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

Compassion, Understanding and Dedication

My inner connection to health care began when I was a little girl. “When I grow up, I’m going to work in a hospital,” I told my family. My father, who was a dairy farmer and a hard worker, was also a heavy smoker! I remember him blowing smoke rings into my little sister’s face as she sat on his lap. I also remember through the years how Dad became increasingly short of breath as he attempted his daily chores. In high school, while investigating different career choices, I was lured to respiratory therapy.

I learned how the body physically and emotionally responds to tobacco products. The one person that I hold dear to my heart, my Dad, was able to quit smoking! This inspired me to develop a smoking prevention program for grade school children.

As health care providers, it is our responsibility to respect, guide, and nurture our patients. I recall a home oxygen patient stopping me in my tracks to say, “I look forward to your visits. You’re the only one that really listens to me. I see and talk to you more than my own family.” I am continually rewarded by such words of kindness. My own life is enriched when I am able to improve someone’s quality of life or assist them in overcoming difficult circumstances.

I was recently given the opportunity to grow professionally and have become the Quality Improvement Coordinator for my organization. Quality is never an accident. It is always the result of good intentions, sincere effort and intelligent direction. I enjoy providing the high quality of care that our patients have come to expect. By providing hope to the hearts and minds of those whose lives we have touched, we can make the world a better place to live. That’s what health care is all about!

Jo Ann VonRuden
Quality Improvement Coordinator/Respiratory Therapist
Vernon Memorial Healthcare, Viroqua

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

I was touched today. An elderly woman who looked small and frail said she would pray for me today. She said that I was a wonderful person and it shows that I care a lot about the people I meet at work, that I am a good young lady and she would pray for me.

What did I do to deserve her praise and prayers? I am not entirely sure. It may be because I do what I always do. I take pride in my job and joy in doing it right. I made her comfortable for her exam, kept her covered in our cool rooms, and wrapped her in warm blankets for her trip back to her room. I didn't do anything extra special; I did what I always do. I talked to her, kept her company on the way back and helped her into bed. After I tucked her in she smiled at me and said she would pray for me. She is the kind of person that makes you smile.

Did I do anything special or go out of my way? What I did is a daily occurrence, one we sometimes take for granted. She touched my heart and brightened my day, knowing that the simple joy of doing my job and taking pride in doing it right can bring a prayer to someone and touch my heart.

Annette Begaye
Radiology Technologist
Aspirus Wausau Hospital, Wausau

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

After 20 years as a Registered Dietitian, I am pleased with my career goal chosen as a high school sophomore. As a teenager, I enjoyed science-related classes and investigated various health care career paths. About the same time period, a dear elderly friend of mine was diagnosed with Celiac Disease, which surfaced after her heart surgery. Celiac Disease is an intolerance to gluten, a protein found in wheat, barley and rye. The only treatment for the disease is a gluten free diet. I was intrigued by Celiac Disease and wanted to help my friend. Thus, I chose to become a dietitian.

During my career as a dietitian, I have worn many “hats” ranging from administrative, hospice, consulting, clinical and diabetes educator. I have enjoyed and grown with each new challenge.

Being instrumental in diagnosing patients with Celiac Disease is a joy. One young patient had anemia despite large doses of iron supplements. I knew that if the supplements weren't correcting her anemia, my advice on high iron food wouldn't help. I called her physician and discussed testing for Celiac Disease. She tested positive. The patient was thrilled to get to the bottom of the anemia. I was happy to then instruct her on a gluten free diet, which would allow her intestine to heal itself so it could absorb iron.

Another patient was referred for diabetes. During the diet history, her comments pointed toward gluten intolerance. I contacted her GI doctor to see if the patient had mentioned her food intolerances. The subsequent test confirmed Celiac Disease

An astute surgeon reaffirmed my career choice when he said to me, “Fay, you are in a very important profession. There are two reasons for disease. One is heredity. The other is nutrition. Nutrition is the factor that can be changed.”

By Faye Moseley Rezin RD CD CDE
Hospice Dietitian
Black River Memorial Hospital, Black River Falls

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

Why a Nurse

I have worked in health care since 1978 in a variety of positions, becoming a RN in 1999. I care for the oncology clients as an oncology certified nurse. However the questions of what kind of nurse are you, usually brings the same response, isn't that depressing?

On the good days it is easy to remember that we help the most vulnerable supporting entire families and minister to the needs of generations, since cancer effects the entire family. This knowledge makes it especially difficult when their time grows short and disease overcomes medicine.

When death comes too often, we question why we are health care providers. We question the value of the seemingly short amount of time our patients have to live. Yet, we as nurse encourage hope for more time through medicine. When discouraged it becomes easy to see the futility of our efforts.

I have heard from my patients the joy of making it to a date, a conversation, a dance, or the simple gift of holding hands. My patients seize time; embrace moments, and find joy in the mundane. I stand in awe of their strength and will to live life to the fullest, ignoring the quantity of time and enriching the quality.

Oncology patients in the midst of their fight to conquer disease open their eyes to the value of time, no matter how brief and embrace life. Could sharing this experience be depressing? Depressing would be not learning from the insights our patients share. Relish your time; share your skill with patients and their families. Our patients depend upon our skills and expertise as nurses, but they remember our touch, smiles and empathy. No, I do not find the field of oncology depressing, but the highest expression of love for fellow man.

Deborah Bradley, RN, BSN, OCN
All Saints Healthcare, Racine

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

Growing up, it never occurred to me that I would find my life's passion in nursing. Then, my father fell very ill. At that time, I'd had no formal training, but as I would sit by his bed, I found that I could do little things to help ease his pain – adjust his pillows, get him a drink. It was the first time in my life that I truly felt that I could help my father, and that was a powerful feeling.

So I made the decision to enroll in nursing school at Southwest Tech, and I've been in nursing since 1991. I feel blessed to have found my calling. What other job would allow me to make such a profound impact on people's lives? To be trusted to care for people's loved ones when they are at their weakest? To leave every shift with a calm sense, knowing that although not all my patients made it through, that I was able to make their last few hours as peaceful and as comfortable as possible? The rewards I reap are priceless.

