KentuckyOne Nurse
Advancing Nursing Across KentuckyOne Health

Spring 2016 – National Nurses Week Edition

Inspired to Serve

We Are One.

Nursing Vision:
KentuckyOne nurses are leaders distinguished by evidence-based practice, exquisite service to others, and safe, effective care. Nationally renowned for our innovative practice environment, our nurses will achieve the highest level of outcomes by partnering with patients, their families, other care providers and our communities.
Nurse Inspiration

By Velinda Block, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, SVP, System Chief Nursing Officer

I wanted to be a nurse for as long as I can remember. As a young girl, I was drawn by the romantic version of how nurses were portrayed in books. Looking back, that initial view was naïve as I reflect on what ultimately drew me to this powerful calling.

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to shadow an amazing nurse when I was in high school. Her brilliance and deep compassion for her patients connected me completely to nursing. I knew this work was for me.

In my 33 years as a nurse, I have been blessed to have worked with many nurses who have continued to inspire me. One in particular worked in a 28-bed trauma/burn ICU in a large hospital. On this unit, the patients came from every corner of the community and all walks of life. The nurse shared with me that no matter what, she never let herself be influenced by others who might label a patient or family as “difficult.” She entered into the nurse/patient relationship with a compassionate and open mind. She always tried to put herself in the place of her patient which helped her deliver exceptional care to everyone who crossed her path.

Spending time with this nurse was a joy. I could see and feel the strong connection she made with every one of her patients. She didn’t just take care of them; she showed them that she cared. I remember her fondly and am so glad that she has been a part of my nursing life.

Nursing is a powerful calling. Many of us have been inspired to serve in a way most others can’t. We should all feel honored and blessed each time a patient looks to us for help, with trust in their eyes and hope in their heart.

Velinda J. Block, DNP, RN, NEA-BC

Proceed to Excellence!

Our summer edition will focus on process improvement efforts across KentuckyOne. If you have a story to share that demonstrates work you and your colleagues have done to improve care, reduce waste and increase efficiency email your article to KentuckyOneNurse @kentuckyonehealth.org.
Throughout my nursing career, I have always been inspired by patients and families who place their trust in me as I care for them during their cardiac events. Today my inspiration still revolves around cardiac patients, but in a much different manner. KentuckyOne’s decision to be the state’s only provider of the Dr. Dean Ornish Program for Reversing Heart Disease™ is creating that inspiration. Every day I watch patients’ whole demeanor change when they realize there is new hope for them after their cardiac events. I’ve had patients come off their cardiac medications and then stop having chest pain for the first time in years. It is an honor to have a job in which I can give patients the tools they need to change their lives for the better—and then watch them make those changes. This is all the inspiration I need to be the best RN I can be.

Anna Goodlett, BSN, RN
Healthy Lifestyle Center, Saint Joseph Hospital

As long as I can remember, I have wanted to be a nurse, possibly from kindergarten. We used to play Army in our backyard with my sister, brothers and neighbors. My sister and I were the nurses patching up the wounded.

There was a neighbor boy who had a weight problem who was always getting injured. He said peanut butter and jelly sandwiches would make him feel better. I think his mother was restricting his diet, because he was always hungry and getting wounded. We made him many sandwiches before my mother caught on.

My sister is also a nurse. Our good family friends were a big influence on our becoming nurses. The husband was an internal medicine doctor; his wife was a nurse. Once I had a wart on my hand and “Uncle Wally” took a straw out of a broomstick and rubbed it over my wart. Afterwards we buried it in his backyard. He told me it would soon be gone, and it was.

I thought this “treatment” was magical. I didn’t realize that the wart was caused by a virus, and that the broomstick straw had nothing to do with it going away. I thought Uncle Wally (some called him Uncle Wallet) and Aunt Pat, his wife (who assisted him), were amazing. Years later, practicing real medicine, he diagnosed my appendicitis and referred my parents to a surgeon to do the appendectomy.

I have had many experiences in my thirty-five-year nursing career at KentuckyOne Health. These days I get my greatest enjoyment from perianesthesia and helping to alleviate patients’ anxieties prior to surgery.

