

# 2009 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program



***You Make the Difference***

***Sponsored by***

Wisconsin Hospital Association

***In collaboration with***

Wisconsin Society of Healthcare Human Resources Administration

Wisconsin Organization of Nurse Executives

# The Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

## Table of Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Table of Contents by Job Title</b>	i-v
<b>Table of Contents by City</b>	vi-xi
<b>Clinical Professional</b>	
Kathryn Murphy, Employee Health Practitioner Sauk Prairie Memorial Hospital & Clinics, Prairie du Sac .....	1
Eric Thunstedt, Exercise Physiologist - Clinical Vernon Memorial Healthcare, Viroqua .....	2
Alicia Madigan, Exercise Physiologist - EKG/Cardiopulmonary Beaver Dam Community Hospital, Beaver Dam .....	3
Debra Martin, Lead Specialty Pharmacy Technician Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, Milwaukee .....	4
Brittany Homer, Massage Therapist Luther Midelfort Northland-Mayo Health System, Barron.....	5
Rebecca Berg, Medical Assistant Gundersen Lutheran Health System, La Crosse.....	6
Kendra LaCrosse, Occupational Therapist Divine Savior Healthcare, Portage .....	7
Peggy Hays, Physician Assistant Aurora Health Center, West Bend.....	8
Julie Andersson, Physician Assistant Burnett Medical Center, Grantsburg.....	9
Theresa Hoyles, Registered Dietitian Memorial Medical Center, Ashland .....	10
Patrick Baker, Respiratory Care Practitioner Ministry Health Care - Howard Young Medical Center, Woodruff .....	11
Diane Neste, Social Worker Spooner Health System, Spooner.....	12
Jane Cain, Surgical Technician St. Mary's Hospital of Superior, Superior .....	13

## Management

Mark Ahrens, Diagnostic Services Director Orthopedic Hospital of Wisconsin, Glendale .....	14
Rhonda R. Larson, RN, Director of Cancer Care Nursing Mile Bluff Medical Center, Mauston.....	15
Judy Hannaford, Director, Alcohol and Drug Counselor St. Clare Hospital & Health Services, Baraboo .....	16
Kevin Dean, Emergency Services Coordinator St. Joseph's Community Health Services, Hillsboro .....	17
Marta Hoch, Manager, Medical Staff Services Aurora Medical Center, Oshkosh .....	18
Kathy Van Ryen, RN, Nurse Manager Ministry Health Care - Saint Mary's Hospital, Rhinelander.....	19

## Nursing

Lauren Pallin, Administrative Supervisor, Nursing St. Mary's Hospital, Madison.....	20
Janet Schlegel, RN, Case Manager Mercy Health System, Janesville .....	21
Patricia Celek, RN, Certified Diabetes Educator Aurora West Allis Medical Center, West Allis.....	22
Sarah Anton, CNA, Certified Nursing Assistant Baldwin Area Medical Center, Baldwin .....	23
Lindsay Rees, CNA, Certified Nursing Assistant Hudson Hospital, Hudson.....	24
Philan Susa, CNA, Certified Nursing Assistant Memorial Medical Center, Neillsville .....	25
Lisa Clary, RN, BSN, Clinical Coordinator The Richland Hospital, Inc., Richland Center.....	26
JoAnne Arndt, Clinical Nurse 2 Columbia St. Mary's, Glendale .....	27
Mary Jo Burgoyne, Clinical Nurse Specialist Froedtert Hospital, Milwaukee.....	28
Sherry Wenzel, RN, Emergency Room Upland Hills Health, Dodgeville .....	29

**Nursing (continued)**

Barbara Koch, RN, Home Health and Hospice Nurse Flambeau Hospital, Park Falls .....	30
Dody Lunde, RN, Lead, Oncology Infusion Services Osceola Medical Center, Osceola.....	31
Florence Falk, LPN, Licensed Practical Nurse Fort HealthCare, Fort Atkinson.....	32
Stacey Connell, Nursing Assistant Luther Midelfort Oakridge, Osseo .....	33
Lisa Breaman, RN, Registered Nurse Aspirus Wausau Hospital, Wausau .....	34
Kathy Guenther, RN, Registered Nurse Black River Memorial Hospital, Black River Falls.....	35
Nicole Buehler, RN, Registered Nurse Memorial Health Center, Medford .....	36
Nancy Johnas, RN, Registered Nurse Ministry Health Care - Good Samaritan Health Center, Merrill .....	37
Kelly Friesen, RN, Registered Nurse Ministry Health Care - Saint Joseph's Hospital, Marshfield.....	38
Ann Soda, RN, Registered Nurse Ripon Medical Center, Ripon .....	39
Diane Zakopyko, RN, Registered Nurse Sacred Heart Hospital, Eau Claire .....	40
Kari Pace, RN, Registered Nurse Southwest Health Center, Inc., Platteville .....	41
Suzanne Yanke, RN, Registered Nurse St. Joseph's Hospital, West Bend .....	42
Lori Larsen, RN, Registered Nurse Stoughton Hospital, Stoughton.....	43
Margie Weber, RN, Registered Nurse Tomah Memorial Hospital, Tomah .....	44
Holly Brom, RN, Registered Nurse UW Health Partners Watertown Regional Medical Center, Watertown.....	45

**Nursing (continued)**

Susan Schmitz, RN, Registered Nurse  
Veterans Administration Medical Center, Tomah..... 46

Stacy Wilson, RN, Registered Nurse  
Aurora St. Luke's South Shore, Cudahy ..... 47

Jeffrey Klister, RN, Registered Nurse - 4KLM Dept.  
Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center, Milwaukee..... 48

Lynn Reynolds, RN, Registered Nurse - Emergency Department  
Aurora Medical Center in Washington County, Hartford ..... 49

Patty Bekkers, RN, Registered Nurse, Outpatient Renal Dialysis  
St. Vincent Hospital, Green Bay ..... 50

JoAnne Damaschke, RN, CNRN - Neurosurgery  
Franciscan Skemp Healthcare, La Crosse..... 51

Lindsay Hintz, RN, Team Facilitator  
Bellin Hospital, Green Bay ..... 52

**Office Professional**

Michele Hein, Accounting Specialist  
Columbus Community Hospital, Columbus..... 53

Denise Reilley, Administrative Assistant  
Wild Rose Community Memorial Hospital, Wild Rose..... 54

Jaime Harris, Business Office Receptionist  
Hayward Area Memorial Hospital, Hayward..... 55

Jennifer Patzer, Patient Financial Advocate  
Community Memorial Hospital, Oconto Falls ..... 56

Kathleen Evertsen, Patient Registrar, Admitting  
Lakeview Medical Center, Rice Lake ..... 57

**Support Service**

Suzanne Dungan, Activities Coordinator  
St. Mary's Care Center, Madison ..... 58

Terri Reuter, Cafeteria Aide  
Shawano Medical Center, Shawano ..... 59

Theresa Clark, Cancer Center Receptionist  
Langlade Hospital, Antigo ..... 60

Jon Paquette, Chaplain  
St. Nicholas Hospital, Sheboygan ..... 61

**Support Service (continued)**

Linda Sangrene, Contract Management Specialist  
Monroe Clinic, Monroe ..... 62

Kelly Akkerman, Employment Coordinator  
Riverview Hospital Association, Wisconsin Rapids..... 63

Barb Van Egtern, Employment Specialist  
Agnesian HealthCare, Fond du Lac ..... 64

Kris Contois, Housekeeper I  
Ministry Health Care - Saint Clare's Hospital, Weston ..... 65

Jody Keil, IS Training Specialist  
Aurora Sheboygan Memorial Medical Center, Sheboygan ..... 66

Kurt Ellis, Lead - Clerical Medical Imaging  
Luther Midelfort-Mayo Health System, Eau Claire ..... 67

Kristine Brekke, Mail Clerk  
Red Cedar Medical Center, Menomonie ..... 68

Michelle Edwards, Medical Coder  
Memorial Hospital of Lafayette County, Darlington ..... 69

Berdie Maigatter, Patient Access Representative  
Aurora Medical Center Manitowoc Co., Two Rivers..... 70

Gloria Jackson, Patient Transporter  
Aurora Sinai Medical Center, Milwaukee ..... 71

Jared Davis, Physician Recruiter Specialist  
Ministry Health Care - Saint Michael's Hospital, Stevens Point ..... 72

Elinor Gbedey, Scheduler Senior  
University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics, Madison ..... 73

Catherine Kromrie, RN, Service Area Coordinator  
St. Joseph's Hospital, Chippewa Falls ..... 74

Connie Belter, Telecommunications Operator  
Berlin Memorial Hospital, Berlin ..... 75

Shauna Knott, Wellness Coordinator  
River Falls Area Hospital, River Falls..... 76

# The 2009 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

## Table of Contents by City

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Antigo</b>	
Langlade Hospital Theresa Clark, Cancer Center Receptionist.....	60
<b>Ashland</b>	
Memorial Medical Center Theresa Hoyles, Registered Dietitian.....	10
<b>Baldwin</b>	
Baldwin Area Medical Center Sarah Anton, Certified Nursing Assistant.....	23
<b>Baraboo</b>	
St. Clare Hospital & Health Services Judy Hannaford, Director, Alcohol and Drug Counselor .....	16
<b>Barron</b>	
Luther Midelfort Northland-Mayo Health System Brittany Homer, Massage Therapist.....	5
<b>Beaver Dam</b>	
Beaver Dam Community Hospital Alicia Madigan, Exercise Physiologist - EKG/Cardiopulmonary .....	3
<b>Berlin</b>	
Berlin Memorial Hospital Connie Belter, Telecommunications Operator .....	75
<b>Black River Falls</b>	
Black River Memorial Hospital Kathy Guenther, RN, Registered Nurse .....	35
<b>Chippewa Falls</b>	
St. Joseph's Hospital Catherine Kromrie, RN, Service Area Coordinator.....	74
<b>Columbus</b>	
Columbus Community Hospital Michele Hein, Accounting Specialist .....	53
<b>Cudahy</b>	
Aurora St. Luke's South Shore Stacy Wilson, RN, Registered Nurse .....	47

<b>Darlington</b>	
Memorial Hospital of Lafayette County	
Michelle Edwards, Medical Coder .....	69
<b>Dodgeville</b>	
Upland Hills Health	
Sherry Wenzel, RN, Emergency Room RN.....	29
<b>Eau Claire</b>	
Luther Midelfort-Mayo Health System	
Kurt Ellis, Lead - Clerical Medical Imaging.....	67
Sacred Heart Hospital	
Diane Zakopyko, RN, Registered Nurse .....	40
<b>Fond du Lac</b>	
Agnesian HealthCare	
Barb Van Egtern, Employment Specialist .....	64
<b>Fort Atkinson</b>	
Fort HealthCare	
Florence Falk, LPN, Licensed Practical Nurse.....	32
<b>Glendale</b>	
Columbia St. Mary's	
JoAnne Arndt, Clinical Nurse 2 .....	27
Orthopedic Hospital of Wisconsin	
Mark Ahrens, Diagnostic Services Director.....	14
<b>Grantsburg</b>	
Burnett Medical Center	
Julie Andersson, Physician Assistant.....	9
<b>Green Bay</b>	
Bellin Hospital	
Lindsay Hintz, RN, Team Facilitator.....	52
St. Vincent Hospital	
Patty Bekkers, RN, Registered Nurse, Outpatient Renal Dialysis.....	50
<b>Hartford</b>	
Aurora Medical Center in Washington County	
Lynn Reynolds, RN, Registered Nurse - Emergency Department .....	49
<b>Hayward</b>	
Hayward Area Memorial Hospital	
Jaime Harris, Business Office Receptionist .....	55

<b>Hillsboro</b>	
St. Joseph's Community Health Services	
Kevin Dean, Emergency Services Coordinator .....	17
<b>Hudson</b>	
Hudson Hospital	
Lindsay Rees, CNA, Certified Nursing Assistant.....	24
<b>Janesville</b>	
Mercy Health System	
Janet Schlegel, RN, Case Manager .....	21
<b>La Crosse</b>	
Franciscan Skemp Healthcare	
JoAnne Damaschke, RN, CNRN - Neurosurgery.....	51
Gundersen Lutheran Health System	
Rebecca Berg, Medical Assistant.....	6
<b>Madison</b>	
St. Mary's Care Center	
Suzanne Dungan, Activities Coordinator.....	58
St. Mary's Hospital	
Lauren Pallin, Administrative Supervisor, Nursing .....	20
University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics	
Elinor Gbedey, Scheduler Senior .....	73
<b>Marshfield</b>	
Ministry Health Care - Saint Joseph's Hospital	
Kelly Friesen, RN, Registered Nurse .....	38
<b>Mauston</b>	
Mile Bluff Medical Center	
Rhonda R. Larson, RN, Director of Cancer Care Nursing.....	15
<b>Medford</b>	
Memorial Health Center	
Nicole Buehler, RN, Registered Nurse.....	36
<b>Menomonie</b>	
Red Cedar Medical Center	
Kristine Brekke, Mail Clerk .....	68
<b>Merrill</b>	
Ministry Health Care - Good Samaritan Health Center	
Nancy Johnas, RN, Registered Nurse .....	37

**Milwaukee**

Aurora Sinai Medical Center Gloria Jackson, Patient Transporter.....	71
Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center Jeffrey Klister, RN, Registered Nurse - 4KLM Dept. ....	48
Children's Hospital of Wisconsin Debra Martin, Lead Specialty Pharmacy Technician .....	4
Froedtert Hospital Mary Jo Burgoyne, Clinical Nurse Specialist.....	28

**Monroe**

Monroe Clinic Linda Sangrene, Contract Management Specialist.....	62
--	----

**Neillsville**

Memorial Medical Center Philan Susa, CNA, Certified Nursing Assistant .....	25
--	----

**Oconto Falls**

Community Memorial Hospital Jennifer Patzer, Patient Financial Advocate.....	56
---	----

**Osceola**

Osceola Medical Center Dody Lunde, RN, Lead RN, Oncology Infusion Services .....	31
---	----

**Oshkosh**

Aurora Medical Center Marta Hoch, Manager, Medical Staff Services .....	18
--	----

**Osseo**

Luther Midelfort Oakridge Stacey Connell, Nursing Assistant .....	33
--	----

**Park Falls**

Flambeau Hospital Barbara Koch, RN, Home Health and Hospice Nurse.....	30
---	----

**Platteville**

Southwest Health Center, Inc. Kari Pace, RN, Registered Nurse.....	41
---	----

**Portage**

Divine Savior Healthcare Kendra LaCrosse, Occupational Therapist .....	7
---	---

<b>Prairie du Sac</b>	
Sauk Prairie Memorial Hospital & Clinics	
Kathryn Murphy, Employee Health Practitioner .....	1
<b>Rhineland</b>	
Ministry Health Care - Saint Mary's Hospital	
Kathy Van Ryen, RN, Nurse Manager .....	19
<b>Rice Lake</b>	
Lakeview Medical Center	
Kathleen Evertsen, Patient Registrar, Admitting .....	57
<b>Richland Center</b>	
The Richland Hospital, Inc.	
Lisa Clary, RN, BSN, Clinical Coordinator .....	26
<b>Ripon</b>	
Ripon Medical Center	
Ann Soda, RN, Registered Nurse .....	39
<b>River Falls</b>	
River Falls Area Hospital	
Shauna Knott, Wellness Coordinator .....	76
<b>Shawano</b>	
Shawano Medical Center	
Terri Reuter, Cafeteria Aide .....	59
<b>Sheboygan</b>	
Aurora Sheboygan Memorial Medical Center	
Jody Keil, IS Training Specialist .....	66
St. Nicholas Hospital	
Jon Paquette, Chaplain .....	61
<b>Spooner</b>	
Spooner Health System	
Diane Neste, Social Worker .....	12
<b>Stevens Point</b>	
Ministry Health Care - Saint Michael's Hospital	
Jared Davis, Physician Recruiter Specialist .....	72
<b>Stoughton</b>	
Stoughton Hospital	
Lori Larsen, RN, Registered Nurse .....	43
<b>Superior</b>	
St. Mary's Hospital of Superior	
Jane Cain, Surgical Technician .....	13