This space is too small to share all my stories – of the patients I've seen beat their diagnoses because humor pulled them through when all other hope was gone, or those who found peace in God before the end. But when you ask what inspires me to work in health care, I can only say, "the patients."

I believe in the physical healing of nursing and the emotional healing of nursing. But most of all, I believe in the spiritual power of nursing. At the end of every shift, when I shuffle home, exhausted, I say a little prayer. "God, today I did my best, but if I missed anything, I know you'll take care of the rest."

I am proud to work in health care, and I am proud to work at St. Marys. I would consider it a true honor to represent this institution at the WHA Employee Pride Celebration.

Joseph Brokish, RN
St. Marys Hospital Medical Center, Madison

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

The Force Behind the Choice of Health Care

I'll never forget that hot summer evening in June of 2000—I was rocking my perfect firstborn baby girl, back and forth, marveling at her every feature as she slept so peacefully. She was my perfect little angel, my princess. Life seemed so perfect, so calm and wondrous as I held this little life in my arms. I couldn't imagine being happier.

As a first time mom, I was always worrying that something was wrong with my little girl. I feared it—a fear I could feel burning in the pit of my stomach and deep in my heart. I called her doctor a lot with reports of frequent eating and frequent stooling; often to hear the nurse on the other line explain this as normal newborn behavior. However, on the evening of June 8th, I called again insisting something was wrong. Nothing could have prepared me for what the doctor told me that night. To this day, I can't remember much of the conversation besides, "I'm sorry, we found out today that your daughter has cystic fibrosis." I didn't know much about cystic fibrosis, but I knew it was chronic and fatal. I felt paralyzed by what I was just told. I couldn't move. I remember staring into dead air feeling the tears drop one at a time. Then looking at the beautiful child lying in my arms and feeling my world and dreams for her come crashing down around me. I was her mommy, the person in her life to make things all better, but there was nothing I could do to make this all better. I have never felt so powerless.

In the months and years since June 8, 2000 I have struggled to keep myself out of the forceful embrace of depression and often drift between anger and acceptance of my daughter's disease. The fight to manage the powerful emotional, social, and financial impacts of a chronic illness is very trying and exhausting. I continue to learn everything I can about cystic fibrosis and take the best possible care of my precious daughter. In my determination not to let this disease win, I went back to school to become an RN. I currently work in pediatrics with children and their families. Helping them travel along the very cold, long and treacherous path only known to those parents who have worn the shoes of having a chronically ill child is very gratifying to me. Being able to empathize, not only sympathize, has given me the ability to bring more comfort to those embarking or already traveling this scary and often lonely road. It may be only holding their hand, looking in their eyes and really listening, or letting them cry on my shoulder because they can't bear to see their child suffering, but those little things may be what keeps them fighting and hanging on.

Stephanie Brown, RN
St. Vincent Hospital, Green Bay

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

I remember the exact moment...a decision that would affect the rest of my life. My sister was a nurse and since I felt so close to her, I aspired to be just like her.

It is a decision I have never regretted. I am so proud to be a nurse and even more proud to care for cancer patients. For the past 22 years, I have cared for cancer patients in the surgical setting, inpatient bone marrow transplant unit, inpatient oncology setting, and presently, I work in the outpatient oncology setting administering chemotherapy.

You may think that caring for the cancer population is very difficult but for me the experience is so rewarding and humbling. Each patient is filled with such hope; hope is such a wonderful gift that we sometimes lose sight of.

I have had the privilege to help patients through some very difficult times in their life. It might be as simple as holding their hand, listening to their story, or just being silent with them.

I have cared for a new mother newly diagnosed with breast cancer to the farmer in his final stages of life.

My daughter, Michelle, is named after one of my patients who had a bone marrow transplant when she was 19 years old due to leukemia. I am happy to say that my patient, Michelle, is now 37 years old, married with two daughters.

I look forward to going to work each day. My patients teach me so much about life, and I am a richer person for that.

Sandy Burns, RN
Nurse Clinician, Oncology
University of Wisconsin Hospital & Clinics, Madison

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

I'm there to hold your hand, teach you, or provide treatments. While doing these, I'm watching how you are doing – physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. It matters to me, whether you are my only patient or one of many, because I am a nurse. In nursing, you impact people's lives wherever you choose to work: you utilize technical training and empathy to give patients the care they need, whether helping them come to peace with the death of a loved one or experience the joy of a newborn life. I intended to become a doctor; however, after delivering my son I knew I wanted to be a nurse, providing direct, personalized care. I love the variety of settings that I have worked in, and the fact that there is pride in providing excellent care no matter where you are. It was a recent personal event that reaffirmed my knowledge of the uniqueness of my profession: I became a patient in my own unit due to the death of my baby at 4 ½ months into my pregnancy. I was devastated, and not a “nurse” but a grieving mother who needed physical, emotional, and spiritual care. It would've been easier for my nurses to have simply provided the ordered physical treatments; instead, they went beyond “tasks,” tending to my wounded heart and grieving family, often at emotional cost to themselves. I returned to work with refreshed dedication and pride in what we do best: Sincerely *car*ing about those we encounter. A joyous event brought me to the path of nursing, and a tragedy helped reaffirm the choice that I had made. Simply put, nurses care deeply and help others according to *their individual needs*. It's our nature to advocate for our patients, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

Jocelyn Champeau, BSN, RN
Obstetrics Dept. and Nursing Administration
Shawano Medical Center, Shawano

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

Touching a Soul

This past year has reinforced the importance of my career. It's been a year of challenge and trial, with serious questioning of my own self worth. My mother's death last spring with Alzheimer's is one in a series of events that have shaken me deeply.

One sympathy card from a man named Bill included \$15.00 for my mother's memorial. Realizing this was a man I'd cared for 10 years before overwhelmed me. He had remembered me, one nurse of many, caring for him. Someone smiled, because of me. I made a difference. Since then I've had the opportunity to see Bill again and thank him personally. While expressing gratitude for good care received during another hospitalization he had, Bill remarked that I must have taught those nurses well. I couldn't speak. I had touched a soul.