Stephanie Eitel, RN, BSN, CAPA
Medical Center Jewish East

Nursing is who I am, and it’s my passion in life. Being a nurse is more than a job, a title, or a career to me. I love nursing! I am inspired by the reality of knowing that what may seem like an insignificant encounter to us as nurses can make such a dramatic impact on patients and their families.

Day after day performing my duties as a nurse, I continually realize that nursing is the only thing I want to do. I have found my “calling” in life: to help others, to be a hand to hold, to be an advocate for their care, and to make a difference in their experience.

Nursing, for me, is a blessing. It teaches me great lessons about life, compassion, and humility. Working at KentuckyOne Health allows me to give my best for every patient every day.

Zachary Hall, RN
Saint Joseph Martin
Compassion and caring – two personal values that have driven most decisions in my life – were the catalysts for my career change. As a soon-to-be empty nester single parent, I had the impetus I needed to begin my journey toward becoming an RN.

The path of the non-traditional student was not one without hiccups; however, every time I get to improve the patient experience, the trying times pale by comparison. I am excited about caring for my patients, and I want them to feel they have my undivided attention in their care.

I would like to continue my education in order to become a family nurse practitioner. This would allow me a greater opportunity to advocate for the people in my community.

Being a nurse is more than a job. It was a lifelong dream that is now a reality. Three years ago I could not have ever imagined the joy nursing would bring into my life.

Dena McCoy, BSN, RN
Sts. Mary and Elizabeth Hospital

When I was 12 years old I lost 24 of my friends in a fiery crash. That devastating experience left me feeling helpless and triggered my deep desire to help others. I knew then that my life would become one of service, but I didn’t find myself in nursing until many years later.

Nursing encompasses a wide range of attributes. Sometimes it’s knowledge of anatomy, physiology and pharmacology. But just as often it’s the compassion needed to face another day; the steady voice rising above the turmoil of an unexpected injury or illness; the champion of a patient’s wishes; or nothing more than a hand to hold in the final moments of life.

I went to nursing school out of my desire to help others. But I BECAME a nurse when I learned what it means to BE hope, trust, compassion – and an advocate. THAT is a nurse.

Katrina M Bates, BSN, RN
University of Louisville Hospital

I always knew I wanted to become a nurse and help others – even since I was a child. I had a heart condition that required many doctor visits, and eventually I faced open heart surgery at the age of eight. Going through this experience sparked my interest in nursing.

Several years later, when my mother was in a serious car wreck and almost lost her life, my love of nursing became even stronger. However, it still wasn’t until some time later that I started my journey of becoming the nurse I always wanted to be.

Going back to school as an adult with two teenagers was difficult, but I eventually made it through. Now I am a nurse with KentuckyOne Health, and I enjoy every minute of helping others and their families during their difficult times, just like the nurses who helped my mother and me through ours. Working for KentuckyOne Health has been a great experience. It’s a great feeling going to work knowing I’m making a difference in others’ lives.

Lena Johnson, RN
Saint Joseph Mount Sterling
As the old saying goes, “If you love your job, you will never have to work a day in your life.” This sums up my 20 years as a nurse.

Originally, I wanted to be a nurse after I saw the great care my daughter received in the NICU. Even though she was on a ventilator with numerous wires connected to her, the nurses took the time to let me hold her, and they encouraged me to talk to her. They were there for both of us.

Thirteen years later I was at a low time in my life, and I realized I needed to do something for myself. I started to take the classes necessary to become an RN. It was the hardest thing I ever did, but the most rewarding.

I became a nurse at 42 and am now 62.

Cheryl Bundy, RN
Flaget Memorial Hospital

Substance abuse issues and mental health issues can touch many lives. I watched alcohol take hold of a dear friend of mine. What started out as an occasional social drink eventually took her life. My inspiration to be the best nurse I can be started with the hope that I could somehow help others in their time of need.

I feel Our Lady of Peace is an inspiration in itself, due to the leaders we have and the services we are able to provide. Jennifer, Martha and Brad have inspired me to become the best I can be. I have watched them give so much of themselves to provide the best possible care for our patients. I feel blessed to work with a team of such dedicated leaders, people who provide a place for patients to come and find the help and support they need on their journey toward finding their own “peace.”