<b>Tomah</b>	
Tomah Memorial Hospital	
Margie Weber, RN, Registered Nurse.....	44
Veterans Administration Medical Center	
Susan Schmitz, RN, Registered Nurse .....	46
<b>Two Rivers</b>	
Aurora Medical Center Manitowoc Co.	
Berdie Maigatter, Patient Access Representative .....	70
<b>Viroqua</b>	
Vernon Memorial Healthcare	
Eric Thunstedt, Exercise Physiologist - Clinical .....	2
<b>Watertown</b>	
UW Health Partners Watertown Regional Medical Center	
Holly Brom, RN, Registered Nurse.....	45
<b>Wausau</b>	
Aspirus Wausau Hospital	
Lisa Breaman, RN, Registered Nurse .....	34
<b>West Allis</b>	
Aurora West Allis Medical Center	
Patricia Celek, RN, Certified Diabetes Educator .....	22
<b>West Bend</b>	
Aurora Health Center	
Peggy Hays, Physician Assistant.....	8
St. Joseph's Hospital	
Suzanne Yanke, RN, Registered Nurse.....	42
<b>Weston</b>	
Ministry Health Care - Saint Clare's Hospital	
Kris Contois, Housekeeper I.....	65
<b>Wild Rose</b>	
Wild Rose Community Memorial Hospital	
Denise Reilley, Administrative Assistant .....	54
<b>Wisconsin Rapids</b>	
Riverview Hospital Association	
Kelly Akkerman, Employment Coordinator.....	63
<b>Woodruff</b>	
Ministry Health Care - Howard Young Medical Center	
Patrick Baker, Respiratory Care Practitioner.....	11

## **Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program**

I have had the privilege of working in health care for 30 years, 23 as a nurse. I marked my 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary at Sauk Prairie Memorial Hospital & Clinics (SPMHC) in January. In that time I have witnessed some of the tenderest moments in people's lives. That is the privilege of nursing.

One of my first memories is of running a hospital under Mrs. Tock's pine tree –at the age of three. My first patients were the neighbor boys pretending to gun one another down. I casted my Barbies. My becoming a nurse did not surprise anyone. I wanted a challenge: heart, mind, body and soul. I wanted work with meaning. Nursing is. I chose SPMHC after talking to patients and I knew if the patients preferred Sauk, I would, too. I have been able to be the kind of nurse I want to be here.

There are moments in nursing where your actions are lifesaving. It is a humbling responsibility and honor. There are other fiercely personal moments when all you give is your presence. You carry everything you are into those moments, they alter you, and they keep you in nursing. I have held women, twice in one week, as they collapsed after hearing their husbands died. I have stood with a woman profoundly ill with AIDS as she confided her diagnosis to her congregation. The congregation embraced and supported her. I listened as a single mom rehearsed telling her children her cancer was back and had her call me years later when she was cancer free. I have soothed an addict giving birth. That child has since graduated from college. I have listened to stories and witnessed moments I can never repeat.

In those moments lies the spirit of nursing; heart, mind, body and soul.

*Kitty Murphy, RN, BSN  
Employee Health and Wellness  
Sauk Prairie Memorial Hospital & Clinics, Prairie du Sac*

Have you ever experienced how it feels to comfort an infant to sleep? Can you recall the enjoyment when hearing a baby giggle? Do you remember the sense of encouragement when someone reached for you in a time of hardship? Have you ever looked back on your accomplishments and smiled? Have you ever experienced the victory of scoring the winning basket? Remember how proud you were when your kids got on the bus for the first time? **Can you believe that's my job?** Being employed by Vernon Memorial Healthcare (VMH) in the Cardiopulmonary Diagnostics and Rehabilitation Department has given me the opportunity to experience all the above. The underlined words tell my story during a typical day in cardiac rehabilitation.

When seeing post-procedure/operative heart patients for the first time, most are scared, frustrated and often at their lowest physical and emotional level. It's my privilege to comfort and console them, lending them a strong shoulder to lean on. Getting to know patients personally, I witness the enjoyment on their faces when they talk about family, reminisce about childhood adventures, or share a joke or two. With a little encouragement, patients feel they can exercise safely while having fun at the same time. As they progress their way to better health, patients often realize the accomplishments they have made and their victory over their heart disease. As a patient transitions from monitored to independent exercise, the sense of pride overwhelms me. It's when patients shake your hand or give you a thankful hug that you realize your job means something special. That's payment enough.

My mother gave me an awesome piece of advice once. She said, "Smile to everyone because it may be the only sunshine they see all day." It's my motto that laughter is the best medicine and I consider it a gift to be a small brush stroke in what is the portrait of VMH. God Bless.

*Eric Thunstedt, M.A., ACSM-CES, ACSM-RCEP  
Clinical Exercise Physiologist  
Vernon Memorial Healthcare, Viroqua*

## Employee Pride Program

Choosing a career path was fortunately, a very easy decision for me. I have always had a personal interest in health and fitness and when I realized that there were opportunities to apply this passion in a rehabilitation setting I set my sights on achieving a master's degree in clinical exercise physiology. This degree has allowed me to enter the field of cardiac rehabilitation. Cardiac rehab is a medically supervised exercise program for heart patients recently recovering from by-pass grafting, an MI, or stent placement.

Years ago when I started volunteering in this field, it was very apparent that life did not go unappreciated to those who are recovering from a cardiovascular event. Each patient has a very diverse background and with that each patient that I have encountered has given me knowledge and insight that is more valuable to me than they will ever realize. Life is full of its unwarranted challenges and regrettably, these challenges often dominate over many of life's everyday miracles. My field of work has opened my eyes to how many of us take life for granted.

I feel a great responsibility to give back to every patient that I encounter; through them I have gained a much higher appreciation for health, second chances, and life's simple pleasures. The least I can do in return is to provide these patients with an increased knowledge about their hearts, health, and fitness as well as provide motivation and someone to talk to. Like every job, I encounter unique complications, but overwhelmingly my choice to work in health care is reaffirmed every day. I take pride in my job because of my belief in this popular quote "Yesterday is the past, tomorrow is the future, and today is a gift, that is why we call it the present."

*Alicia Madigan, MS, RCEP  
Exercise Physiologist - EKG/Cardiopulmonary  
Beaver Dam Community Hospitals, Inc.*

## **Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Essay**

My decision to have a career in health care had a delayed beginning. My first career was in health insurance. I began with a clerical position and worked my way up to director. I always wanted to be more involved in the health care system on the delivery side versus payer side, but as you climb the corporate ladder, it is hard to take a different path. Well, that path took a different turn when I learned that my mother who lived out of state was diagnosed with cancer. We moved her back to Wisconsin and cared for her in home hospice for the last eleven weeks of her life. My oldest daughter is a pharmacist. When I saw her helping in the medication decisions for my mom, I knew my next career would have to be in the health care field. My daughter told me the growing need for pharmacy technicians and the evolving role they have in the pharmacy team.

During the last weeks of my mom's life, I was told that my office was closing due to a buyout and restructuring. My mom encouraged me to do something that will provide me with a feeling of self fulfillment.

I went back to school and became a certified pharmacy technician. I am currently the lead specialty pharmacy technician in the Children's Hospital Oncology/Infusion Clinic. My primary role is to prepare the chemotherapy for both the inpatient and clinic patients. I truly enjoy working closely with the nurses and of course the pharmacist. I think special thoughts and prayers as I make each dose. In my heart, I know that my mom is looking down at me with pride that I am doing something I enjoy and making a difference in children's and their family's lives.

*Debbie Martin*

*Lead Specialty Pharmacy Technician*

*Children's Hospital and Health System, Milwaukee*

When I was a teenager my father started having symptoms of numbness and tingling in his hands and arms. Within the next 24 hours this feeling progressed to his legs and feet. He had difficulty walking and he was rushed to the local Emergency Room. Over the next several weeks he was confined to a hospital bed while tests were run. He experienced incredible pain. He was afraid to take pain pills because his mind was the only thing that seemed to be working correctly. A physical therapist performed a trigger point massage on areas of his back, neck, and hips. This was the first relief he had felt since the ordeal had started. It was at that moment that I thought, "What if I could take away someone's pain with touch?"

I have worked as a massage therapist for seven years. I have spent six years working for Luther Midelfort Northland. I enjoy being able to come to work each day knowing that I can help reduce someone's pain. I see people who come in for a massage on their own as well as clients referred from other health care practitioners such as physical therapists and physicians. The fact that I can also refer my clients to other providers helps me give the best, personalized care to each client.

During the past six years, I have helped clients with pain issues from headaches, to back pain, to relaxation. I get a great feeling of accomplishment from sitting down with each client to talk about what is bothering him or her. We can discuss what they are doing in their everyday lives that might be contributing to the pain complaint. I use posters of muscles and replicas of a spinal column to show where I will work and what muscle groups are involved. When I personally see a doctor I like to be told not only the problem but what I am personally doing that might be interfering even more. To be able to share this type of positive experience with my own clients helps me feel that I am giving the best treatment I can.

I am not only interested in the physical change in muscle tissue during a massage that can relieve pain, but I am fascinated by the positive mental attribute that a massage can have. Several years ago a gentleman came to me with mid-back pain. He has suffered from it for many years and believed it was something he had to deal with due to aging. He only came because a granddaughter had purchased a gift certificate. Once we talked through what we were going to do and started the session he informed me that no one had rubbed his back since his wife died twenty years ago. I was baffled. How could anyone go twenty years without their back rubbed, or scratched, or any type of therapeutic touch. This client reminded me that I not only treat the sore muscles but the emotional soreness as well. What a positive reminder that I am doing exactly what I am supposed to be.

*Brittany Homer  
Massage Therapist  
Luther Midelfort Northland, Barron*

“Making a difference in someone’s life”

Working in the health care field is most every child’s dream. Meeting a doctor or nurse for the first time leaves a lasting impression on you that makes you want to be just like them when you grow up.

That’s exactly how I felt when I had major surgery at age 6. I still recall all the wonderful nurses and doctors that cared for me at that time. I knew that someday I would like to leave that kind of impression on someone.

So I started in a nursing home as a CNA and then eventually became a Medical Assistant. Talk about rewarding and loving my job. The chance to help make a difference in someone’s life and working with patients of all ages is very rewarding. The face-to-face contact you have with patients and getting to be there in the happy times and in sad. They make you feel like you do make a difference and they’re glad that your there.

I’ve had the experience of being on the other side as a mother of a two-year-old patient with a ruptured appendix. And experienced the great health care from clinic physician to pediatric surgeon and all the wonderful medical staff that makes that lasting impression on a patient and their family. And with these experiences I can honestly say that I can’t see myself in any other position in my life. I want to be there to make the difference in someone’s life.

*Rebecca Berg*  
*Medical Assistant*  
*Gundersen Lutheran Health System, La Crosse*

## **Motivation: Healthcare**

I have worked in occupational therapy for over 7 years now, and I really do love my job. It is a rewarding and fulfilling career. I decided to work in health care for many personal reasons, but why I stay here is another story.

First of all, there are my coworkers. I am proud to work in a department where we all work as a team with the goal of providing rehabilitation to people of all ages. I know that I am in a safe environment where I can advocate for my patients and my opinions are heard.

Secondly are the patients I serve. I have the privilege of seeing them from their hospital stay to the nursing home, to home care or the outpatient clinic. My day consists of treating patients at their most vulnerable to their most independent.

I remember fondly one specific patient that inspired me. I treated him in the hospital and then at the extended care. Several months later I covered in the home care department and completed an evaluation at his home. He was like a different person in his own environment. I was tickled to have been able to follow up on his care and remind him of how long and far his journey had taken him.

My final point is this: seeing the difference that occupational therapy can make in someone's life is what motivates me each and every day. I know I am making a difference in this world, one patient at a time.

*Kendra LaCrosse  
Occupational Therapist  
Divine Savior Healthcare, Portage*

To my dear son:

You are at a difficult time, choosing what you are going to do with the rest of your life. I knew early on that I wanted to be in health care. Perhaps it was my father's heart attack in his 30s? Perhaps it was the way I was "brought up"? Whatever the motivation, 35 years ago I became a nursing assistant and was then guided to the career of physician assistant by my high school guidance counselor. Health care has been fascinating. Working along side bright, compassionate co-workers, I have learned something every step of the way:

From the wonderment of seeing a new life emerge during an emergency c-section; to the comfort, reassurance and hope provided in times of need; to the lives cut short by disease and injury; to the lives destroyed by tobacco, alcohol and drugs; to the times I could see the real person beyond the disfiguring burns or the disabling condition; to the cures that worked; to the lives that have been changed; to the curiosity of connecting the parts to the whole being, the science to the person, and the person to society with its goods and ills.

Health care has been the cause to which a great deal of my last 35 years has been dedicated. It has supported my family and my interests. Health care has taught me about people and myself. Along my career journey, I have appreciated the trust given to me by my patients, along with their strengths, their pains, their heartaches and their joys. Whatever you choose to do with your life, it is not the nice car or the iphone, or even a particular career that is important. What is important is the journey, and making the world a better place for everyone. In doing so, you will find special people and have a satisfying and fulfilling life for yourself.

Love,  
Mom

*Peggy Hays  
Physician Assistant  
Aurora Health Center, West Bend*

## **Pride in My Profession**

I work as a physician assistant in a rural health clinic in northwest Wisconsin. I love my job and the people I am privileged to work with. I have a lot of autonomy and get to do many interesting things.

Fifteen years ago my father died of a heart attack while on a business trip out east. He was only 57 years old. At the time, my mother, siblings and I all flew out to Brattleboro, Vermont and watched helplessly as the medical staff tried different medications and treatments to keep him alive.

I decided that I wanted to know all I could about the heart, lungs, and diabetes. My dad hadn't taken care of his health problems, even though he had available clinic access and insurance to cover expenses.

I feel I can make a difference in my family, friends and in the patients I see. I stress the importance of a healthy lifestyle, health maintenance and preventing disease and illness. I try to use medications conservatively. Along with the lab, x-ray, nursing and ancillary staff I believe we can make a difference!

I hope to live and work in a healthier community.

*Julie Andersson PA-C  
Physician Assistant  
Burnett Medical Center, Grantsburg*

## Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program

I was marveled to discover that a job titled 'dietitian' existed when writing a careers paper as a teenager. My assignment was to research a career that you could see yourself pursuing. I needed to find out the education required, the skills and job duties, and possible settings for the occupation. I remember thinking they call this a "job," I would call this fun! Today finds me working as a Registered Dietitian at Memorial Medical Center in Ashland, Wisconsin.

When reflecting on what motivates me to wake up each day and go to work with a smile on my face I find it is a multitude of words such as challenging, rewarding, interesting, variety and ever changing. Each patient is different with his or her diagnosis and background and that keeps it exciting! Another favorite thing about working as a dietitian for me is that I am never bored. I love that I learn something new each day from either a patient or from a co-worker.

I feel that working in health care allows me to improve the quality of people's lives. An individual's health is at the center of his or her quality of life and nutrition plays a part in prevention as well as improving the condition of many chronic diseases. It is very rewarding to put people in charge of their health through nutrition education. For example, dietitians are often one of the first health care professionals that individuals see after diagnosis of either type 1 or type 2 Diabetes. They come with many fears, expectations, and questions, and it is rewarding to help them through this difficult time. I see after a few nutrition counseling sessions individuals get their lives back and they are empowered to improve their overall health.