Honesty in what we do breeds trust, focus on the patient's needs and not our own, strengthens it. The faith of others is possible only when we are honest with ourselves. This holds true in any aspect of our lives. Bill is a wonderful, honest, caring man, very much aware of all that is around him, who glows. You see it in his smile. His faith in me, coupled with that from my wife, pastor, family, friends and coworkers has renewed faith in my decision to become a nurse, and myself.

Therefore, never forget the tremendous power we have not just to heal, but also to affect a life. This responsibility and power to touch a soul is awesome. It transcends human comprehension and our own life and death. When we place the patient first, taking time to do "the little things," we're working according to God's plan. The possibilities of what we can do are endless!

Larry Coffey, RN
Monroe Clinic, Monroe

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

Every Day is an Opportunity

Beginning with the day I received my nursing pin, everyday has presented me with a new opportunity.

I have had the opportunity and honor to care for your loved ones. I have shared in some of the happiest and sadist moments of their lives.

I have had the opportunity to cry with a family at the death of their father and to hold the hand of a dying patient who is all alone.

I have had the opportunity to be with a family as they agonize over donating their precious daughter's organs and I have read the joy in a letter from the young mother who received the liver and has a new chance at life.

I have had the opportunity to witness first hand the power of laughter and humor to promote healing and I have seen the courage of a chronically ill man who to elected to cease medical care and die with dignity.

I have had the opportunity to simply make someone's day by calling to let them know that their lab work was normal.

I have had the opportunity to witness the improvement in a patient's condition that has no medical explanation and I have been humbled to realize that I am only a medical instrument of a higher authority.

I have had the opportunity to work weekends, night and holidays with some of the greatest co-workers and friends in the world and to share with them the many milestones of life.

I have had the opportunity to be a nurse and for that gift I am truly thankful.

Laurie Collins R.N.

Mercy Heart and Vascular Center, Mercy Health System, Janesville

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

Why I Chose a Career in Health Care

I was raised with the philosophy that you have not really lived in this world unless you have left a mark on the hearts of men.

Both my mother and father challenged me to plan my life so that I could meet this goal. The plan fell into place so naturally that I didn't even realize that it was happening. Being the oldest of five children on a Wisconsin dairy farm I naturally had a lot of regular chores, but would also inherit other duties depending on the work load at the time. I was healthy and strong so hard physical work didn't even make me blink an eye.

My younger sister was born with a congenital heart defect that my parents knew would require surgery when she was about 4 years of age. What they didn't know was that my younger brother would develop a malignant brain tumor soon after she had recovered from her surgery. For those of you who aren't familiar with farm life, there is no such thing as taking a sick day. The work still has to be done no matter what else is going on. Many times this meant going with my mother to Rochester to help take my brother to appointments so that my father could stay home for chores and take care of the rest of the kids. This is where I saw first hand what an impact the health care team could have on a family's life. From that summer of my 8th grade year I knew that I had found a profession where I could leave my mark.

I've been a member of the health care team now for 28 years and can truthfully say, "I LOVE WHAT I DO!" I've told countless people I can't imagine doing anything else.

Lisa D. Craig, RN, BSN
Franciscan Skemp Healthcare, La Crosse

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

Nursing: Simply Rewarding

Becoming a registered nurse was not just a job; it was my future. Everyday that I go to work and walk into the hospital, I never truly know what scenario I will encounter. I suppose that is "in my blood" though. I like the challenge.

When I was a child, I pretended that I was a courageous nurse when I would pull out my Fisher Price nursing kit and pretend to heal my family's grueling paper cuts and their horrendous bruises, the size of a child's thumbnail. My dad would be wrapped up like a mummy in toilet paper for a sprained "pinkie" and would always tell me that I did a wonderful job caring for others. It was then that I decided that I would pursue a career in nursing.

Becoming a registered nurse was the only profession that looked like it would fit me. I love the satisfaction of helping, teaching, caring, and reassuring people of all ages.

My career in nursing has been rewarding on many occasions. For example, the day I laid under the misty croup tent with a very scared toddler who had only trust in his parents. The parents had left for a few hours to go home and get a break away from their sick child. Or giving emotional support to the first-time mother who gave birth to a stillborn infant. Maybe it was simply holding the homeless patient's hand as he took his last breath.

In my twenty years of nursing, I can honestly say that I always give one hundred percent to my patients and their significant others. No matter how minor the situation is, knowing that it is very important to the patient. I am a registered nurse, but also a patient advocate in the health care system.

Janet Danek, R.N.
St. Luke's South Shore, Cudahy

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

Whenever I hear people complaining about their jobs, I am privileged that I am not among them. When I was in 7th grade, my uncle asked me what I was going to be when I grew up. I said a librarian or a nurse. But in my heart, I figured, at least at that time that neither would come to fruition – how would I pay for it? My parents certainly couldn't. But things happen. I ended up working in the kitchen of a nursing home to see if I would like it. I loved working with those older folks and ended up going to nursing school.

That experience paved the way to a most rewarding career. I may have busy, challenging, or even sad days, but I have never disliked what I do. I have found nursing to be the most fulfilling work that I have ever done. Every day is different, with its own rewards. My patients are my gift.

I do so much for my patients, but it's the little things that mean the most. Years ago, as a relatively new nurse, I was called to a patient's room to update the wife on her husband's condition. She was sitting on a chair, at the foot of the bed, just staring at her ill husband. I told her that I was with another patient and would be in shortly. I smiled and left. Returning 15 minutes later, I pulled up a chair. We talked. As I got up to leave, she said, "Honey, you don't know how much your smile meant to me. I mattered to you." I have never forgotten the impact.

Smiling. Part of me. Part of healing. As a nurse, I can be who I am and still love every minute of it.