Substance abuse and mental health issues can be a lifelong struggle for some patients. It’s a great feeling to be part of a team and have a chance to make a difference in someone’s life. When a patient looks at you and says, “Thank you for helping me, and thank you for listening to me,” it speaks to my heart. It just doesn’t get any better than that.

Debbie Deering, RN
Our Lady of Peace

Twenty four years have passed since I stood and recited the Nightingale Pledge. I wonder where the time has gone.

The first five years I was a nurse, I was focused on the medical aspect of nursing. Then life happened and my dad died, and I finally learned what type of nurse I wanted to be.

I continued to learn, and finally I was given the privilege of working in CTVU. In CTVU I am allowed to use my nursing knowledge, while focusing on the humanity of nursing. This is my passion – to ensure that every patient and family is treated with the same dignity and respect.

My coworkers are my daily inspiration. On night shift we are a close-knit family whose members depend on each other in times of professional and personal crisis. Together we provide some of the best care in this city.

Estella Robyn Burchett, RN, BSN
Saint Joseph Hospital

As the old saying goes, “If you love your job, you will never have to work a day in your life.” This sums up my 20 years as a nurse.

Cheryl Bundy, RN
Flaget Memorial Hospital
What I have found to inspire me each day, working as a nurse, is to share with my patients an artistic image to help transform their hospital room into a healing space.

Nursing is my second career. I worked for many years as an art therapist before I became a nurse. I created a Healing Heart binder with images of nature, hope and inspiration to share with my patients. Today my patients look through the binder and select an image that connects with them. It is then placed on their whiteboard.

This simple act of choosing an image creates an opportunity for my patients to share with me aspects of themselves outside of their illness. And the image on the white board is a reminder for the patient, family and me, the nurse, that we are all here to heal and be healed.

Jennifer Hartzler, BSN, RN
University of Louisville Hospital

There are so many things in life I’ve been able to experience through being a nurse. I’m not sure that any other career would give me the opportunity to see, hear and feel all that nursing has shown me. The old adage, “You learn something new every day,” could not be more appropriate. Each day brings a range of new situations that keeps us constantly learning and testing the limits of our sanity.

Nursing, for me, is rarely boring. It is incredibly unpredictable, and the curiosity about what today may bring is what keeps me coming back for more.

As nurses, we get to experience all of the patients’ and families’ emotions, from crisis to recovery. We are there to share the joys of childbirth, and we are there to console others in times of loss. It is an amazing privilege to care for people from all cultures and walks of life. Through our compassion, we make impacts on people’s lives that will last a lifetime.

Jennifer Lyttle, RN
Sts. Mary & Elizabeth Hospital

So much of what we do is who we are. I didn’t fully realize this until almost a year into my early retirement. I enjoyed my days, but at night I found myself searching On Demand and Netflix for anything medically-related. My husband laughed as I yelled at the television about how things would not really happen in an ER.

I noticed waiters’ veins as they poured water into my glass at a restaurant. I heard people cough and wondered if they were choking. I heard sirens and my heart would race.

I soon realized I needed the patients as much as they needed a nurse. I missed my colleagues, the great work, the challenges, and even the full moon in an emergency department. I had been privileged to work twenty five years as an ER nurse. It was time to come back and work some more.

Patty Herndon, RN
Jewish Hospital
I know beyond a shadow of doubt that God called me to be a nurse. I remember reading a series of fictional books about a nurse when I was eleven years old, often under a shade tree in my front yard during the summer, and thinking that I would like to be a nurse and have all the excitement that this fictional nurse had.

I experienced a major illness at twelve years of age which required a hospitalization of approximately six months, several surgeries, and many unpleasant procedures. Nursing students were affiliated with the hospital, and one was assigned to me almost every day. I remember how nice they were, how they made unpleasant activities bearable, and how they treated me with kindness, yet did their assessments/tasks in ways that did not seem so medical.

Each one always found time to play “Old Maid,” checkers, work on a puzzle, or help with a school assignment. Often, after dinner, a couple would show up in my room to watch television or read with me, and one taught me to crochet.