*Theresa Hoyles  
Registered Dietitian  
Memorial Medical Center, Ashland*

On the morning of Jan. 18<sup>th</sup> 2003, I was in an automobile crash which almost ended but dramatically changed my life. Through the events that followed my realization is that I did not choose health care, it chose me. In the 5 years following the accident, I was cared for by a multi-disciplinary team of health care workers with a unified goal of putting the pieces of me back together. Through the long process of returning to health I was attended by doctors, nurses, therapists (OT, PT, RT, and ST), psychologists, technicians, phlebotomists, clergy/chaplains, and other specialists. I learned as a patient that the health care professionals that surround you are there because of choice. I could tell which loved their careers and their patients. I could also tell which did not. When respiratory care was presented to me as an option for my future I immediately knew it was a great fit, and after reading the job description, speaking to an instructor and a job shadow I was even more sure. The most important input of all has been from the patients whose lives I have been able to touch by being an empathetic care giver that loves my career and patients. As a believer in Jesus Christ I have been told to “love one another;” this job is the perfect way for me to accomplish this. Ministry Health Care was the one place that caught my eye while searching for a place of employment, one of the first lines in the mission statement is that we will “...strive to further the healing ministry of Jesus...” Here I find not only my career but my calling.

Patrick Baker  
Respiratory Care Practitioner  
Howard Young Medical Center, Woodruff

## **Employee Pride**

As with most social workers, I was drawn to the field by a desire to help people. I just put up a poster on my office door for social work month that describes the profession as “Purpose and Possibility: seeking a purpose in a career by making connections in the lives of individuals, families, and communities.”

Although social workers are found in many settings, from schools to counseling agencies to government, I was drawn to health care. There wasn't a significant event that triggered this decision. Rather, it seemed to be an area where people's needs could be met in concrete ways.

Working in a small rural hospital provides a variety of experiences. I appreciate being part of a team, caring for people at their most vulnerable. Within the same day I might give a new mother information on the family resource center, support a family whose loved one was in an accident, and meet with a feisty 90 year old who could benefit from some outside services to achieve her goal of returning home.

It's a privilege when people trust you enough to share their life story with you. To be able to link people to available resources is extremely rewarding. Their appreciation is humbling. My job is often a ministry of presence.

I carry memories of individuals and situations with me. I have learned so much from them—primarily that what is important in life is relationships with people, and that life should be lived in the “now” rather than putting things off for the future.

Diane Neste, CSW  
Social Worker  
Spooner Health System

My name is Jane Cain, and I am proud to work at St. Mary's Hospital in Superior, Wisconsin. I have been a surgical technician for more than 21 years, and currently my workplace is seeing positive changes as we have many new surgeons coming on board.

I have worked in most fields of surgery, giving me opportunities to see most of the human body. I have seen brains, bowels, bones and babies. The variety comes in surgeons, procedures, ages, sizes, types of anesthesia along with special considerations for each individual patient. I take great pride in my job no matter how large or small the task.

I have written an Acrostic Poem describing what it means to me to be a surgical technician. I think it will give you an idea of some of the tasks.

## **SURGICAL TECHNICIANS**

**S**terile  
**U**rgent  
**R**eady  
**G**ratifying  
**I**mpartial  
**C**oncentration  
**A**nticipation  
**L**acking nothing

**T**ime outs  
**E**verything gets  
**C**ounted  
**H**anding  
**N**ecessary  
**I**nstruments  
**C**losing  
**I**ncisions  
**A**ssisting Doctors and  
**N**urses in  
**S**uperior, Wisconsin

*Jane Cain  
Surgical Technician  
St. Mary's Hospital of Superior*

My interest in a career in health care began during high school after talking with my counselor about my future. I took a series of tests questioning my personal preferences regarding work, location, interactions with others, and various other inclinations. After these tests, I found out I had a match with radiology.

During my formal training, I was fascinated by the many different facets of radiology. I could perform diagnostic x-ray procedures, but also could pursue other imaging opportunities such as ultrasound, computed tomography, magnetic resonance imaging, radiation therapy and many others. After 24 straight months of education, consisting of 40 hours every week, I became eligible to sit for and successfully pass the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists national examination.

I worked as a radiologic technologist for approximately one year before having the opportunity to learn magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). I have worked as an MRI technologist for nearly 20 years now and enjoy the ability to assist physicians diagnose patients using a non-invasive procedure. The field of MRI changes frequently, with new technology providing additional ways to diagnose specific diseases or disease processes. When I started working in MRI, we were limited to imaging anatomy that held relatively still (for example, brain, spine, knee, etc.). Currently we are able to image coronary arteries as well as determine what area of the brain is active during specific activities. I thoroughly enjoy working in MRI, because every patient is unique even though I image many of the same procedures during the day. This keeps me constantly thinking how to produce the best examination given the patient's individual set of circumstances. Every day poses a different set of challenges and provides me with the occasion to help patients have their medical condition diagnosed.

*Mark Ahrens  
Diagnostic Services Director  
Orthopaedic Hospital of Wisconsin, Glendale*

## Wisconsin Healthcare Employee Pride Program

I remember in grade school wanting to do something in my life that would make a difference. I became a Registered Nurse because it seemed like a great way for me to help others.

Nursing is more than bedpans, injections and IV's. It's using your nursing skills and your desire to help those that need you the most. I knew from the beginning of my nursing career that I could help patients physically, mentally and emotionally. What I didn't know was how my patients would change my life.

I work with people diagnosed with cancer and it has been the most inspirational journey for me. I do my best to provide great care and emotional support during difficult treatments and procedures. I am fortunate to have wonderful patients and their families teach me what is important in life. They've shown me courage, compassion, caring, the power of laughter, patience, and strength. They've taught me that every minute counts and your blessings are right before your eyes...if you open them. There are days you share in their tears and others with their joy. Somehow they touch my heart in a way I just cannot explain. Knowing that I can make a difference in their lives makes me excited to come to work every day.

Nursing is a career choice that has given me so much more than I could have ever thought. I've become a better person through my experiences. It helps me to be a better daughter and sister, friend, mother and wife. I cherish the moments I have with those I love. Nursing has brought out the very best in me and that's how I can make a difference. Nursing is a life changing career. I couldn't be more proud to be a part of such an extraordinary group.

*Rhonda R. Larson, RN  
Mile Bluff Medical Center, Mauston*

“Thy Will, Not Mine Be Done”

I remember when I was a little girl growing up, how alone I felt in my small world. I had no one to go to for help or talk to about my fears or needs. My father was a violent alcoholic, my mother a perfect codependent. At night I hid in the closet, clinging onto my doll Susie, secretly praying God to help me.

I started to use alcohol and other drugs at age 16. The first time I drank alcohol I ended up in the emergency room with alcohol poisoning. I almost died. This didn't stop me from drinking because I thought this was normal behavior. I was on the road to self destruction and didn't know it. I was a dead ringer to follow in my fathers footsteps, why not, isn't this what a child of an alcoholic would do? My life quickly became unmanageable; I was powerless and didn't know what to do. I was in the pit of hell and believed there was no way out. I again was alone now as an adult, with no one to turn to. I attempted suicide. I ended up in a hospital for several days. While I was there I met the most wonderful team of medical professionals who honestly talked to me about “living,” how change **is** possible, that people out there do care about me. I felt in my heart for the first time, I was special and worth the time they gave to me so freely. I was inspired!

I always believed deep inside of me that God intended for me to do something special in my life. I started individual counseling shortly after getting out of the hospital. It changed my life. I returned to school and have been in the Counseling field for 27 years. I currently work at St. Clare Center in Baraboo, Wisconsin as the Director of an alcohol and drug treatment facility. Our patients share stories like mine, praying for someone to help them see a way out of their pit of hell. Recovering from life's trauma is the most wonderful rewarding ongoing life gift we can give to all our patients. Watching them change right before our eyes, seeing them open their hearts to others entering treatment is a true spiritual awakening. I live life today because of the loving, kind care I received many years ago. I didn't want to die; I wanted the emotional pain to stop. My patients say the same thing to me today.

God knew I would be here in this special place some day; all I needed to do was listen. I know I am doing what God intended for me to do all along. St. Clare Center is God's gift.

*Judy Ann Hannaford CSAC, CSIT  
Director, Alcohol and Drug Counselor  
St. Clare Hospital and Health Services, Baraboo*

Like most young boys, I too wanted to be a fireman when I grew up. As I grew older, that always stuck with me. When I was a junior in high school, I joined a fire department explorer post that was part of the local volunteer fire department. This was for teens who wished to explore that career path. By my senior year in high school, I was also very intrigued by the local volunteer ambulance service. I had a chance to speak with one of the EMTs who told me how much she enjoyed it and that they had a class starting in a few months in town. I joined the local ambulance and signed up for the EMT class. I went to school during the day and EMT class in the evening. I graduated both high school and EMT School in the same month.

From the very first call I responded to...I loved it! After the fire department explorers I went on to receive my firefighter certification. I was a fireman. As I continued to be very active with the ambulance, I knew this was what I wanted to do for a career. After four years as a volunteer EMT, I went back to school to become a paramedic, which is the highest level of EMT. With that I was able to get a job as a full-time paramedic in a large city for the next five years. Now, after almost 20 years, I have and continue to work and volunteer in many aspects of EMS, including in a hospital Emergency Department. I teach and mentor new EMTs and try to lead by example. There is no greater calling than helping a person in need and I feel as if I found mine in EMS.

*Kevin Dean  
Paramedic  
St. Joseph's Community Health Services, Inc., Hillsboro*

## How Can I Be Sure I'm In Good Hands?

The simple truth is, you can't always. However, the medical staff services/credentialing professional in your hospital or health care organization is the person entrusted to ensure that the physicians and allied health staff privileged or granted a scope of practice at your facility have the required training and experience to treat you and your family.

Throughout that caregiver's career with an organization, it is our responsibility to make sure that provider is competent to provide the highest level of care possible.

We rely on regulatory bodies including the Joint Commission, CMS, and NCQA to provide the standards. We rely on agencies such as the Department of Regulation and Licensing, the National Practitioner Data Bank, and the OIG to verify credentials and provide any adverse information. We verify education, training and experience. We obtain information from other hospitals and health care organizations based on quality and professionalism.

Both of my parents worked in health care; my father as a physician; my mother as a medical records administrator. I remember telling my mother, "I was just hired for a credentialing job," and her reaction was, "I'm not so sure you're going to like that." Now remember, my parents came from the era when all one had to do to be on staff at a hospital meant providing a diploma to the medical staff secretary (who sometimes doubled as the medical records administrator).

I started my career at an entry-level position not fully knowing what credentialing was. I took advantage of the educational opportunities that were being developed in this field. I have achieved both certifications, one as a professional credentialing specialist and the other in medical staff management.

I take great pride in knowing that what I do matters; a lot.

*Marta Hoch, CPCS, CPMSM  
Manager, Medical Staff Services  
Aurora Medical Center of Oshkosh*

*President-Elect, Wisconsin Association Medical Staff Services*

My inspiration for a career in health care started when I was a young girl. I always admired the way my mother could heal a wound with simple ointment and a kiss on the forehead, or heal a broken or saddened heart with a cup of coffee, a listening ear and a hug. She healed many of our friends and neighbors in this way, never turning anyone away.

I believe that caring and nurturing rubbed off on me. As I got older I enjoyed the medical sciences, always wanting to learn more. I went to school for nursing in 1974, a year after I graduated from high school. Nursing in my family was considered a wonderful profession, highly respected and it was a proud day for my parents when I graduated.

I was eager and excited about the profession. What a difference I could make in the life of someone! What I have learned is that the rewards flow two ways. The feeling you receive when you are able to help someone is a true gift. I see the faces of those I have helped over the years. There are those I will never forget. The faces of parents after the birth of their child, a grieving family over the loss of their mother, a frightened child and the list goes on, each of them looking for help. We touch people when they are most vulnerable and can help ease their fear or pain and even when we can't make them well because the disease overcomes them we can help even if only with a listening ear, a cup of coffee and a hug.

I have enjoyed my profession for the past 32 years. For me it has always been more than a career. I have and will continue to encourage others to seek out the same rewards. Most recently I was able to encourage my sister into the profession. In December I was invited to her pinning ceremony to pin on her nursing pin. We had graduated 32 years apart from the same school. Guess my mom's "kitchen table" therapy got to her too!

*Kathy Van Ryen, RN  
Nurse Manager  
Saint Mary's Hospital, Rhinelander*

## **To Whom Will I Serve?**

I get in my car and I am ready and focused on what my day will bring as I drive to work. Questions that run through my mind are: who will I meet, who will I help, and to whom will I serve? I park my car in anticipation, never knowing what my shift will bring into my life. Each shift is sure to bring laughter, excitement, possibly shared tears and the possibility of something close to a miracle.

I get drawn to a memory of a woman that I took care of as a student nurse. I was assigned to do daily cares. She had end-stage metastatic cancer and her family was about to visit her. Dressed all in white, as student nurses do, I entered her room. She asked me as I opened her door, "Are you an angel?" I was taken by surprise, my thoughts and heart became still. I thought to myself, if this is what she needs, then I can be this for her. I told her I was her student nurse, and I would get her ready for her family to visit. We waited for her family to arrive; I brushed her hair and soothed her with a bath. I did this knowing that this was probably one of the last times that her family would see her as they have known her and loved her. After her family arrived, I left her room so they could visit.

I knew then that I chose the right career. There are not too many careers where one can be mistaken for an angel. I feel for myself, that it is in the act of serving that allows the chance for a miracle to happen.

*Lauren Pallin, RN, MSN  
Nursing Supervisor  
St. Mary's Hospital, Madison*

## **Double The Pride**

When I was a little girl, I dreamed of being a nurse. As time passed, life changed, and dreams started to change. But, my dad always directed me back and reminded me of my dream. So ten years after high school graduation, I returned to school to fulfill my dream. Dad was my biggest fan and has become my motivation.

Coincidentally at this time, my father became very ill and was often hospitalized. Whenever I was in his hospital room, he would tell the staff, "This is my daughter and she is going to be a nurse." Although I could hear the pride in his voice, I didn't really understand it. I always felt a little embarrassed and would inform him that it wasn't necessary to tell everyone I was in nursing school.

Having a family of my own, working full-time, and attending nursing clinicals took a toll on me at times. There were times when I was ready to give up, but then would see my father fighting his illnesses, and hear him say, "This is my daughter and she is going to be a Nurse." I would hear the pride in his often weak voice and think; how can I give up on something I want so badly while he is fighting so hard?

I ultimately realized my dream. Shortly afterwards, my father lost his battle and passed away. The pride he had in me continues to be my motivation.

Now my daughter is in nursing school and my dream to become a nurse has become hers. Her decision to follow in my footsteps has reaffirmed my decision to enter the nursing profession. So now years later, I understand my father's pride, and (like my father before me) proudly say, "This is my daughter and she is going to be a nurse."

With my original dream fulfilled, my dream now is for my daughter to proudly say, "I am a nurse." And maybe someday not only will she realize that dream (as I did), but she will also understand her mother's pride (as I understand my father's pride). Maybe if she is really lucky, not only will she proudly say, "I am a nurse," but she will also be able to proudly say, "This is my daughter and she is going to be a nurse."

*Janet Schlegel, RN  
Case Manager  
Mercy Health System, Janesville*

## MY “SUCCESS” STORY

There has been a yellowed slip of paper on my refrigerator door for many years. On it is written a poem entitled “Success” whose authorship is in doubt but whose ability to inspire is not. My favorite lines are:

“To give of one’s self...  
To leave the world a better place...  
To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived  
This is to have succeeded.”