Linda Gottlieb, RN
St. Michael Hospital, Milwaukee

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

If someone would have told me 28 years ago that I would be a registered nurse, that I would be a recovering alcoholic, I would have looked at them like they were slightly off. I did not dream of being a nurse yet God has a way of opening doors.

A high school drop-out, I completed my general education diploma in 1973 and during this time met my best friend. Sandy saw potential in me and encouraged me to take a health unit coordinator (HUC) course. I loved it; I trained and was hired at Gundersen Lutheran in 1977. Life's next challenge—my alcohol use increased and by October 1982, my life was unmanageable, alcohol treatment was the next door. I had wonderful support in my recovery. A year later I was hired as secretary in the alcohol treatment center. I wanted to help others.

A year later Sandy was injured in a car accident, and lived in a nursing home for five years till she died, in my arms. Sandy had encouraged me to return to school, said I would make a great nurse. I started watching the nurses I worked with, imagined myself as a nurse.

December 1994 I graduated with an associate degree in nursing and in May 2004 I completed my Bachelors Science Nursing through the University of Iowa. A master's in nursing leadership is my next goal.

Gundersen Lutheran has been supportive of me, as I go through this journey of hard work but worth it. This is where my journey was meant to go. As I walk across the parking lot coming to work I feel a sense of pride in myself, my nursing profession and in Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center. This is where we make a difference in the lives of those around us.

Diane M. Harding, RN, BSN
Gundersen Lutheran, La Crosse

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

Nursing is a profession of opportunities. Choices abound as to what direction to go. I work in a Long Term Acute Care (LTAC) hospital. As a RN, I am a Clinical Liaison as well as a staff nurse when needed.

As a Clinical Liaison, I assess patients at Short Term Acute Care (STAC) hospitals for possible admission to our facility. I also educate Social Workers, Case Managers, and physicians of our services. There are times, however, when I assess a patient in the community and then I'm their admitting nurse on the floor. The look of surprise and then comfort at seeing a face they've seen before is very satisfying to me. Talk about continuity of care!

Whether you enjoy hands-on patient care or prefer education or administration, nursing is one profession where you have the freedom to pursue the career YOU want.

Christina Keedick, RN
Clinical Liaison
Kindred Hospital Milwaukee

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

What made me want to become a nurse? I am one of the few that can tell you almost to the minute when I decided to become a nurse. I had just turned 10 years old when my sister was in a bicycle/car accident. She was five years old and in critical condition. At that time, no one under the age of 18 years was allowed into the ICU unit at St. Vincent's hospital. She was calling out my name for days and many nurses just ignored her cries of "Anna."

One nurse asked my parents who Anna was and when they explained I was her sister she said to bring me in to visit. My parents said I was too young per policy. The nurse said not to worry; she would talk to the doctor and get an order for me to visit. Needless to say, within 24 hours I was standing by the bedside of my baby sister. I will never forget that horrid site. She had tubes, bruises and wires hanging off every part of her tiny, little body. That nurse stood right along side of me and explained each and every tube, wire and monitor to me. I remember feeling comfortable and reassured in my time of stress.

That feeling was something that I knew I would like to pass on to patients and their family members with the hope that they would feel a little reassured in their time of need. Each day I try to take that extra minute to explain that little something that a family member doesn't understand. I hope I will someday be that nurse who encouraged someone to become a nurse. I know I will never forget that nurse who convinced me to become one myself.

Angie Klein, RN
Bellin Health, Green Bay

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

My name is Jamie Kubenik-Maier, and my journey in health care started 14 years ago, when I became a nursing assistant to supplement my income while selling real estate. It's at this point that I found myself fascinated by the medical field. I was always asking questions, wanting to know more, a sponge for knowledge. Being inspired by really great nurses, and smiles on the patients' faces, compelled me to want to do more.

Then an LPN program was offered by our hospital, I was accepted. I became an LPN and continued practicing as an LPN for 7 years, growing in knowledge, and my practice as a nurse. Again I found myself desiring to do more, I went back to school again to get my RN degree.

It was at this time I was faced with some very big challenges in my life, besides trying to finish school, I had 2 major family illnesses, one resulting in the death of my grandpa right before I graduated. I knew because of my schooling, and my choice to become an RN, I was able to not only be there for my family in critical times, but also my friends, patients, and strangers on the street.

I had the honor of speaking to a graduating class of nurses. I'll share with you something I said to them. Nursing is an exciting career, knowing that you have the ability to help others whether it be through a routine exam, or taking their last breath of life, making the experience the best it can be. A career in nursing takes a willingness to share your compassion, kindness, gentleness, and patience with those in need. These memories that touch our hearts as well as our patients stay there forever. This makes nursing one of the most rewarding and fulfilling jobs you could ever experience.

Jamie Kubenik-Maier, RN
St. Luke's Medical Center, Milwaukee

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

For all the reasons someone may become a health care professional there is one reason I believe people stay in the profession. It is not what you may think; it is not to help people and to touch their lives. It is because as a health care professional people touch my life everyday.

My days at work are filled with moments of severe stress, heartbreak and triumph. It is in the sharing of these moments with my co-workers that gives me the professional satisfaction I have. We are a team in everything we do at our jobs but we have become more like a family in the sharing of these moments. We support each other through deaths of patients. We laugh together over the oddities we encounter throughout our day-to-day tasks.

Patients and families also share the moments of triumph as well as failure with us. It is not how I make a patient or family member feel or how I am able to ease their suffering and help them live a better life that keeps me in the health profession. It is the long lasting affect that the patients and families have on me that stays with me. As I care for my patients everyday, a connection occurs with each of them. Patients and families share their lives with me, they confide in me and they tell me wonderful stories. They also find laughter and humor in the most stressful of times. As I watch families go through grieving processes I am amazed and honored to be able to share in these moments. I have witnessed the amounts of compassion and love that we are capable of.

In health care the true reward is in the sharing of someone else's life, which enriches your own.

Kate LaPierre, RN
Bay Area Medical Center, Marinette

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

The Courage to Advocate

Several years ago, my nephew was rushed to Waukesha Memorial Hospital, where he died of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. My entire family was devastated, but the staff at the hospital was wonderful and caring. I was so impressed by the way they treated us. All my experiences at WMH had been positive and I hoped to be part of that some day.

Years later, after finishing nursing school I was hired as an RN at WMH. It was the only place that I applied because I didn't want to work anywhere else. I chose to work on 5 Medical and it turned out to be a great place to learn and grow.

A few years ago, I cared for a young woman. She had to have one of her lungs removed and was on a ventilator for a long time. The entire staff worked together as advocates for this patient, it was very difficult at times, but we wanted her to get better. We became close to her and eventually she got well enough to go to rehab and return home.

One day I saw her at a local department store. She looked so healthy! She recognized me, thanked me and everyone else for all that we did for her. I was so thrilled to see her and actually hear her voice for the first time since she was off the ventilator.

This patient taught me not to get discouraged when recovery takes longer than expected and never be afraid to be a patient advocate. I'm so thankful for the experience that I had with her and that I have a job that makes a difference in people's lives. I'm also proud to work for a hospital that supports me in doing so.

Carol Majeskie, RN
Staff Nurse, 5 Medical
Waukesha Memorial Hospital, Waukesha

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

I grew up in a family where everyone helped care for aging family members. Nightly when my father came home from work, we would travel 15-miles round-trip to relieve my aunt who cared for my Grandma. We all helped with nightly care. A nurse directed the family in Grandma's care over the next three years.

Those events with my grandmother set the stage for my career choice of nursing. After high school, I entered nursing school. Unfortunately, I was a little naïve about the career I was about to enter. I envisioned my role as a "Consuelo" (a popular character on the TV show *Marcus Welby, MD.*) My diploma education at a large Milwaukee hospital gave me the diversity and opportunity of educational resources/research that I had never imagined. My compassion and empathy grew as I encountered patients who faced life-threatening diseases without family support.

Webster defines nursing as "one who nurtures or protects." My definition of nursing is continually expanding on this definition. Early in my career I supported pediatric patients and families during their illnesses. I then branched into school nursing teaching wellness to students, parents and faculty. At one point, I provided home care. The interest of technology in nursing was sparked by an opportunity in intensive care.

Nursing has allowed me to practice in a variety of settings - from the traditional hospital setting (both rural and urban) to the homebound and chronically ill patients. I have been allowed to enter the elementary classroom, work clinics and health fairs, and speak in non-traditional areas regarding health issues and concerns. Sadly (and joyfully), I was allowed to nurture and protect my own mother, mirroring her caretaking of her mother in a home hospice setting at a parent's house. This time I was not only the family member, but also the nurse teaching my siblings and father the wonderful ways to provide comfort and peace in my mother's last days. It was a blessing to have her be able to spend her last days in her home surrounded by family and extended family.

All these experiences throughout my life have reaffirmed by commitment to my wonderful profession of nursing. I look forward to the opportunities that await my peers and me in the years to come.

Elaine Mason. RN
Aurora Medical Center of Washington County, Hartford

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

In 1986, shortly after enrolling in nursing school, I began working at Froedtert Hospital as an assistant in the Gastroenterology Department at the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW). I did everything from photocopying to running for supplies and coffee for the MDs and secretaries. In 1987, I accepted a job at Froedtert Hospital as a Food Service Assistant, where I worked the tray line and clean-up. It was while working this job that I decided I would like to be a Registered Nurse for Froedtert Hospital. In October 1988, I became a Patient Care Assistant (PCA) in the float pool. I was able to sample many different nursing specialties throughout the hospital, which helped me to decide what type of nursing fit my personal style.

Spring of 1990 brought me to 35W nursing unit as a Registered Nurse. I found that I really enjoyed interaction with patients and their families. Through the 11 years on 35W, I experienced patients in all specialties including ostomies and every type of wound imaginable. When I pursued my bachelor's degree while I worked full time, I chose to focus my projects on ostomies, and thus became a good resource to my peers. In late winter of 2001, my application was accepted to be the first Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nurse Specialist for Froedtert Hospital.

I get immense gratification working in the health care profession knowing that I am helping others to reach the ultimate goal of each and every one of us in every day life; Wellness.

Every day at Froedtert Hospital reaffirms my decision to become a health care professional. The people I work with are fantastic. I see almost every nook and cranny in our hospital, chasing my patients all over, and what I see is a great sense of teamwork and pride in the job that each person does.

Charles J. Mathison, RN, BSN
Program Coordinator
Froedtert Memorial Lutheran Hospital, Milwaukee

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

Hi! My name is Karen Redeker and I am an employee of the Agnesian system. I am a registered nurse and work with hemodialysis patients. I enjoy my job because of the variety of experiences I encounter each day. I care for patients and their families in ICU, the inpatient setting of the hospital, and in the outpatient setting. I have worked with hemodialysis patients for several years and each day brings a new challenge and reward.

I have always tried to care for patients and families as I would like my family to be cared for in that setting with care and compassion. I want my patient to feel respected well cared for, and special. This means to me taking an extra step sometime, going the extra mile. Here are just a few experiences that I have encountered:

- When meeting a patient for the first time, shaking their hand, introducing yourself and assuring them that you will be caring for them.
- It's scraping snow off of the patient's cars in the parking lot as they finish their treatment on a snowy day.
- It's finding out that it's your patient's birthday and this patient is having a rough day--so you send up a floral arrangement and a birthday card. Surprise!!!
- It's knowing that your patient has no appetite but while you are caring for this patient she tells you that a malt from Culver's might taste good. You get the okay from her doctor and after work you stop and get a malt from Culver's and bring it up to the patient.
- It's going to the visitation for the son of a patient who has passed away. You are there to support the patient and family.
- It's stopping to say goodbye to a patient and his family. This patient's health is declining and he has decided to stop dialysis. He and his family know that this is the end of life. You stop in to hold his hand, give a hug or two and say goodbye, give support to all.
- It's praying with a patient because they are apprehensive and are in need of comfort and reassurance
- It's sitting with a patient for his 3-hour treatment and just listening to him talk about life experiences because he is a little apprehensive.
- It's stopping to check on your patient on your way out-to make sure that they are comfortable.