I found this poem shortly after the death of my husband who endured a long and difficult illness. I did a lot of reflection in the period following his passing. Death has a tendency to strip away the inconsequential things in our lives. I wondered what would be a worthwhile way to live my remaining years that would exemplify the sentiments in this poem. It came to me that the health care professionals who cared for my husband in his final months lived these words daily. So, at age 40, I made a career change and enrolled in nursing school. It was the most rewarding decision I ever made...and my only regret is that I didn’t find this career path sooner.

Working as a nurse has allowed me to touch the lives of so many people just as my husband’s caretakers touched ours. In my position as a diabetes educator, I can do something I love - share my knowledge and my passion for disease management - while doing something of service.

There are sections on my paycheck which include all the benefits that my job provides. But there is no section that lists the intangibles which it offers. And this is the part of my nursing career, a job which allows me to experience real “success,” that is the best part.

*Pat Celek, RN, CDE  
Certified Diabetes Educator  
Aurora West Allis Medical Center, West Allis*

## Finally

I've done it!! I have finally registered for college. I have taken the entrance exam, paid my tuition and registered for classes. I have two classes, starting in January. I now ask myself, what have I done? Am I too old? Can I do this? Am I smart enough? Well, I'm about to find out. Class is about to start. While looking for a seat, I scan the room and notice there are actually people my age. I now feel slightly better. In walks the instructor, who says, "Welcome to WITC." Without realizing that I was holding my breath, I exhale and prepare to learn.

My journey began many years ago. After learning how to be a wife and mother of two at a young age, I decided I needed to do something for myself. I always knew that I wanted to be a nurse. So I registered for the LPN program, which at that time was a two-year commitment. I was to start in the fall of 1996. In early March of that year, I received a phone call that would change my life forever. My husband was in a car accident and did not survive. What was I going to do? How would I support my children? Well, my dream of nursing would just have to wait. I took a job as an Accounting Coordinator and raised my family. We went through many ups and downs, which included moving my family and commuting for two years. However, we survived. I realized then that I wasn't very happy, and I needed to do something about it now, before it's too late. I took a huge scary step and quit my job. I registered for the Certified Nursing Assistant class at Chippewa Valley Technical College. I was so happy, and proud of myself for taking this step. I applied for a position at Baldwin Area Medical Center and was hired. My job is six blocks from home, I was home so much more and my children were happy. What more could I ask for?

I've worked at Baldwin Area Medical Center for 3 ½ years now, and love every minute of it. I work on the medical/surgical floor as a nursing assistant and unit coordinator, transcribing all doctor orders and keeping the nursing station running smoothly. I also work in the emergency department and as an aide with the school nurse for the Baldwin-Woodville School District, which contracts with the hospital. I know this is where I want to be and what I want to do, but, my dream of becoming a nurse is still out there.

Experiencing the miracle of birth and the tragedy of death in a single day can be overwhelming sometimes, but knowing that I make a difference in the lives of others makes it all worth it.

Now that my children are older, it's time for me to do something about that dream. I know it will be hard, both emotionally and financially, but in the end it's worth it.

After much thought, I decided to attend WITC. Now here I am in the Pre Nursing Program, still scared, but pushing through it. I've realized it's never too late to pursue your dreams, and you just have to go for it!

*Sarah Anton  
Nursing Assistant  
Baldwin Area Medical Center*

After graduating high school and working in retail customer service for over 13 years, I never dreamed I would be where I am today.

The long road started when my mother was in the hospital after surgery for colon cancer. I realized right then that the customer service I was performing was not making the difference that I wanted it to make. How much do you really remember the girl at the checkout counter? I wanted to see that real joy on a person's face when I helped them accomplish something truly remarkable, like taking their first steps after surgery, or helping them shower and get dressed after being bed bound for 5 days.

Not being ready for a long trek in college, I was amazed that I could be helping people accomplish these things after a two-month training program to be a nursing assistant. The hands-on experience I've received after completing the certification and now working in a hospital, brings great joy and meaning to my life. I work every day knowing that these patients I help are somebody's mother, father, child or friend. In the absence of those relatives and friends, I can be confident that I am giving patients the care that they would, if they could be there themselves. I go home each day knowing that I didn't just please someone for a moment, by smiling when I rang out their purchases, but honestly helped someone on the road to becoming their better selves.

The growing passion I feel for my work made me realize that I have the potential to do more, and have now applied to nursing school. I can't wait for the chance to further my skills and care for more of my "mothers, fathers and friends."

*Lindsay Rees, CNA  
Certified Nursing Assistant  
Hudson Hospital, Hudson*

One day, someone asked me, “Why do you do what you do?” Here’s my response:

Twenty five years ago, and 1,000 miles away from me, my mom had open heart surgery. When I went to be by her side, I could tell the difference between the people that took care of mom and genuinely liked doing what they were doing versus the ones that did what they did for the paycheck only. The good ones put a smile on mom’s face. I decided then what I wanted to do for a career. When my boys were all in school, I would become a CNA!

For a decade, I worked at Memorial Medical Center with the elderly at the nursing home. Every resident was someone’s family. To walk in the room with a smile and say, “Good morning!” and get a smile in return was the satisfaction I needed from my job. I enjoyed helping them with their activities of daily living (ADLs) and getting ready for the day.

Now, I’m back working at Memorial Medical Center’s hospital. It’s a challenge every day. I enjoy helping to get surgical patients up for the first time after surgery, and see them do better each time they get up, and then do well enough to go home. It’s very rewarding. And the satisfaction I get when I see a patient and he says, “I hoped you would be working today.” is overwhelming.

I plan to continue doing CNA work as long as I’m able – at least 20 more years of helping each and every person I can!!

*Flip Susa, CNA  
Memorial Medical Center, Neillsville*

Thinking about a career in health care? This is more than just a “yes” or “no” question. There are so many choices and endless opportunities in this field.

If you choose to pursue nursing there are many decisions and options for a career. Do you want to work in a rural area, where one can care for your own friends and neighbors? Or do you want to work in a city or metropolitan area and specialize in one skill or specialty area? Do you want to work during the day or at night?

As a registered nurse I have chosen to work in the rural setting where I care for my friends and my neighbors. I see everyone as someone, a unique individual.

As a night nurse, I get to deal with a variety of problems, diagnoses and situations. I learn something new and make it a point to laugh every shift that I work.

Nursing is a career that can be very challenging, yet very rewarding. The reward is so much more than a paycheck. When you see someone after they have recuperated from an illness or injury and they have a smile on their face and remember your name or say “you were the nurse that was so nice to me and helped me,” now, that is what I call rewarding!

I would encourage and challenge anyone thinking about a career in health care to “check it out.” The opportunities are endless—just ask a nurse.

*Lisa Clary, RN, BSN  
Clinical Coordinator  
The Richland Hospital, Inc., Richland Center*

## Having a Career You Can Love

Surrounding myself with people who have positive attitudes is the key to being able to love my career as a registered nurse. My attitudes toward myself, my workplace, my job and especially my co-workers helps me stay in touch with my positive feelings and make all the difference in taking the high road approach to loving my career.

Nursing is both compelling and rewarding. The health care environment encourages me to unleash my full potential of creativity, innovation, productivity, motivation and commitment to my work, the patients and the staff I work with.

My desire to become a nurse stems from watching my sister recover from a cerebral aneurysm several years ago. Having to watch her, not knowing if she would survive, overwhelmed me with a feeling of helplessness. Her struggle to recover became a life changing and career-changing event in my life. When she was released from the hospital, I immediately set out to pursue my nursing career.

Nurses are paid for the work performed, but what I have learned is that pay is only the monetary portion of a job well done. Equally important is the feeling of self-satisfaction and accomplishment that comes with helping people and being part of a team that cares about human life.

Nurses are an important asset to making a hospital or health care facility successful. Recognizing that prompts and increases my desire to become even more valuable as a worker.

There is great satisfaction in knowing each day as I leave for work I know exactly.....

- what I will do with my time
- what my purpose is
- what I need to accomplish

**And . . . most importantly . . .**

- That God has granted me another day in which I can make a difference in the lives of those around me.

*JoAnne M. Arndt  
Clinical Nurse 2  
Columbia St. Mary's, Glendale*

Like most people, I am surprised when I realize that what seems like yesterday is actually quite some time ago. For young people beginning to think about careers today it may seem impossible to believe that in the 1960s career options were pretty limited for women: secretary, teacher or nurse. I had no idea in 1968 how flexible nursing would be throughout my career.

I began the pursuit of my nursing career by getting my BSN with a psychology minor from Georgetown University in 1972. After spending some time in the rural Kentucky Appalachian Mountains, I chose to specialize in urban psychiatry with an MSN in Community Mental Health Nursing from UW-Milwaukee in 1978.

I've had the opportunity to practice in a variety of settings. Over my nursing career I have shifted from home health care in rural areas, to an inpatient specialty hospital, a community hospital, private practice and now, an academic medical center. At various times, depending upon my life circumstances, I've worked from 2 to 40 hours a week. In addition to becoming a nurse psychotherapist, I taught psychiatric clinical nursing at local hospitals for Marquette and the UW-Milwaukee when my children were young. After they grew up I became nurse prescriber and created policies for use of this credential at a community hospital. For the past three years, with the support of Froedtert's administration, I have had the opportunity to implement a counseling program tailored to the unique needs of cancer patients.

My choice of a nursing career has served me and my family well. I've been able to continue professionally growing and I've been able to meet amazing people whose health journeys are nothing short of inspiring. Even though my career choices may have seemed somewhat limited in the late 1960s, my choice of nursing has proved to be very broad experientially. And, today's nursing profession offers unlimited opportunities for anyone to contribute to the base of scientific knowledge while continuing to offer flexibility to meet changing life demands.

*Mary Jo Burgoyne  
Clinical Nurse Specialist  
Froedtert Hospital*

My decision to become a nurse came after being a paramedic for 16 years. As a pre-hospital care provider, I was able to hone my critical thinking skills. I had been part of many critical incidents and mass casualties which can wear on a person's fortitude. Nursing seemed like a natural progression for my skills and abilities.

While attending school, so many questions went through my mind. I questioned my ability to take orders rather than making decisions on my own. Would my family be as proud of me as a nurse as they were of my paramedic career? Do menial tasks involved in nursing mean as much as heroic life and death actions in EMS? It didn't take long for me to realize all these answers.

Being part of the Hurricane Katrina evacuation reaffirmed my decision to become the best nurse possible. Touched by so many stories of patients with devastating injuries and illnesses that day in Tampa, I realized that sometimes menial tasks mean more than the life-saving actions. Just being able to make these patients feel safe again made a tremendous difference in their lives.

Being part of a small, rural hospital makes me feel more like a nurse than I ever did in a large hospital. Being able to share my experience and knowledge has made me feel like part of a team providing excellence in health care to the patients we serve every day.

By the way, my family is more proud of me as a nurse, because I am here in Wisconsin and not a thousand miles away. I also take pride in myself for my accomplishments and contributions as a nurse. Giving back to the community is the best way to be part of it.

*Sherry Wenzel, RN  
Upland Hills Health, Dodgeville*

## Why I Became a Nurse

Simply? I love what I do! I can't say that enough! I cannot point to a specific person or event that made this decision easier or faster. More, it is like a collection of instances, people, and patients that have made me glad to have made the decision to become a nurse.

I received my nursing license in 1996 and have worked in a variety of settings since then. I started in a hospital setting and then moved outside the hospital. I currently am a hospice nurse. When I tell people this, they look at me strangely and remark, "How can you take care of people dying all the time." I don't think of hospice as people dying, though most of them do. I look at this time as a gift. They are allowing me into their lives . . . at a crucial time in their lives. While I give them a gift of being able to die at home, or die with their symptoms relieved, they are giving me a gift too.

I consider myself a teacher and a student. What may you ask can I teach patients and families about dying? I like to see people living optimally with symptom management; teaching them about what treatments or medicines help specific problems they are having—shortness of breath, pain, constipation, diarrhea, vomiting, and all other distressing symptoms that tend to happen at end of life. I like to watch them live again and participate in life. I love to watch them make decisions and be at peace with those decisions.

But I am also a student. The people and families that allow me to take care of them have taught me patience, the gift of silence, and presence. I have learned that hugs are a very important part of living...and dying. I have learned that peace is attainable, even when one is dying. To me there is nothing more peaceful than holding a person's hand as they let go of life as we know it and embrace what their next life holds. The look on their face is a sight to behold.

Because of all this, I believe I am a better person in my personal life for this. But this also helps me in my professional life. There isn't a day that goes by that I don't thank God for giving me the abilities he has to become a nurse and then steering me in that direction. I AM where I want to be!

*Barb Koch, RN  
Home Health Registered Nurse  
Flambeau Hospital - Home Health and Hospice*

## Hope

BEEP...BEEP...BEEP...I roll over and peek at my alarm clock with one eye. It's 6:30 a.m. I turn off my alarm and think to myself, hmmm, I GET to go to work today!

Thirty-one years ago my mother, who is a retired OMC Surgical Technician, inspired me to enter Nursing School. In my 29 years as a registered nurse, I have worked in the Medical/Surgical, Obstetrics, Emergency, and Operating Room departments. My current chosen field is oncology nursing.

Today I will care for and administer chemotherapy to my patient who we will refer to as "Hope." It will be Hope's first chemotherapy treatment at Osceola Medical Center. For some patients, the first treatment day can be overwhelming. I make it clear that I am committed to Hope and her family to help her through this difficult time in her life. I explain that she is in for the fight of her life, she is strong, she did not choose this, it happened to her, that it's about faith and hope, and I will do everything in my power to help her get rid of her cancer.

My patients are the reason I come to work. Many people think Oncology is "doom and gloom." However, the people I see everyday are strong and determined. They motivate me with their strength. I enjoy getting to know my patients and their families, seeing people get better, and when necessary, helping patients and families come to terms with death and dying. Helping families get ready and helping someone leave this world has its own rewards.

As I drift off to sleep that night, I feel blessed to be a caregiver. I truly feel as if I have made a difference in Hope's life.

*Dody Lunde, RN  
Oncology Nursing  
Osceola Medical Center*

## WISCONSIN HEALTH CARE EMPLOYEE PRIDE PROGRAM

Ever since I was in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, the only thing I wanted to be was a nurse. I was the one who always took care of bumps and bruises and made sure everyone was o.k. I have been in nursing for 50 years and I am very fortunate to still have contact with some of my patients. The first two years of my employment with Fort HealthCare were spent on the Med-Surg-Peds Floor. There is nothing more satisfying than to see a critically ill patient get well and go back to their normal life. I am also very compassionate, caring and a good listener to people with problems, including the dying patient or families that receive news of a critically ill family member.

For over 48 years I have worked on the OB Floor. I have helped with over 11,000 babies. It is so much fun to see all these new families being started. I am on my third generation.

In terms of my employment with Fort HealthCare, my longevity should speak for itself. It is a great place to work and holds wonderful memories for me. I've watched the hospital grow from 50 beds to 110 beds. I try real hard to live up to our mission, which is to provide excellent compassionate care for the people of our community. Our vision means a lot to me because I am proud to work for the best independent community health care system.

Do I have any regrets? No! The thank you's, kind words and hugs are good enough for me. I can't help but think how I'm somewhat like the hospital aging...but ripe for new challenges. In May of this year I will be retiring. Even though I am gray and past retirement age, God continues to keep me updated. He still thinks I have a lot of life in me.