These are just a few of my experiences and rewards. It also means respecting those you work with. I try to live by the Golden Rule--Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. This may mean coming in extra and re-arranging your schedule, bringing treats for everyone because you expect to be busy in the unit you are working in. I also feel that you represent the establishment you work for when you are in the public and community.

Thank you for taking the time to read why I take pride in my work.

Karen Redeker, RN
Fond du Lac Dialysis Center/Agnesian HealthCare, Fond du Lac

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

Nursing is the one way that you can help all people in many different ways to achieve wellness and or comfort in their lives. Also, it is a way to accompany them in their journey to another chapter in their lives. We are advocates, educators, comforters, and/or sounding boards for our patients, providing a safe place to be scared, happy, angry, weak and sore. A nurse is able to assist in all these areas. Being in the nursing profession gives you guidelines to follow and the ability to incorporate your own personality into your care, making nursing personal and professional.

When I was a young mother, my grandmother moved from my parents' home to an assisted living complex. I felt like I had abandoned her. I got to spend some quality time with her there, not like when I was a teenager and we palled around until I got married, but still able to spend quality time. When she passed away, I felt that my soul mate was gone. The relationship we had, made me yearn even more to help others as they journey through life, from beginning to end.

In my profession now, I get to assist families at the birth of their children, tears of joy, anticipation, fear and pride; assessing the healthy mom and newborn, assuring their safe beginning as 2 separate individuals, preparing them for their journey home and giving help and assistance where ever it is needed. I also get to be with patients who don't know what is wrong or going on. Using our assessment skills and intuition and discernment to get them the best care we can give them. It is my responsibility to give 200% to my patients, and I do.

There isn't just one experience that reaffirms my decision to become a nurse. Every day, I look forward to what is ahead, what I can learn and use what I already know to encircle my patients in a safe and secure environment, assisting our providers in giving the best care we can offer.

Nursing is a gift that I can share with others. I am thankful and blessed to be in a profession that so emulates serving, caring and giving. In a society that is so hurried with life it is a privilege to be of service whenever it is needed.

Gayle C. Russo, R.N.
Amery Regional Medical Center, Amery

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

I became a nurse because my mother told me to. Off to a diploma school of nursing I went. I figured my mother would only choose a respected career for her only daughter.

Myself, I really didn't know what I wanted. Had considered law or teaching. Through the years, I have discovered that nursing encompasses these and so much more. I do not regret my choice, although some tough nights, weekends and holidays I question my sanity.

I 'fell' into the Emergency department. I was working at a small community hospital, as a single mother, facing too many low census days. I applied at a larger hospital. They didn't have openings in ICU, stepdown or monitored units and suggested I add a fourth line and list ER. That is the position I accepted. I got rather trapped into this as I saw one of the doctors I worked with, and he reported back to the first hospital that I was leaving. With trepidation I entered the E.R.... an unofficial level II trauma center. I learned so much and loved the diversity.

During this time, I met the love of my life. Then he moves to the Green Bay area. I stayed behind to let my son finish high school in our hometown, then married and moved. I thought life was great when my son chose a college less than one hour away.

When my son died in a car accident, I discovered just how supportive my coworkers could be. I found an ad describing it, "Come for the career, Stay for the friends." Nurses can understand that tears and laughter can come together. It has been hard, but my co workers/extended family have lent me strength; and somehow I believe I have become stronger.

I have learned that tears do not equal weakness and having contacts and allergies can be blessings in that they give you excuses for puffy eyes.

Lorrie Shafer, RN
St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center, Green Bay

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

Being There: A poem about nursing

She was there when I woke up,
There was blood on my pillow.
 I thought she'd be mad.
But she smiled,
 And changed my pillow,
 And brought me ice cream.

She was a nurse.
 A smiling person who was there to help,
 When little kids have their tonsils out.

She was so nice . . . I wanted to be just like her.

So I learned:
 Blood pressure, heart rate, temp.
 Oxygen saturation.

 Lab tests, x-rays, CT scans,
 Esophagogastroduodenoscopy.

 Wash, bandage, medicate, touch,
 Listen, talk, laugh, cry,

 I'm sorry to wake you, doctor,
 Mrs. B's blood pressure is up.

Understand the things of nursing,
Understand the ways of healing.

I was there when he woke up.
There was blood on his pillow.
 I wasn't mad.
I smiled,
 And changed his pillow,
 And held his hand.

I am a nurse.
A smiling person who was there to help,
When old men have come to die.

I hope I am nice.
I hope I am just like her.
 I know I will always be a nurse.

Mary Beth Smith, RN
Myrtle Werth Hospital, Menomonie

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

In The Name Of Service

I grew up in the 60's and 70's. While a very spirited period of time, it was conservative as far as professions for women. The options generally were teaching, secretarial or nursing. Having been raised in a family of three generations of nurses, is it any wonder what my chosen profession would be. My interest in helping others and my love of people helped me to believe I possessed all the elements necessary to become a good nurse. Early in my nursing education I determined my interest was in surgical nursing. Over the past 26 years it has become my passion.

Being a very "people oriented" individual, I soon learned the fast pace of surgery does not lend itself to developing a relationship with patients. Confirming information on the pre-operative checklist, and the few minutes of conversation before induction of anesthesia do not provide a huge window of opportunity to get to know my patient. However, nothing is impossible! Committed to fulfill the pledge I read aloud on the day of graduation, I challenge myself daily to remain sensitive and compassionate. Although a routine day in the Operating Room consists of multiple surgical procedures with rapid turnovers, the impact of the initial introduction is remarkable. "I am the nurse who will take care of you while you are in surgery" is spoken, but also communicated with a warm sincere handshake and eye contact that penetrates so deeply the patient can sense the passion this nurse has for her job.