*Florence Falk, LPN  
Fort HealthCare, Fort Atkinson*

"Quality of Life" means so much to me. To describe it in one way just seems impossible. There are so many things that we as capable humans take for granted. I personally envision myself in the place of the people I take care of. I wouldn't give myself anything other than 100 percent, so why should I do any less for the people I take care of? I believe that quality of care comes from a care provider that is compassionate, understanding, and knows the difference between empathy, sympathy, wants and needs.

When I was a teenager, my grandparents were in a nursing home and we would go visit them every weekend. On one occasion, my grandmother had told a caregiver that she was having some chest pain. After a few attempts with the call light, I walked out into the hallway to find someone to assist us and was told, "Well, your grandmother always has an excuse for a pill, so it isn't always necessary to get right on it." My grandmother passed away from a heart attack 3 days later. This is one of my reasons for becoming a health care provider.

I have been a nursing assistant for 15 years. I have worked in long term care facilities, hospice homes, assisted living centers, hospitals and private homes. To describe the type of work I do, I assist people with their daily care needs, bathing, grooming, dressing, ambulating, as well as other tasks related to their personal care needs.

I know that I have made the right choice for my career, because I get to go home every day knowing that I have made a difference in someone's life and even if it may go unnoticed, I know I did my personal best.

*Stacey Connell  
Nursing Assistant  
Luther Midelfort Oakridge, Osseo*

Recently, I received a beautifully handcrafted “Thank you” card from a high school student that shadowed me in the Birthing Unit. Rachel’s kind words of thanks and appreciation inspire me, along with my daily experiences on the job.

Rachel joined me while I was coaching and monitoring the progress of first-time parents. The labor was long, hard and the mother was near exhaustion. Rachel witnessed first-hand how important the nurse is in making this birth experience a rewarding one. The use of touch, reassurance, education, enthusiasm, **lots** of energy, and establishing and maintaining trust made the difference in my patient’s willingness to continue.

A lot of emotions were expressed in that birthing room while Rachel was there. The patient cried and expressed fear and exhaustion, while her spouse looked to me for support and answers to handle his fragile wife. Rachel watched in awe as the physician, technician and I carefully managed the delivery as a team.

When the first cry from their daughter was heard, the tears from the parents changed from fear to joy! The grandparents, listening outside of the room, screamed with excitement! Soon after the delivery, the grandparents came in to visit their granddaughter. They carefully leaned over their daughter and whispered sweet words to her “We are so proud of you...she’s beautiful,” and watched their granddaughter snuggle on her mommy’s chest.

Rachel and I crept quietly out of the room and took a deep breath and sighed. Tears formed in Rachel’s eyes. The moment was overwhelming. It was another miracle witnessed by me, and just a start of “miracles” for Rachel.

“I am going to be a nurse in OB as well...you have been an inspiration. I hope I am as good at my job as you are at yours! Sincerely, Rachel.”

*Lisa Breaman, RN  
Aspirus Wausau Hospital*

My career in health care began in 2005 and I only wish it had been much sooner. After high school, I attended technical college for nursing. For several reasons, I didn't go into the nursing field then, yet always wondered what I was missing. Throughout the years, when events occurred where I found myself within a hospital setting, I would think about what it would have been like to have finished school. Well, I now know what that is like. For me, completing nursing school will always be a major accomplishment in my life.

When I go to work, I feel as though I have a purpose, and not just functioning in a mechanical or meaningless job. Furthermore, I prepare for work each day with the hope that I can make a difference in someone's life. I would want the same for any member of my own family, as would anyone. This is how I try to do my work each day, as if the patient were one of my own relatives. Whether it is direct patient care, education, family support or any number of other functions, it all has a direct impact on the patient. I believe this is what brings personal satisfaction each day in what I do.

In this economy, for many people, it will be a year of change and I wonder how many will return to school and find employment within the health care system. For those that think they can't do it, yes you can if you really want to. It certainly isn't easy, but well worth it in the end. Each and every day I leave my job having learned something new from working with an incredibly expert team of professionals. It is never dull or boring, and always meaningful.

*Kathy Guenther, RN  
Black River Memorial Hospital, Black River Falls*

## ***Presence***

“Never underestimate the power of your presence.” These words were spoken to me by one of my wise nursing instructors over twelve years ago. At that time, I had no idea how heavily weighted such a simple statement could be.

About ten years ago I entered the nursing profession with excitement and great expectation. Being part of a health care team has taught me many things, both personally and professionally. There is not a day I do not learn something new or when I am not affected by the people around me.

In a world where it can sometimes be difficult to remain optimistic, my interactions as a nurse remind me of how good life really is. Whether holding the hand of a person in their last moments of life or witnessing the first breath of life by a newborn, it is the gratitude and humility for having the privilege of sharing those moments that serves as a true reminder of why I chose the nursing profession.

It is not only the care that I alone can offer, but the awesome teamwork of the providers, caretakers, technicians, and ancillary staff that makes me proud to be a nurse. Health care is a team of people, each making a contribution to serve the greater good.

The care I offer patients, as a nurse, rises higher than the technical skills learned in school. A kind word, gentle touch or simply being *present* can make a profound difference. Assisting the health care team, and again, not always in task, but by offering a shoulder or encouragement, makes a difference.

The statement, “Never underestimate the power of your presence,” resonates in all of my relationships. I believe it is the relationships and the dedication to caring that make the greatest difference in the service we provide.

*Nicole S. Buehler R.N.*  
*Memorial Health Center, Medford*

## Caring From the Heart

Flipping burgers, sanding doors or perfecting pizza crusts—what do these three things have in common? I can tell you they all need several team members to give you the finished product; all three of them can be the finished product of automation with little to no amount of effort from the heart. Consumers expect products they purchase to meet their expectations, rarely will any consumer give you a compliment such that they thought that they had the best burger ever and who exactly were the people involved in making their burger, or they thought the door they purchased was sanded far more than met their expectations, or the crust under the pizza they ate was better than they thought it should be.

The first twenty years of my career consisted of just that. I felt as if anyone could do my job. As time passed I felt automated; I felt empty. I knew I needed a change. I needed more. I needed a job where I could make a difference and I could stand out from the rest of the team, yet be exceptional in what I did. I wanted a job where I used my mind and my heart more than my hands.

In nursing with Ministry Health Care, I am fulfilling my dream every day. At Good Samaritan Health Center in Merrill, every day is a different day with different challenges. Yes, I believe every patient has expectations of their stay and the care they receive. But I also believe when you go above and beyond the standard expectations you are an exception. The patients feel the warmth from your heart and soul. They feel that you are there just for them. Every patient expects you to know your skills and what you were taught to do. I found it is the **little** things that count and that is what the patients will remember, such as giving an elderly person a hot pack for their cold feet, holding their hand when they are scared, a back rub when they can't sleep and talking to them on a personal and professional level instead of just the nurse that comes in and out of their room to get the job done. That is what the patient remembers, not how well you performed your everyday obligations.

I know I am meeting my expectations when I receive cards and thank you notes from the people whom I have cared for. What a great feeling it is to see how I have stood out from the rest and have made such an impact in some one's life that they have remembered the care I had given them. What a warm fuzzy feeling to have your patients come back to visit and thank you personally after they are well again. That is when I know I have chosen the right profession. Every day after caring for my patients, I would hope that I can look back on the day and know I was the exception, rather than the rule.

*Nancy Johnas, RN  
Ministry Health Care - Good Samaritan Health Center, Merrill*

Nursing is a perfect fit. My job provides an inward satisfaction that is positively rewarding. My leadership, communication skills, and compassion for others permitted me to succeed in a medical field that is constantly evolving. I love the atmosphere I work in, daily chaos that melts into a structured environment that yields dynamic results. We have so many health care disciplines working together to achieve the patients' desired outcomes.

I wanted to be a nurse from the time I was a child, helping with Sunday school and babysitting. I wasn't sure at first about choosing a particular area or specialty. In neurology and trauma care, I've found my comfort level; it suits me. I get to know lots of patients who I work closely with day to day.

My routine of floor nursing offers many touching moments to remember, but I feel the most essential time comes when I have a nursing student or new hire. This is the fundamental key role to connect book knowledge to hands on learning and application.

My coaching experiences have allowed me to grow as a nurse and teacher. These situations only enhance my care and comfort I give my patients. I would recommend a career in nursing if you have a large heart, an eye for detail, enthusiasm to keep learning, and "cold hands."

I have a learning disability, and when researching colleges, a nursing program director told me, "You might want to change careers because nursing has a lot of reading." That was the best and worst advice I ever received because I strived harder to reach my goal and have been successful in the nursing profession. I come to work with a smile on my face, ready for the challenges of the day prepared to make a difference in someone's life.

*Kelly Friesen RN, BSN, CN3  
5N Neuro/Trauma Unit  
Saint Joseph's Hospital, Marshfield*

If one looks the word nurse up in the dictionary, it will read: a person who cares for the sick. Any true nurse knows that that definition, simple as it is, is the true core of our souls. A smile, a thank you, hugs and every so often a box of chocolates is what really means the most. I presently work in a day care surgery unit and have found that it can be very stressing on the heart strings because a lot of times this is the first step in a person's finding out of a terrible diagnosis.

I will never forget a day when an elderly man came in for a colonoscopy. He was scared to death because his brother and wife had been recently diagnosed with cancer and he wouldn't know what to do if that was his result. He was so worried about his family members first. His diagnosis would mean finding help to run the family business and maybe helping to care for himself and wife. This man had one baby blue and one beautiful brown eye. We started our path with his eye color and went on from there with stories of his family and grandchildren. The simple act of spending time with people is so lost at times in nursing due to short staffing and other political obstacles. Luckily, this day was not busy in our unit and I could spend that time with him and his wife. The lessons one can learn from our elders are priceless!!! Time went fast as our conversation grew and soon enough he was back in the OR. Once back and awake enough I brought the doctor in.....his results were normal...I had to step out of the room because of the relief and the tears were flowing. I gave him and his wife some privacy and upon leaving the unit for the day, this man turned to me and gave me the biggest hug, thanking me for the time I spent and making the whole experience a better one...He even said that if the outcome was different, I would have made the same difference in his experience. That simple gesture is all that I need to make any day a great one!!

The role of a nurse is not a pleasant one many of times. It is hard work. Long hours, short staff, punching block for the doctors and family members and messy a lot of the times. BUT, if you have the urge to feel the greatest joy of helping another person, then I would encourage anyone to try nursing because it truly is a rewarding profession.

*Ann Soda, RN  
Ripon Medical Center*

## **The Power of Prayer**

In health care, I frequently witness how spiritual care provides a healing strength for someone in need. Like the disciples in the Easter story, sometimes it's hope that we need to overcome our fears and help us go on.

I had the recent privilege to care for an older gentleman who was undergoing a Cath Lab procedure that took much longer than usual and became somewhat complicated. Besides the obvious cardiac symptoms, the patient suffered from the tremors of Parkinson's Disease. He was extremely nervous and several times asked me if he was going to die, though he assured me he was ready to go if it was his time. I told him that he was not dying today, and asked him if I could pray with him. "Yes," he replied and said that he would be grateful. I asked Jesus to hold Clarence in His embrace, and to arm him with His strength.

After my patient's recovery and discharge, he frequently sought me out and sent a touching card in the mail telling me he is a retired pastor and appreciated my "ministering" to him in his time of need. He wanted to meet me so that he could put a face with his nurse, instead of a surgical cap and mask. More importantly, he asked my family and I if we could attend a presentation he was going to give at his church (Bethesda Lutheran) about "growing old," which he would ultimately conclude with his experience at the hospital's Cath Lab.

My family and I were honored to attend his presentation. He shared how it meant so much to him that the staff at Sacred Heart Hospital cared for him not just physically, but spiritually as well. He gave the hospital, its staff and doctors rave reviews. Then, during his talk, he stopped and asked me to share something of my experience with his audience.

I stood up and put it simply: The hospital does indeed harbor miracles within its walls. I explained I felt privileged to have had the opportunity given by God, through my work to "minister to my patients" and care for their families. I have been blessed to be a nurse and to care for people in their time of need. It is truly a privilege in this health care profession to be able to work as one of God's shepherds when one of His flock is hurting. There truly is hope here.

*Diane Zakopyko, RN, BSN  
Cath Lab Nurse  
Sacred Heart Hospital, Eau Claire*

## **Being Blessed from Above**

When I think about what has inspired and motivated me recently in my nursing career, I think about “Grace.” She was a woman in her 70s who recently had a total knee replacement. I was helping various nurses on our medical/surgical unit one evening, and was called upon to help her go to the bathroom. I carefully removed her continuous passive range of motion machine from her right lower extremity and assisted her to the bathroom. After she was finished using the bathroom, I assisted her back to bed. She then looked at me as she was holding her rosary and said “You know you are blessed, don’t you?” I then looked at her and said “What do you mean?” She then looked at me and replied, “Every time you do something nice for someone you are blessed. I’m sure you have been blessed many times over.” I then replied to her, “I guess I will go to heaven some day.”

After we had this conversation, I thought more about what she had told me. I was flattered. I felt appreciated. It was one of the nicest things I could have a patient say to me. I then thought about how all of us in health care must be blessed because we do wonderful things for people every day. From the emergency room nurse who saves a man having a heart attack, to the physician who informs a patient their cancer is in remission, we are all blessed to be part of some of the most life changing moments in a patient’s life. We are all here to make a difference.

*Kari Pace, RN  
Southwest Health Center, Platteville*

The significance of being in health care as an RN is almost indescribable to me, and has touched me in ways that I never would have imagined when I first chose this career. My profession has given me the greatest gift of being able to serve my most valuable patients, my family members.

Being a nurse helped me easily deal with everyday minor illnesses and injuries as my family was growing. What I didn't expect was the significant role I played during major life events. I have been privileged to be there for family in very high moments, watching over the birth of nieces and nephews, sharing the joy. I have been there in very difficult times, helping my/own daughter survive the heart-wrenching diagnosis and treatment for ovarian cancer. I have been there at the lowest times as aging and chronic illness brought both of my parents to the end of life, working with hospice for their comfort and dignity, with family at their bedside at their last breath.

Every patient we touch is part of a family. They need us to help get information, navigate the ever-growing and complex health care system, find appropriate resources, and translate medical terminology so they can understand care and make decisions. Families depend on us to fill gaps as they take care of their loved ones. We give them reassurance, hope and strength to carry on.

Patients and families entrust us with themselves at vulnerable times. It is our responsibility to honor that trust. We must listen carefully to their story, and provide care based not only on scientific evidence and established standards for their diagnosis, but on their individual needs. I am proud to be part of providing health care to Wisconsin families, particularly within the art and science of the nursing profession.

*Suzanne Yanke, RN  
St. Joseph's Hospital, West Bend*

What motivated and inspired me to become a nurse? I would say my yearning to help others. My eagerness and desire arose from a lifelong vision to facilitate the healing process of others. I also sought to give soothing comfort and educate my patients in order to improve and maintain their quality of life. My post graduate dreams included becoming a Nurse Practitioner and Educator. What I have recognized in the sixteen years since my graduation is that my patients have provided me with far more valuable education than I could have ever imagined.

I have seen into the window of genuine love, compassion, and intimacy as a wife sat diligently at the bedside of her dying husband on their 54<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. I have felt the gentle arms of a teenage girl's good-bye hug as she tearfully thanked me for being the only nurse who treated her like a new mother, rather than an inmate. And I have experienced the most profound trust given to me by an older gentleman as he shared his sorrowful story of his wife's suicide. Her chronic pain condition caused her severe debilitation and she no longer wanted to burden him. This she conveyed to him in her good-bye letter.

While in college, I learned the value of accurate nursing assessment, planning and intervention. Effective communication strategies and the importance of strong organizational skills were also heavily emphasized. What I could have never learned in school was that not only would my nursing career allow me to touch the lives of my patients and their loved one, but also, that I too, would open my heart to be touched by them.