Once the patient is on the operating room bed (and I pride myself on referring to it as a bed where one would nap as opposed to "table" as is not uncommon), I strategically position myself where I can be "hand holder". I look into eyes that are often tear filled, or blinking anxiously as I say once more "We'll take good care of you. Relax and sleep well," speaking on behalf not only of myself, but my dedicated coworkers as well. At times the magnitude of this moment has brought me to feel tearful, especially when I have felt the patients' hand squeeze mine as sleep sets in.

Although my decision to become a nurse was influenced by role models in my life, I truly believe this was my fate: to provide service to others; to be a health care provider.

Cynthia M. Stevens, RN
Orthopaedic Hospital Of Wisconsin

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

The “Mad Hugger”

Over 20 years ago I began my nursing career, first as an LPN, then as an RN. I learned that nursing is an “Art” and a “Science”.

I enjoy the “Science” part -- new medicines, new techniques, procedures, equipment, etc. The facility is ever changing, now we’re working on computer charting! That’s a bit challenging for some of us “older” folks (who didn’t grow up in the computer age)! As an Oncology nurse, I’m always interested in new chemo meds or procedures to help my patients get better or better the quality of their time remaining.

The “Art” of nursing is what really “grabs” me! I am the “mad hugger” of the unit! I was so happy when one of my patients was no longer neutropenic and could walk in the halls. I gave him such a hug! Later he asked his wife, “Why did she do that?” He didn’t mind, but it did surprise him. How amazing the human touch is to an ill individual or anyone. I enjoy the one-to-one time with my patients and their families. When a patient hears that his/her bone marrow biopsy is clear after chemo treatment, the look is one of relief – it says, “Alright, it was worth it!”

On the other end of the spectrum, when the diagnosis is not good, I am glad I can “be there” for the patient/family; to listen to their fears/concerns, to give a hug, wipe away a tear.

A smile goes a long way for the comfort of the patient or family. A smile can say, “It’s alright, we’re here for you. You’re not alone.”

When I started here at St. Joseph’s, I was getting lost going to the cafeteria. A nice lady with a big, warm smile directed me in the right direction. This is the attitude I have tried to convey since I’ve been a nurse here – “I’m here to help, please ask.”

This is the part of nursing I enjoy the most. Even though there is sadness sometimes, in some way, I have brightened someone’s life for a time, with a smile, a touch, a hug or a kind word.

Marianne Walker, RN
Saint Joseph’s Hospital, Marshfield, Wisconsin

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

Why I work ...

At Age nine I knew my destiny was to become a nurse. I was playing in an apple orchard and climbed an apple tree to pick an apple. I ended up falling out of that tree and broke my leg. That was the most painful experience of my entire life. I was in the hospital in traction for two months. Those two months were life changing. I remember one particular nurse who was so kind and caring. When I called for her, she would immediately come to my bedside. She made me feel safe and secure. That was when I said to myself, "I want to be a nurse. I want to be just like her. I want to make other people feel safe and well taken care of when they are sick."

I began my career as a Certified Nursing Assistant when I was 17 years old. I worked in a local nursing home and loved it. It gave me a sense of well being.

At age 19 I received my LPN. I immediately applied to St. Marys Care Center and I've been here ever since. This is my second home. I've been here for 14 plus years. At age 29 I received my RN. Throughout my entire nursing career here, I've kept the promise I made when I was nine years old and in return I've received much happiness in my life.

I truly love what I do. I can't see myself doing anything else. I love taking care of people. I especially love taking care of the elderly because they deserve the best care. They have done so much to keep our world a great place to live; I repay them by making them feel safe, secure and very special.

Karen Wendt R.N.
St. Mary's Care Center, Madison

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

I am a registered nurse with 26 years of professional experience, the last 13 years in ER. Nursing is a “24/7” job that requires team effort – physicians, laboratory, radiology, spiritual care, law enforcement, social services, etc., caring for people of all ages, religions, and backgrounds, each with their own story to tell. Being a nurse requires continuing education to keep current with health care and ethical issues, nursing skills, technology, and pharmacology. My job makes me question my own spirit and strengths. Caring for other people certainly puts your own life in perspective. What saves lives and the human spirit is a smile, a touch, your presence, giving respect, care and dignity with confidence, all complimented by a high standard of nursing skills.

I had always wanted to be a nurse. I’ve had the opportunity to work in many areas of health care including Med-Surg, OB/GYN, ICU, teaching at post-secondary schools, assist with setting up the first satellite dialysis unit in Wisconsin, and now being a Hospice bereavement volunteer and an emergency room RN, which is certainly challenging.

A recent experience reaffirmed my career choice to work in health care. I was working the 11-7 shift and cared for a mom and newborn baby who was delivered in the car enroute to the hospital in a snowstorm. Within minutes of getting them admitted to the Birth Center, I received via ambulance an elderly gentleman in severe respiratory distress. This patient became a Code Blue who expired before my shift was over. This was a very spiritual experience – to assist with and be a part of bringing a life into this world, and then assisting with a “good death” for a patient and family. These experiences were a source of human inspiration and strength that makes me appreciate the awesome power of life – sharing joy and pain. Being a nurse is all of this and then some.

Mary Wiley, RN
St. Joseph’s Hospital, Chippewa Falls

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

My Mom used to tell me I had such compassion for people and that I should choose a career where I could make a difference in someone's life. For 22 years, I worked in management trying to accomplish this. Unfortunately, I never felt this occurred. Then, three events happened that changed all of this.

The first event happened one day while I was driving to work. I was hit by a truck. I injured my neck and had difficulty breathing. During my hospital stay, I was diagnosed with asthma. I had no idea what that meant and I was determined to find that out. I also realized I enjoyed being around patients and needed to be in health care. I researched health careers and started attending college for Respiratory Therapy. Besides learning about asthma, I knew someday I would be able to help patients with this diagnosis.

Then, the second event happened. While attending college, my mom, a smoker of 60 years, was diagnosed with lung cancer. Before she died, she asked me to get others to quit smoking. It was then that I knew I was in a field where I could make a difference. Not only could I help patients with asthma, but I could educate patients on smoking cessation.