This is the motivation by which I am continuously inspired to uphold my lifelong commitment to the nursing profession.

*Lori Larsen, RN  
Emergency Department  
Stoughton Hospital*

## Profession or Passion: Nursing

Every nurse has had the instinct to care for others since the age of two. If you ask them why, they will respond with a smile. This profession is unlike any other. While those in other professions most likely will say, "money," this one differs.

We are in it for the passion. Yes, nurses have financial constraints, but they are not the bottom line. I have never looked in the face of a patient in pain, someone about to deliver a baby, or an elderly and said, "We cannot afford to do that."

No one is refused care. We do it or find someone who can. Everyone is our customer.

Titles mean very little to the customer. The badge says nurse and that is all they want to know. I have yet to roll someone over for a backrub and have them ask me for my resume or grades in school. Where we live, how much money we have, or the car we drive, does not define us.

We have so many areas to choose from. We are not confined to any department or office. We do not change professions, we switch specialties. At the end of the day, we lay our heads on our pillows with a feeling of satisfaction. If it was a good day or a bad day, we can know that we have helped someone feel better.

I make a living while doing what I love. Few people in life can say that. Helping someone to heal, feel joy, or lessen their pain. What do you call that? PASSION. It just could not be any better.

*Margie Weber, RN  
Tomah Memorial Hospital*

For as long as I can remember I have always wanted to be a nurse. My mother has been one all of my life and I remember being so proud of her even as a child. I am still incredibly proud of her as well as myself for the hard work and dedication we both put forth every day. I am fortunate enough to work with her. I remember being a young teen and attending a funeral of a baby with my mom. I remember crying for someone I never knew, but most of all I remember how badly I wanted to be able to support them and realized some day I would do a job that involved just that.

I have been a RN for almost 8 years as either an OB nurse or pediatric nurse. I have seen the miracle of birth numerous times and I still get teary-eyed at every delivery. My favorite story throughout my years is being part of a team that cared for a 27-week infant born here at Watertown three years ago. He was born at 1 pound 13 ounces. With the help of a transport team, we were able to stabilize him & transfer him. He was released from the hospital at 34 weeks. The best part of all is getting to see him now in the community as a healthy boy with no medical problems at all and weighing over 30 pounds! Seeing him really reminds me why I love doing what I do.

To quote my favorite saying, "Being a nurse means you will carry immense responsibility and very little authority. You will step into people's lives and you will make a difference. You will know what it is to be human and humane."

*Holly Brom, RN*

*UW Health Partners Watertown Regional Medical Center, Watertown*

In a world when there seems to be more uncertainty than certainty, more questions than answers, and more fear than security, I write this knowing with 100% certainty, with 100% clarity, and with 100% security that working as a nurse in today's world is one of the most rewarding experiences I could have. I went to college not really knowing what I wanted but I knew that health care would give me opportunities, and I was pretty secure with getting a job after the education was finished.

I was fortunate enough to get involved in the first VALOR program at the Tomah Veterans Administration. This experience not only opened me up to an opportunity to practice skills as a nurse; but also to an opportunity to take care of some of the most important people in our world today, our Veterans of the United States of America.

It has been nearly 17 years since I started at the Tomah VA and I must say that I find great satisfaction every time I come to work. I really don't believe that there is a day that goes by that I cannot say that somehow, somehow, I didn't make a difference in someone's life. There are many days that I go home totally spent from the day's activities; however on reflection on my ride home every day I know that I contributed something very important to the lives of veterans I had contact with.

Nursing is not always about the medical skills that one possesses, such as starting an IV, reading an EKG, providing a treatment, or assisting with a procedure. Nursing is much more than that. Nursing is about listening with an empathetic ear, hearing what a patient has to say, and providing reassurance without instilling a false hope. It is about giving comfort in times of trial, giving the hug in times of death, and sharing the laughter in times of triumph. As nurses we do not always need to "make it right" or "fix it," we just need to be there when someone asks for help and do the best we can to assist.

My most memorable moment as a nurse is a hard to pinpoint as I think there have been many. One of the most memorable moments came when a Vietnam veteran called looking for help. He was encouraged to come in which he did with hesitation. He was being blinded by the stigma behind mental health issues and worried about being embarrassed. He was attempting to cope as so many do with alcohol. He was using alcohol on a daily basis to get him through the day and to help him sleep at night in an effort to forget all the tragedy he had seen. What unraveled that day was a story that had been buried for 35 years. What was released was much tension and many tears that had been hidden inside him for decades. What ensued were referrals to therapy, and to treatment programs. What began was a healing process, was connection to comrades, and was the feeling and knowing that he is not alone. It is the smile now that we both share when we pass each other in the hallway, or when he comes for appointments knowing that his healthy journey of healing has begun.

I can say that I love my job as a nurse, especially as a nurse at the VA. I cannot think of any better way that I could give back to my country than to assist those who have born the battle, suffered the pain, and sacrificed time from their families for the very freedoms and liberties that we all enjoy today.

*Susan Schmitz, RN  
Tomah VA Medical Center*

Pride...accountability...self respect...gratification; that is what I feel being a nurse.

Being the youngest of five children, I was always the caretaker of the family. I didn't realize it at first and in actuality I had no idea that I was already a nurse deep down inside. I had big dreams of becoming a lawyer, but while completing my last year of high school, and working as a resident assistant in a nursing home, I started to question, really what should I be doing? Discussing this with my dad, he said, "Why don't you become a nurse?" WOW...did that hit me deep down inside, why did I not think of it? It was there right inside of me and all it took was for someone else to realize it, someone who saw me in action every day and then allowed me to see it too. I became an official registered nurse. How exciting! I have always had my hands in wound care and that is where I currently work.

What I find most rewarding is the trust that I receive from my patients. Their smiles when they see me, warms me. Their confidence, frustrations, fears, their inner-most feelings on what is happening and that they allow me in to see and experience those feelings with them.

I am proud to be part of Aurora St. Luke's South Shore. I am happy that we are able to provide such a specialty service to our clientele, but we have another specialty and that is community. WE may not be the most "high-tech" hospital, but what we provide is excellence in what we do.

Every day re-affirms my decision to be in health care, and specifically a nurse. I am most proud of the woman, nurse, mother, wife and friend that I am today.

*Stacy Wilson, RN  
Aurora St. Luke's South Shore, Cudahy*

## **2009 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program**

I had no idea when I was hired by Aurora Health Care as a nursing assistant on November 23, 1996 that it would forever change my life. I worked on a medical-surgical floor for several years with prior attempts attending various colleges to pursue a career as a registered nurse. Attempting to attend college as a “middle-aged” student and trying to juggle daily responsibilities along with dealing with personal obstacles proved too much for me to achieve a college degree not alone my personal dream of becoming a registered nurse.

Aurora Health Care in collaboration with Cardinal Stritch University presented an opportunity in 2002 for employees to pursue a degree in nursing. I had read the information in the Aurora newsletter but did not have the confidence nor the self-esteem to apply for this program. My manager and CNS at the time called me in their office to discuss this opportunity. I reassured them that I did look into it but revealed to them that I did not think I would be a candidate because I did not think I would pass the required testing process. After several weeks of them pressuring me, I finally signed up to get them off my back. Imagine my surprise when I received notification that not only did I pass the preliminary testing but I was chosen to be a candidate in the pilot program!!

The three-year program worked very well with my work schedule but also with my personal schedule. Although it was hard work, it was the most beneficial three years of my life. We graduated in May of 2005 and had jobs waiting for us on our designated floors.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank Aurora Health Care Administration for providing this program as I was able to achieve my dream of becoming a registered nurse in which regained my self confidence and self esteem; Bette Gillespie and Bev Weston not only pressuring me into signing up for this program but also working with me and believing in me; my current manager, Jeannine Peters and Cathy Bromberek CNS for providing me with the support and resources the last year of school and current.

I have been an Aurora Health Care employee on the same unit for 12 years and love my job. I look forward to coming to work, developing a relationship with my patients and their families, and using this good rapport to provide a positive outcome. I like to view myself as a role model for the nursing assistants that I work with and give them support and/or encouragement to enroll in school and to keep in school as it will benefit them in the future. I can unfold and reveal my experiences and challenges that I was able to overcome to achieve this goal along with the help of Aurora Health Care to assist them to achieve their goal.

Jeffrey Klister, RN  
Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center, Milwaukee

As far back as I remember I have always wanted to be a nurse. In fact, I have a photograph of myself at age 4, carrying a “nurse’s bag” with a stethoscope hanging around my neck and a pointed paper cap on top of my head. I was a Candy Striper in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade in a red and white pinafore and can recall my “idol,” a tall thin RN who worked on the floor where I first volunteered; she was all in white except for the black band around the base of her cap. She let me observe and even help right at the bedside so that I got a taste, first hand, of how nurses took care of real patients. If it hadn’t been for her, my experiences would have been limited to washing out metal bedpans and kidney basins and passing out the mail. I can recall helping her manage a toddler who had to have an EEG...I got to hold his bottle and pat his little hand so that he laid still for that procedure. What I loved most was that the small, community hospital where I volunteered had such an orderly, quiet atmosphere and that the nurses made sure of it! They were so respected, comforting and capable of handling all sorts of calamities. Thirty-odd years after obtaining my diploma in nursing, those memories are still clear to me. Sick and injured people never change. They still come to health care providers, as we are collectively called, for help. My role has been expanded many times over and despite new medications, equipment, procedures and research, not to mention laws regulating our practice; nothing will alter that basic human need.

*Lynn Reynolds, RN  
Emergency Department  
Aurora Medical Center in Washington County, Hartford*

## **Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program**

I have had a lot of time to reflect on my 20+ year career as a registered nurse. There are so many changes that have occurred in the medical field and yet some things never change.

If I were to talk to a group of students, I would try to impress upon them that nursing is not an easy profession to study. One has to possess the passion to help others, while educating yourself on the advances in technology. I would also stress the importance of being a patient advocate because patients often need help in educating themselves about their condition and prognosis.

I decided to go into nursing to be able to help comfort and console others, to provide a listening ear as well as to teach. My father died of a heart attack when I was 12 years old. The summer he died, I knew then that I wanted to be a nurse, to learn more about the cause of heart disease and one's general health. I feel I have remained committed to caring for others in compassionate ways in the various nursing units I have worked. I try to make a difference in each patient I interact with, helping to empower them and assist in their effort to regain some control over their life.

I feel that my personal experiences in coping with long term Multiple Sclerosis and more recently a diagnosis of Leukemia, have helped me gain a greater degree of empathy for patients and families with whom I interact. My husband works as a counselor at St. Vincent, and we rely on each other. We support each other both in our day-to-day work and also in our personal journey with cancer and life in general.

We have experienced firsthand the compassion of our health care team. We feel privileged to work with everyone on a professional and personal level as we carry out the healing ministry of St. Vincent Hospital.

*Patty Bekkers  
Renal Dialysis  
St. Vincent Hospital, Green Bay*

I have been pondering this question for several weeks. My response is based on the past, present and future.

When I was a young girl I would visit my blind grandmother often. On several occasions I read her the newspaper. After one such visit she said to me I think when you grow up you should be a nurse. At the time I thought no way but I now believe a seed was planted. Another guiding force for me entering the health care profession was my chronically ill mother.

I began my career as a certified medical assistant in a clinic setting. I realized early on I found great pleasure and satisfaction in helping others but I wanted to do more and learn more. I returned to school to become a registered nurse and finished in 1997.

Working on a medical floor was very challenging hard work but exciting to a new nurse. Eventually I accepted a job in a neurosurgery clinic.

I am so blessed to be able to help patients at some of their hardest most vulnerable times in their lives. There are not many professions where you are allowed to place your hands on another human being to help with healing.

The facility I work for is a great place to be practicing medicine; the opportunities given to me have been very enriching and nurturing to my career as an RN. When asked what I do for a living, I respond I am an RN and feel very proud of that fact. It is always followed by where do you work and I am even more proud to say Franciscan Skemp Neurosurgery clinic.

*JoAnne Damaschke RN, CNRN  
Franciscan Skemp Healthcare, La Crosse*

I knew unwaveringly from the age of three that I wanted to be a nurse. I don't know if it is because as a preemie, not expected to live, my mother always spoke with the highest regard for her unsung heroes – all the doctors and nurses that saved me. Or quite possibly it was always a piece of my heart. I am not sure of the answer or even if there is one, but this is what I can tell you.

My senior year of nursing school, I applied for a nurse tech position at Bush Orthopedics at Bellin. I thought I would stay through graduation then move on. That was more than five years ago. I haven't looked back.

I am currently in a team facilitator role on the unit. I do miss the close patient contact that primary care nursing provides, but now I'm in a position to teach, mentor, support and encourage staff. I have come to understand that by doing these things in my team facilitator role, I am helping the staff members give the best care to their patients. I feel one of the most powerful statements said by nurses to their patients is, "I am going to be taking care of you today." That statement alone provides such reassurance. Although being in my team facilitator role I am not able to say that to patients, I am able to take that statement and make it the nurse's own. I am there to nurture staff members and give them the opportunity to understand the importance of their role in their patients' care and help them feel empowered.

So as I sit here writing, trying to figure out what exactly to say, to come up with an inspiring message, or even to put into words what I do all day, I realized I already told you the most important part – helping staff feel empowered. By doing that, it helps them give the best care to their patients. I am still trying to put into words the more operational part of my job.

I guess the best way to describe it is that my role is much like that of a coach. Like a coach I organize the day-to-day operations of the unit, bandage a few wounds for patients, staff and doctors, too (don't tell them I said that), give some words of encouragement and even give a few pats on the shoulder. That part is also important, but reassurance and empowerment go much further.

So this truly is a far cry from what I thought nursing was all about, but I can tell you that when I go home for the night, I leave with feelings of satisfaction and a job well done. I have been given a gift, knowing I made a difference in either one of the patients or staff's lives. Doing that only comes from the heart.

*Lindsay Hintz, RN  
Team Facilitator  
Bellin Hospital, Green Bay*

## My Peaceful Valley

Health care as a career was something I stumbled into, but unlike the proverbial mud-puddle, it was a lush green valley with beautiful rolling hills, a bubbling stream and colorful wild flowers as far as you could see. I had previously been working in Corporate America, commuting 2 hours a day and found very little reward in my day-to-day tasks. So when a friend of mine told me of an accounting position at my hometown local hospital, I jumped at the opportunity. The first year was a whirlwind of learning a new position, meeting new people and the biggest challenge—learning the hospital lingo. This would be my first climb up the rolling hills.

Once at the top of that first rolling hill I saw the most wonderful sight—a sea of wildflowers; AKA staff members. With every flower being unique and capable of standing on its own, but when put all together they create a wonderful surrounding that I am proud to be a part of. Their dedication and values to the patient and health care have shown me a new path in my life.

In the financial world of health care there are so many pieces of the organization that you touch without ever touching a patient. I would compare it to the bubbling stream flowing thru the middle of the valley, gently touching the shorelines. In my past 8.5 years of working in health care I have seen a lot of changes in health care, but each change has the same goal—helping people enhance their lives. Despite the fact that I don't have much interaction with our patients I feel that my contributions help to enhance our mission and enhance our community. I think I'll linger a while longer in the peaceful valley.

*Michele Hein  
Accounting Specialist  
Columbus Community Hospital*

My career in health care started early in my adult life. At the time, it didn't matter to me that the position I was taking was in health care. I needed employment and Wild Rose Community Memorial Hospital was willing to take a chance on me. I had no idea what to expect in this career and I was ready for an adventure. A short time after being "on my own" as an admissions clerk, I began to realize what it was that was so very special about health care.

Every day people used the services offered at the hospital; sometimes they were pleasant situations and sometimes it was the unthinkable. With my career, I was not the person who directly cared for the patient. I watched the very talented physicians and clinical staff bond together to provide the best possible care for each patient as we all hoped for the best possible outcome.

As time went on, I began to understand that there was an opportunity for me to have an impact just as they did. I began with the simple things, opening the door or helping a patient into a wheelchair. Walking a patient to a different department or providing young children with crayons and a color book while they wait, I wanted to try and do a little more.

Through the years my job title has changed but my philosophy about patient impact has not. I still do not have direct patient care and I may not be able to open as many doors or walk with as many patients, but I know that every day I can smile and greet everyone with a warm good morning or hello and hopefully help brighten their day as well as mine. And this is the reason I continue to choose a career in health care.

*Denise Reilley*  
*Administrative Assistant*  
*Wild Rose Community Memorial Hospital*

## Employee Pride

Hi, my name is Jaime Harris and I currently work as a receptionist at Hayward Area Memorial Hospital in Hayward, Wisconsin.

Before I began this job four years ago, I began taking CNA classes. Soon after clinical began, I realized, or should I say my stomach realized, this was not my calling. However, I still had the urge to find my place in the health care field.

I grew up with my father working in the health care field as a registered nurse. I definitely think he was what inspired me to want to work in health care.

When I initially began as a receptionist, I wasn't sure if it was going to fulfill me enough. I kept asking myself questions like, "Is this really making a difference? Should I try to ignore my stomach at the sight of blood and continue in the CNA field?" Soon after though, I began thoroughly enjoying my position, even though I wasn't in the hands-on area.

When patients come into our facility, they have to be registered first. Although this process only lasts a few minutes, it's remarkable how open they become about themselves and their families. I have held hands, given hugs and comforted family members waiting in the lobby for their loved one.

Living in a small community such as Hayward, I think it's comforting to patients and their families who have to come in frequently to see a friendly, familiar face greet them.

I now realize it doesn't matter what area you work in the health care field, whether it be a receptionist, a nurse, a housekeeper or a doctor, it just matters that you're there and wanting to help.

I am so very proud to work as a receptionist for Hayward Area Memorial Hospital.

*Jaime Harris  
Receptionist  
Hayward Area Memorial Hospital*

I am a patient advocate that works with a wide variety of patients on a daily basis. Since I began my career in health care 7 years ago I have had a few other positions, but none more fulfilling than my current position.

I help people when they are in need, whether it is financially or just that they need to voice their concerns. I am here for them. I feel like I have as well as my heart has grown; with seeing what others have to deal with each day. I have always tried to remain positive, as I know that there is always someone out there that is hurting or dealing with more than me. Each day I come to work, I know that I am going to make a difference. It may only be for one person, but knowing that I have brought a peace of mind or was just able to lend an ear or a helping hand is what matters most.

As I was building a family, my daughter came down with an illness. I had to struggle with the insurance company to cover the illness, even though it was something new. I tried to talk to people at the facility that gave the service, but it seemed like no one was there for me.

I don't want anyone who comes to talk to me to ever feel that way again. I am here to assist, this is my job and they are my boss. If I don't make them happy or at the very least assist them to the best of my ability then why am I here? I know each time someone sees me whether it is in the hospital or out in the public that I have and will continue to make a difference. They see me and smile and even know my name. That tells me that I have made a difference for them, and that is why I am very proud to serve them in the health care business.

*Jennifer Patzer  
Patient Financial Advocate  
Community Memorial Hospital, Oconto Falls*

## **Employee Pride Program Submission**

In 2006, my son was born with a devastating set of heart defects. We spent the entire 7 weeks of his life in the hospital fighting for every breath he took.

Shortly after his death, I was given the honor of attending the passing of another baby we had known. That day I realized that although I could never get back what was lost the day I held my son for the last time, I could carry his spirit on with my hard-earned knowledge and understanding. As I held this child's tiny body in my arms and looked into the eyes of his mother, I felt the deep connection we now shared. Our stories were forever altered and had taken the same fork in the road.

I left that day and knew that through this experience my son was asking me to carry forward the compassion and empathy that few people can truly have. I couldn't spare my children the pain of learning their brother had died, and I couldn't alter God's decision to take my child, or the family members of others at home. But I could take the hand of a stranger, look into their eyes and in a silent moment share their pain and give them the hope that it is possible to survive and move forward.

And so, I went into health care. I currently work in admitting and am in school for my Medical Assisting degree. Every day I bring a little bit of my son with me, a child who lived until we were strong enough to let him go and gave more than he ever took with him. A child who taught me that some people are born with special hearts, the rest of us have to work at it.

*Kathleen Evertsen  
Patient Registrar, Admitting  
Lakeview Medical Center, Rice Lake*

## **Closed Doors, Open Windows**

I didn't prepare to make health care my profession, I fell into it!

In 1991 I had no job, home, or health benefits, two children in college, a third child as a senior in high school and I was alone. I had a BS degree in Art Education and had taught art in the public schools prior to raising my three children. There were no teaching openings in my area within driving distance, and I didn't want to uproot my daughter in her senior year of high school.

"I need this job!" I said to the hospital nursing home administrator. "But Suzie," she said "you are over-qualified for the job, and will probably leave as soon as a teaching job opens up." She hired me anyway.

At the lowest point of my life I looked into the eyes of my audience at morning activities and saw the hopelessness I was feeling. At that moment I knew it was time to get to work! As I began to repair the lost self-esteem, the "I can't, "I'm too tired" or "I'm too old," my self-esteem began emerging, they taught me how to face the "empty nest" and live through two kids far away in Ohio. I taught them that pain was inevitable, but misery is always optional. So let's live! Let's play cards, throw a great party, win the match and do it all with a competitive spirit!

Now almost twenty years later I marvel at what a privilege it is to reshape lives. Some days I'm the daughter who doesn't visit often, other times I'm an artist, coach, entertainer or party hostess. And then some days I am just a good friend who is getting used to my hearing aid or trying to remember where I put my glasses.

Most days I go home deeply satisfied that I've used the best of me. There are no pills for self-esteem, or motivating residents to live the best lives possible. It is their voices which motivate me to push forward and "beat the clock" to get it all done.

I'm proud to see them blooming where they are planted and thriving—not just surviving. It is a good feeling to know that I am where God wants me to be—in the health care profession after all.

*Suzanne Dungan  
Activities Coordinator  
St. Mary's Care Center, Madison*

My name is Terri Reuter. I have been employed at Shawano Medical Center for 10 years as a cafeteria aide. I've learned that you don't need to be a nurse or doctor to make a lasting impression on people. You just need a positive attitude, patience and compassion. I try to model that every day that I work.

The cafeteria is a gathering place—for employees, patients, visitors, and a place for families to wait for a loved one who's having a procedure or test done. Making them all feel welcomed while they are here is so important to me.

One thing I'm blessed with is a wonderful memory for names. When new employees come on board, I ask their name and whenever I see them again I address them by their first name. It seems to make them feel like they're part of a family, and makes them feel more at ease. When customers or visitors come in, I offer a warm greeting and a smile. Some patients come here frequently for therapy or treatments, and we soon are also on a first name basis. Getting them to feel comfortable and focused on something else, especially if they didn't have a good day in therapy is challenging at times, but they almost always leave with a smile and say "see you next time."

I've had the opportunity to explore other positions and departments within the hospital and have taken different courses related to health care to see if there was something out there I'd like more, but have always found myself choosing to go back to the Dietary department. Helping our employees and customers is what I like best. The satisfaction I get from helping them, from going the extra mile, is what motivates me more than anything. It's been very rewarding and satisfying.

*Terri Reuter  
Cafeteria Aide  
Shawano Medical Center*

Eight years ago at the age of thirty-seven I was diagnosed with breast cancer. As you can imagine this was very difficult not only for me but my family and friends. I underwent chemotherapy, radiation treatment, a double mastectomy and a full hysterectomy. I also tested positive for the BRACA gene. It inspired me how these people going through the same things as me could have such positive attitudes considering what they were going through. I spoke with patients to help them keep up their courage. People ask me why I would want to see people dying. I say why wouldn't you want to be part of helping?

When I finished my treatments I said to myself, "Some day I want to be part of this." At that time our community didn't have a facility. I prayed that someday we would be fortunate enough to have one. Since then, our hospital and community raised enough money through donations to build my dream. Our small town is truly blessed.

One night I saw a posting for a receptionist in the Cancer Center. I was hired for this position. I am grateful to work with the wonderful staff of nurses and physicians. Each day I feel am helping, whether putting a smile on a patient's face or to encourage them in some way. I want to stay with this job for as long as possible. I take pride in my work and helping patients cope. I don't look at my job as being sad—I am glad I can spread hope. I know that when a patient passes they are at peace.

Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of Langlade Hospital and all it has to give.

*Theresa Clark  
Cancer Center Receptionist  
Langlade Hospital, Antigo*

To work in the health care field is to be able to participate in life at its fullest.

It is difficult to give description to the meaning that my work in health care has for my life. How do you truly explain the blessing it is to be a part of a person's most significant moments of their life? Whether it is the sorrowful moments in a patient's end of life, or the joyous event of a baby's birth, I, as a part of the St. Nicholas Hospital team, am allowed to be fully engaged in the process of someone's life.

I've been given the privilege to be with a dying man who had outlived his family and friends. To talk with him, laugh with him, and cry with him knowing that he would not meet the end alone. I have been renewed and reinvigorated in the participation of joyful news with family and friends over the healing of their loved one.

I get to do this as part of a health care team, a group of professional people who really care about the job they do. How incredibly rare it is that each person I work with is dedicated, compassionate, and committed to the life of the patient, their family members and friends. Each fellow employee, from maintenance to surgeon, is highly trained and skilled in their field. Together we care for the patient—and each other.

Every time I walk through the doors of this hospital I am filled with the excitement and anticipation, knowing that I will be working with people who are devoted to the mission of providing patients with the best service possible, and each other with care and respect.

Every time I walk out the doors of this hospital, I feel – life! And – love.

*Jon Paquette  
Chaplain  
St. Nicholas Hospital, Sheboygan*

We hear children say, “I want to be a doctor/nurse/therapist when I grow up.” But there are many health care professionals that support these talented, gifted people.

I am one of the lucky ‘behind the scenes’ health care professionals. After serving in the Army Reserves as a medic and psychiatric nurse, a year of law school, and about ten years of medical insurance experience, I have found the career that was always meant for me – a Contract Management Specialist.

I have daily contact with our patients, I continually work with patient financial issues, and find contractual ways for our patients to maximize their insurance benefits. This career thrills me when, after my explanation(s), a patient understands his/her insurance benefits. It excites me to resolve a contractual issue with an insurance company. It challenges me to review contracts or identify contract issues to be resolved. It inspires me to resolve unpaid or incorrect insurance payments for our patients.

This position incorporates and utilizes all of my experiences and knowledge: my legal and medical knowledge, my insurance experience, along with my delight in working with numbers. The most thrilling aspect of this position is, I can be ‘behind the scenes’ of a wonderful health care team and still make a positive impact on our patients.

For the first forty years of my life, I did not imagine such an exciting and challenging career existed. But if I would have known as a child, I would have said “I want to be a contract management specialist when I grow up.”

*Linda Sangrene  
Contract Management Specialist  
Monroe Clinic*

My name is Kelly Akkerman. I am one of the employment coordinators at Riverview Hospital Association. I have been with Riverview Hospital Association since 1995; originally as patient accounts coordinator and since 2000 as employment coordinator. In my current role I am the initial “face” of the organization. It is my passion to portray *Pride* in what I do and who I do it for.

It is with my guidance that hiring decisions are made. It’s a big job and one that could impact us for a very long time! Also part of my job is to talk to young people at school presentations on the importance of choosing a health care career and also to community members at local job fairs. It’s at these types of events I feel that I am really making a difference in encouraging people to work in health care by showcasing all of the many different positions available, as most think its just nursing or being a doctor.

Another very important part of my job is our new employee orientation program. I am the “face” of this program as well, as the human resources piece is the first portion in the morning. So I can’t have the Monday morning blues – ever! It is with *Pride* that I genuinely welcome our new hires to Riverview Hospital Association and encourage their success here.

On a more personal yet related note... my mother was diagnosed with lung cancer in September of 2006 and it was my pleasure to see the people that I encouraged the hire of, take care of my very precious mother at our UW Cancer Center Riverview. I was proud of those that cared for her and recognized the impact my hiring decisions have on our patients.

*Kelly Akkerman*  
*Employment Coordinator*  
*Riverview Hospital Association, Wisconsin Rapids*

20 years ago my Agnesian journey began... I was offered a position as a Home Health Aide for the HomeCare Program. What I really enjoyed was that HomeCare believed in continuity with the HHA and the patients, so I was able to build true relationships with my patients. I had the privilege of staying with most of my patients until the Lord came to take them home.

After 9 years as an aide I broke my foot, because I was unable to provide the care for my patients, I asked my director if I could assist with other duties. She was overjoyed because her receptionist just went out on FMLA. How in the world would I be able to provide compassionate care over the phone! The phone conversations were amazing! I remember one day staying on the phone with the family member of a hospice patient that was near death and the family member asked me to pray so I did right then and there with that family over the phone! Thank you for that opportunity!

Sometime later a position became available in human resources. I thought how in the world will I ever survive with no patient contact! What I soon found was that "my patients" were now the employees. I love my position now as an Employment Specialist, I have the opportunity to meet all the new employees and train them on our Mission and Values, Service Excellence and how important it is to provide a responsive presence to our customers. I believe in kind words, a caring heart and I strive to meet the needs of those in my care. Agnesian HealthCare gives me the opportunity to do what I enjoy most, to provide compassionate care and allows me the ability to live out my faith.

*Barb VanEgtern  
Employment Specialist  
Agnesian HealthCare, Fond du Lac*

## **WHA Employee Pride**

My name is Kris Contois and I've worked in health care for more than 24 years.

I've been working at Saint Clare's Hospital in Weston in the environmental services department as one of the first housekeepers that started before the hospital opened.

I started my career in health care in high school as part of a health occupation class that allowed me to get hands on training experience in the hospital.

Over the past 24 years, I've enjoyed working in the health care field because every day brings a new set of challenges and adventures.

One reason I enjoy doing my work is because it makes me feel good when patients and visitors compliment the work that I do.

This job is very important to me as a health care employee because it is my duty to ensure that every patient and visitor comes into a clean building. I also feel that it is important for me to everything I do like it's my own family member in the hospital.

I work on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Intensive and Progressive Care Unit and it's a very high demand floor where you're always moving. I like my work environment because I've never been a sit down type of person and enjoy always being busy.

Over the years, I have met plenty of different people and enjoy helping everyone in any way I can. I know I'm doing a good job when I have family members and patients asking me to come clean their house.

When I am outside of work, patients have come up to me in stores and recognized me, telling me I did a good job.

I hope I can continue to be part of the Ministry Health Care team for years to come.

*Kris Contois  
Environmental Services  
Saint Clare's Hospital, Weston*

I remember in junior high, having to write a humorous speech for an English class. But, I had such terrible stage fright. I just couldn't get up in front of class. So, had anyone told me back then that my dream job would end up being teaching computer classes to employees, I would have told them they were nuts!

Many people dream of the perfect job, but few achieve the happiness and fulfillment they seek. I have been one of the lucky few to find a job I absolutely love! I am an IS training specialist for the North and Central Regions of Aurora Health Care. I teach Microsoft Offices classes as well as Aurora-specific computer classes.