About 1½ years later, the third event happened. After having irregular heartbeats and shortness of breath, an echo confirmed I needed a new mitral valve. Again, I was faced with understanding a new diagnosis, but realized I could help patients in a whole new capacity. That is why today I am in my nursing clinicals, specializing in cardiac care.

After looking back on these experiences, I realize health care offers so many opportunities to make a difference in someone's life. I know I can accomplish this everyday whether I work in Respiratory Care or in Nursing.

Deb Clissa
Respiratory Care Practitioner
Community Memorial Hospital, Menomonee Falls

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

Helping People – A Career in Health Care

Poem written to the tune of “*My Favorite Things*” from **The Sound of Music** (lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II, music by Richard Rodgers)

Inpatient, outpatient, many health issues,
Living and dying, compassion and tissues,
Volunteers, family – are all welcome here,
To Grantsburg, Wisconsin all times of the year

Our doctors and nurses and x-ray technicians,
ER, lab, PT, and special physicians
Maintenance, laundry, a pharmacist, too,
Serve the community – people like you.

CEO, CFO, HIM sharing,
CNAs, office staff, teamwork in caring,
A board of directors – they often convene
Housekeeping scrubbing the floors – oh, so clean!

Service provided, requires a fee,
Questions on statements, directed to me,
Working in health care, a call to my heart,
Financial counselor – that is my part.

Self-pay collections, community care,
Account solutions, the hang-ups are rare,
Calls from our patients, reminders to pay,
Assistance and listening fill up my day.

Treatment for patients our primary goal,
Registration to discharge, we make people whole,
Nursing home, clinic and hospital staff,
Serious work, then we find time to laugh.

When your leg breaks,
When your back aches,
When you're feeling ill,
Here at Burnett Medical Center we strive,
To keep our mission alive.

Kristin M. Larson
Self Pay Collector
Burnett Medical Center, Grantsburg

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

There are days ...

There are days when we laugh with a neighbor who has said one of their famous “one-liners”

There are days when we cry seeing the pain a family is enduring

There are days when we want to pull our hair out trying to problem solve what seems like an unachievable goal

There are days when we smile along with proud parents of a newborn child

There are days when we leave at night thinking, “What more could I have done?”

There are days when we are so happy thinking about how we have assisted a neighbor in achieving their goal to return home to their loved one

There are days when we can't get home soon enough to our own family after working with a neighbor who has just lost a loved one

There are days when we feel hopeless that there is nothing else that can be done for a neighbor and the end is inevitable

There are days when a “thank you, for all you have done” means more than anyone will ever know

There are days when our eyes are filled with tears of happiness after receiving a cite free survey in the Nursing Home

There are days when we feel that we have pulled together as a team to fulfill our mission of “Neighbors Caring For Neighbors, Body, Mind and Spirit”

There are days when we feel proud to be affiliated with an organization that gives so much to the community

Everyday, I reaffirm my decision to work as a Social Worker in the field of health care and I do thank St. Joseph's Community Health Services for this wonderful opportunity.

Teresa Nundahl
Social Worker
St. Joseph's Community Health Services, Inc., Hillsboro

2005 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

My name is Deborah Fox and I am a Transporter/Film Management Clerk for Aurora Medical Center in Oshkosh. I started working for Aurora as a Medical Records Clerk in April 1997. A few months before the hospital opened, Darrell McGill, who was the Supervisor of the Radiology Department approached me and asked me if I would be interested in coming to work for him as a transporter. I was definitely looking for a change and challenge because I had been working in medical records for the past 6 years and the position sounded interesting. When the position was offered to me and I accepted it, I just knew that this was for me. The main responsibility for the transporter is to transport patients to and from their rooms to the appropriate destination in a safe and timely manner, while meeting department timetables. This also includes getting the patients up and out of bed, getting them dressed in the appropriate clothing, making sure that they have oxygen if necessary and assisting the nurse when necessary. There are also various clerical duties including obtaining files, retrieving, logging in and out of files, delivering PACS images, videotape or films to all areas requiring them, transporting equipment as needed interdepartmentally and ensure proper medical forms accompany the patient. Another responsibility is to make sure the beds and wheelchairs are in good working order and properly cleaned, that the blanket warmer is full with sheets and blankets and that the oxygen tanks are full. This past year, since the hospital has opened, has been an enjoyable experience for me.

It is very rewarding to have patients tell you that the experience they had while being transported was safe and comfortable. I have also had the nursing staff tell me that I am very good at my job and that I do my best to deliver the very best patient care while they are with me. This reaffirms my decision that I made the right choice. It is a very rewarding position because you meet many different people, some may be more of a challenge than others, but the good outweigh the bad.

Deborah Fox
Transporter/Film Management Clerk
Aurora Medical Center, Oshkosh

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My grandfather wanted to stay at home during his battle with cancer. I decided to help care for him so he could continue to be at home until his death. It was very hard to watch him fade away and in the end die. It is because of him I have chosen to work in health care.

The year after grandpa passed away, while I was working in a small town grocery store I saw an ad for a Unit Assistant at a small town hospital that was close to my home. I had turned 30, sent my youngest to kindergarten, and was considering going back to school to become a nurse, so I applied for the job. I did not have any experience in health care except for taking care of grandpa. I was extremely lucky the people here gave me the chance to get my foot in the door of health care.

That was 10 years ago and in that time I have had a mix of jobs, including housekeeping, physical therapy aid, certified nursing assistant, and now an ER Unit Coordinator. My job is a combination of registration, unit clerk and CNA. Never knowing what you will be doing next. Entering orders, answering the phone, listening to the ambulance radio, or it could be comforting a family member of a dying patient, or helping hold a small child while they are getting stitches because the parents just cannot bear to watch.

Who would have known that decision 10 years ago would be the most rewarding and fulfilling one I could have ever made. It is all because of the patients and the families we care for. Knowing you make a difference in their lives. That is what health care is all about.

Tammy Arndt
ER Unit Coordinator
Stoughton Hospital