So, how did I come to get over my stage fright and teach classes to employees? In 2002-2003, I was a part of the graduating class of the Aurora Leadership Academy. As part of ALA's graduation requirement, I had to develop a project. My project was to develop and teach leadership skills to Aurora's leads in Manitowoc County. In teaching those classes, I found my calling and finally overcame my stage fright.

But, it wasn't until I was diagnosed with cervical cancer in 2004 that I finally was inspired to do something that would have an impact on people and give me true fulfillment in my life. I became a trainer to motivate and inspire others to better themselves.

Through my classes, employees increase their productivity and efficiency on computer applications, which helps ease their technology frustrations so they can provide good patient care and service. Happy employees make happy patients. I take great pride in knowing that I am doing a small part to help Aurora find better ways to provide health care. If my junior high English teacher could see me now!

*Jody Keil  
IS Training Specialist  
Aurora Sheboygan Memorial Medical Center*

My name is Kurt Ellis, radiology clerical lead at Luther Hospital in Eau Claire, WI. My function as a lead allows me to do just that, lead people. It's not leading people the way most would think of leading. I lead people by drawing on their ideas and helping them to perform their job better. I am better described as a facilitator. I don't have all the answers, nor am I better at anyone else's job. I strive to be an example of enthusiasm, hard-work, and determination. The great Vince Lombardi once said, "Coaches who can outline plays on a blackboard are a dime a dozen. The ones who win get inside their player and motivate." That holds true with employees also. Today's management must be good with people and relationships. We are coaches that must find ways to motivate our employees.

Working in health care has enabled me to understand my purpose in life. I am reminded daily in the form of a smile, handshake or hug from a patient. A hospital is one of the scariest places to be for most people. Some people come for routine things while others are unsure of what is to come. I attempt to take their fears, worries and doubts and alleviate them by listening and talking to them. I can't make their pain go away, but I can be there for them. Most often, all that people want is someone to take time and really listen to their concerns.

I could tell you to obtain a career in health care because of stability, or that health care careers pay well, or for the respect you receive just from saying you work in a health care field, but none of these are the real reason to get into health care. The reason to get into health care is that you truly desire, with passion and zest, to care for people. By choosing a career in health care you are choosing a life of service.

*Kurt Ellis  
Clerical Medical Imaging Lead  
Luther Hospital, Eau Claire*

## **Employee Pride - Wearing Many Hats**

“Pride is a personal commitment. It is an attitude which separates excellence from mediocrity.”

~Unknown

Health care centers staff has two focuses: those who provide direct care to patients and those who are behind the scenes like in the Business Office. The Business Office is more than clerical work; it includes the mail room position, which sees that mail is distributed correctly and in a timely manner for providers and departments.

Health care facilities have always fascinated me, as they have an atmosphere of caring for the mental (Behavioral Health department), physical (caring for their bodies) and spiritual (meditation room) health of their patients. I have always wanted to work in a hospital, even since I was a volunteer in my hometown hospital way back; but giving shots was not for me so I veered away from nursing. Here I am, years latter, doing my dream and helping people at the same time.

There are challenges, too, as the mail regulations have changed over the years. I created a binder to give a source of reference information. It includes the steps of operating the mail room, policies & procedures, general information and forms that are needed for staff to handle everything that comes into or goes out of this area in an efficient manner.

My work is important to me, and I love it. I like the behind-the-scenes work and the interaction with people that it gives me. My supervisor has given me the freedom to be creative and utilize my organizing skills so I can work toward my goal: to make the mail room as user friendly as possible.

The mail room is a busy hub in the hospital where there is an opportunity to serve people by seeing that their mail is correctly delivered in a timely manner. This is why the mail room person wears many hats. Providing an efficient mail service to providers and everyone else in our facility is one small way to make their days easier. I noticed that when I drop off and pick up the mail with a smile and say hi, this not only brightens my day but theirs as well.

In the years ahead I hope the mail room will serve the facility effectively and feel like a place with an open door to every one that enters.

*Kris Brekke  
Business Office  
Mail room/Clerical  
Red Cedar Medical Center, Menomonie*

In the final few weeks of high school the class had all decided what they were doing and where they were going to school, that is all except me. I really wanted to get into health care but knowing very little about the vastness of the field I didn't know where to begin. I asked my mom for advice. We both knew I was not good with "body fluids" so we eliminated direct patient care right away. She said – go with your strengths, you are really good on the computer maybe some thing in health information management would interest you. I looked into it and thought this is it.

I started that fall at NICC in Peosta Iowa. I flew through the first couple weeks of classes, and then reality hit. I had never encountered anything as hard as anatomy. My mom encouraged me to form a study group; you can't be the only one struggling. I got together with some of my classmates and we began working together, which helped a lot. My mom's second piece of advice was to offer to volunteer in the HIM department of Memorial Hospital of Lafayette County. With the theory hands on work could only help with my education and hopefully I could make some contacts to help with homework questions.

I was welcomed with open arms. I did a lot of filing during those few weeks and learned a wealth of information. The staff at Memorial Hospital of Lafayette County truly did treat me like family. Summer time arrived and I needed a job. Luckily enough MHLC was looking for a part-time transcriptionist to transcribe for the rehab therapists. I got the job and learned so much more!! Working in the field as I was going to school helped with my second year. I made the Deans list!! The position has expanded and now I am working full time at Memorial Hospital of Lafayette County in the HIM department. The staff has been so supportive and helpful I could not ask for a better group to work with.

*Michelle Edwards*  
*Medical Coder*  
*Memorial Hospital of Lafayette County, Darlington*

**2009 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program  
Finding Better Ways**

Aurora will always hold a special spot in my heart! For the past 5 years, I have been assisting and registering emergency patients to the ED department. I am the first face they see as they enter the hospital doors and strive to make their first impression of Aurora a pleasant situation. When emergency patients present, many are traumatized; when family presents many are uncertain of their loved ones' condition and often need compassion. I take pride to be that individual who can assist our patients and create a smooth Planetree handoff to the ED staff.

I have become professional and efficient in my duties, can prioritize my encounters to keep things flowing smoothly, and have become a good listener and communicator to many waiting families. I truly enjoy my role at Aurora and believe my smile, mannerisms, and passionate care is an asset. Over the years, I have provided care-giving services for my family members and strongly feel it was fate that brought me to Aurora.

I enjoy giving our patients good service and treat them as "I would want to be treated." By doing that, I feel I have helped make Aurora one of the best hospitals in Wisconsin by becoming extremely attentive to the human needs and concerns of our patients and their family members.

*Berdie Maigatter*

*Patient Access Representative*

Aurora Medical Center Manitowoc County, Two Rivers

## **The 2009 Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program**

When I was ten-years old I remember my stepfather was in a car accident. He was in the hospital for eight weeks with a broken leg and fractured skull. I would massage his back, leg, feet, and put coco butter on his scars. When he came home I would bring him food and his medications. I would also help him with his crutches and getting into chairs.

My decision to pursue employment in the health care field was based solely on my desire to help people. Coming from a background of retail work, I knew that my service with people could soar much deeper than retail work. Shirley Allen Thames, an employee of Aurora for 38 years, and Maxine Varnado, an Aurora employee for 17 years are two wonderful individuals I met from my church. I have witnessed the care and compassion that they share for people. I knew that I too would be a beneficial source to such an establishment. After having my baby here and seeing how "Mt. Sinai" was a great experience, the staff was friendly and very caring. I decided I wanted to be part of that in the work force.

There are many things that make Aurora Sinai a great place to work, but what makes me most proud of being an employee of Aurora Sinai is the feeling of self worth. This is best exemplified when my supervisor, Edmundo Romero tells me that I have made his day. I also feel special when administrator, George Hinton, makes a point to tell me how he appreciates my hard work.

I have worked at Sinai for 13 years with several different coworkers, all whom I am proud to say share my pride and enthusiasm. Being able to make even a small difference in the lives of those that I serve, whether it be a smile or even just a gentle gesture, makes everyday I spend as an aurora Sinai employee very special.

*Gloria Jackson  
Patient Transporter  
Aurora Sinai Medical Center, Milwaukee*

Health care is the best industry to work for because you have such an important impact on the lives of patients and their families. As a provider recruitment specialist I have no direct patient care, but knowing that I have the opportunity to help recruit world-class providers makes me believe I am making a difference.

In my position I create marketing materials for the positions that we currently have open, and what makes this job even more incredible is knowing that I am helping out all of the remarkable providers that we have practicing here. Meeting many of the providers we have throughout Ministry has inspired me to go above and beyond what is expected of me. The way that our organization values customer service aligns directly with my beliefs, and I consider myself lucky to be a part of it.

Ministry Health Care is constantly setting new goals and higher expectations to stay competitive in this market. I receive incomparable benefits being a member of an organization that is continually discovering new and better processes to make us all work more efficiently. Everybody in this organization has shown heart and determination during these difficult times, and that is what makes me want to do the best possible job.

Being a young professional during a recession, and seeing how it affects our patients, co-workers, and families has been an interesting challenge for me. This does not discourage me – it makes me want to work even harder. I believe everybody who works at Ministry Health Care feels the same way, and that is what I love about working here.

*Jared Davis  
Provider Business & Marketing Specialist  
Ministry Health Care - Saint Michael's Hospital, Stevens Point*

Give an injection-no; dress a wound-no; order a prescription-no; diagnose a disease-no! I don't do anything medical, yet I work in a health care setting and love it. I find it very rewarding to be able to help patients when they must come to the clinics; the medical setting is fascinating, and as a float scheduler the variety adds spice to my work.

Patients and their families who come to the UW Clinics need many kinds of help: some are fearful because they have undiagnosed problems; others are from small towns and are overwhelmed by driving in Madison and by the size of the hospital; still others are here for a routine follow-up and simply want to get in and out and back to work. As a front desk scheduler I have the opportunity to help these patients in person and on the phone. An extra dose of genuine caring is truly appreciated. The customer, in turn, makes me feel good about helping them.

For me, working in a medical setting is exhilarating. It is real, it is worthwhile, it is necessary, it is rewarding. Additionally, I find it exciting to observe what can be done by the medical staff.

Floating means variety and the opportunity to work with several types of personalities in multiple settings. It also makes me aware of the medical advances that are taking place in a multitude of specialty clinics.

Health care in the U.S. is in a state of flux, but regardless of the direction it takes, it is an area of expanding employment. Why not choose a career that is enjoyable, interesting, rewarding, satisfying and worthwhile, and in every case, directly helping to improve someone's life?

Loving it!

*Elinor L. C. Gbedey*  
*Scheduler Senior*  
*University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics, Madison*

As a child, I was always the first on the scene when one of my brothers skinned a knee or banged his head, placing bandages and trying to make him feel better. I reveled in the care giving afforded to me by five active brothers. I was a candy striper in high school, became a lab technician, and finally found my niche in nursing.

Each and every experience I have had from starting my first IV, being part of a code in the ER, taking care of a heart surgery patient, holding the hand of a patient dying of cancer, and helping a new life enter the world have come together to make me the person and the nurse that I am today. Each patient and every event, happy or sad, has added a piece to me, much like the scraps of fabric that are added together to form a quilt. My 35 year career in health care has pieced together a wonderful rich, warm and colorful quilt of experiences. Each unique and fulfilling patch fits perfectly against the scrap above, below, and beside it to form an intricate design of life's lessons. Dark somber colors are the heart wrenching moments that made me cry and even doubt why I was there. The bright sunny colors are the moments when there were great achievements and happy outcomes. All of these patches are held together by the small even stitches of the day to day business of being a nurse. I cannot describe what force drives me to be a nurse, I know that that is what I am and what I will always be, and the richness and depth of my quilt grows greater with each day that I am able to experience the joy of being a nurse.

*Catherine Kromrie, RN  
Service Area Coordinator  
St. Joseph's Hospital, Chippewa Falls*

## **WHA Employee Pride Essay**

I have worked at Berlin Memorial Hospital for five years in customer assistance and switchboard. I am very proud of the work that I do because helping people means a lot to me. The word "serve" best describes my work. The definition is: to render assistance; be of use; help. At the switchboard some of my responsibilities are directing phone calls and visitors, entering charges, doing reports, locking doors, making announcements and paging on-call doctors. As a mother of three teenagers, I have encouraged them to work in health care because of the wide range of diverse opportunities. No matter what area you choose to work in, if you do your job well and help people, it will be a satisfying career.

I have always been impressed by the compassion, caring and professionalism of health care workers. When my mother became ill with breast cancer, I drove her to the University of Wisconsin Hospital in Madison for chemotherapy treatments. What struck me was the concern they showed her and how they treated her with respect. Keeping her dignity was important to her right up until her death.

One of the reasons I wanted to work in health care was to provide my family with health insurance. Now the main reason is the satisfaction I get from helping people. Just a simple smile, "thank you," or "have a nice day," can make a difference in someone's day.

I know how patients feel when they are calling for an on-call doctor. I have been the scared new mother wanting to ask a doctor a question about my baby and the patient that had questions after surgery. Patients and visitors of the hospital appreciate being treated with respect, and excellent customer assistance is exceptionally important in health care.

*Connie Belter  
Telecommunications Operator  
Berlin Memorial Hospital, Berlin*

## **Employee Pride at River Falls Area Hospital**

When I first joined the staff at the River Falls Area Hospital, I was completely intimidated. I had always worked in a corporate setting, and coming into a direct patient care area literally scared me. I had no experience with patients or with policies relating to JCAHO. In those first days of learning my role as the Wellness Coordinator, assisting with enlarging the Community Benefit program, and starting fresh as an assistant in the Cardiac Rehab program, I felt like I was waging an unsuccessful war.

I started working with our Wellness Center members, fulfilling the main scope of my new job, and my task was to help each member attain a healthier lifestyle through fitness.

I was amazed at how many people, in small town like River Falls, dedicate a portion of their day to exercise, in an effort to keep heart problems at bay, lower blood pressures or to continue feeling better after a joint replacement surgery. I started feeling less daunted and more fulfilled when I started asking about people's stories. Why are you here? What can we do for you? What do you want to see?

When Wellness Center members state their fitness goals, which may include losing weight or improving muscular strength, I try to think of ways to help them make those goals a reality. But, when I see them shed 60 pounds or lower their blood pressure to stop taking medication within a matter of months, I literally feel like our team has succeeded! I would be remiss if I did not say that each member and each personal goal, even seeing the goal attempted, is a joy for me. To hear one person say, "I lost one pound," makes me feel like our valuable service is paying off and may, one day, help to eradicate disease and obesity. The members have made my job so much more complete and have offered a sense of fulfillment.

What's amazing is to be fortunate enough to work in a facility where so many employees are happy and willing to dive in and help you, in addition to working in an area where you feel you are making a difference. No man is an island, and this is certainly true in patient care where teams of people are needed to achieve goals. Whether it's explaining how something works or where a policy is housed, employees at River Falls Area Hospital show they truly care, not only with a smile, but also when they take the time to show you, to help you understand. Once I met more and more employees in a variety of areas around the Hospital, I felt less and less intimidated and more and more comfortable.

I've had a great experience learning about the goals that the employees have for themselves, as well as those the Hospital wants to achieve as well. This is also the first job I've held where I certainly have enjoyed working with my colleagues, who, daily, teach me something new. I also have a wonderful working relationship with my supervisor and those who run the day-to-day operations of the Hospital, which has made my role all the more refreshing, and have helped me grow and enlarge my role as a professional. That personal touch seen in the employees at River Falls Area Hospital makes the difference, and this quality is just one of the many reasons I am glad to be a part of the River Falls Area Hospital team.

*Shauna Knott, MS  
Wellness Coordinator  
River Falls Area Hospital*



P.O. Box 259038, Madison, WI 53725-9038  
608-274-1820 Fax: 608-274-8554  
[www.wha.org](http://www.wha.org)