After I recovered and was back to normal teenage activities, I would think about those nurses and what they meant to me, and one day I realized my thinking of them was really God letting me know what my purpose was in this earthly life – I was to be a nurse. After 43 years of being a nurse, I have never doubted my calling. There are days when I am challenged and tired beyond belief, but never a day that I don’t enjoy patients and their families and take pride in providing safe, quality care.

Terri Yates, BSN, RN
Saint Joseph Hospital

Whether you call it a passion, a purpose in life, or a calling, to me nursing is much more than a job. I am not really sure if I chose nursing or nursing chose me. What I am sure of is this: I consider nursing a privilege that allows me the daily opportunity to impact, care for, and comfort someone, and to try to make a small difference in a patient’s life. There’s a saying: “Be a rainbow in someone else’s cloud.” That’s how I try to approach nursing every day.

Simply listening to the concerns of, or holding the hands of, patients who are anxious, scared or distraught can make such a difference to those individuals. The reward I receive as a smile spreads across their faces, or their tears stop flowing, is able to erase many missed bathroom breaks, skipped meals, and long hours or physical and mental exhaustion that I have been through.

My passion for nursing is inspired daily by so many of these quiet moments of connection with my patients. To me, nursing is truly an amazing gift for which I am grateful daily.

Michelle Dotson, BSN, RN
Sts. Mary & Elizabeth Hospital

Nursing wasn’t my first choice. I began as a pre-med major; then a series of events led me to nursing. My father became terminally ill with cancer when I was in college. He was a single parent of three girls, with the youngest in high school. In the course of just under four months, he lost his battle, and my sisters and I were left without a parent.

During his four-month struggle, we spent countless hours in the hospital. The doctors moved quickly from patient to patient, and while they were compassionate and cared deeply about their patients, they didn’t have a lot of time to spend with us.

The nurses on the unit, however, were not only caring, kind and compassionate, but they spent more time with each patient. They always answered our questions, spending time with my father and never once making him feel like he was a burden to them. They tried to make the best of a terrible situation, and when he had to spend his birthday in the hospital, they brought him a birthday cake and balloons to celebrate.

It was after those few months that I realized I wanted to be a nurse – someone who could not only handle the technical stuff, but who could also hold the hand of a dying patient, if needed, and comfort family members as their loved one passed. I hope in my 24 years as a nurse, somewhere along that road, that I made a difference for a patient or family like those nurses made for me.

Darcy Maupin, BSN, RN, CEN
Saint Joseph Berea
I grew up wanting to be a nurse from the first visit to Dr. Sasser’s office. My mother was having a cyst removed from her earlobe. I was in the first grade, and very curious. “Nosy,” my mother called it. I asked if I could stay in the room and watch, and he allowed it. He stood me on a stool so I could see and injected her ear to numb it. My mother asked if I was sure I wanted to stay. And I was.

I was so excited there was no way I was leaving that room. The doctor had a large frame on the wall filled with things he had removed from patients: fishing hooks, nickels, safety pins, ink pen parts, beans, and many more things. I wanted to see if what he took out of my mother’s earlobe would end up on that wall.

The doctor walked me through each step of removing the cyst. As he stitched up her ear, he explained that he would send the cyst out for testing. I was disappointed knowing that it wasn’t going to have a place on the wall.

Later the same year, he let me watch as he removed a bone fragment from her finger. That time I got to assist a little bit and heard him say the magic words: “You should be a nurse.” I knew I would be.

Time passes, and life is moving on. I am married, a full-time nurse with a very good income, and a mother. I started at Our Lady of Peace working a PRN shift, but soon found myself working over 40 hours a week and loving every minute of it.

About three years into my career, I was admitting a young man who knew me by name. He asked if I remembered him and I was sorry that I didn’t. “I don’t remember your name, but I remember those beautiful eyes,” I said. He then began to sing “Little Bunny Foo Foo” and making bunny ears with his fingers. This was the song that I sang the children at the hospital every day after lunch. As he moved his hands to the song, he began to cry. Then I cried and he hugged me. He said he had missed me. He shared some about his life— one that had been filled with abuse and sadness. He was trying to get help.

While I drove home later that night, I thought about the impact that I’d had on this man, when he was a young child in my care. As a child, he had never had an adult care for him or be nice to him. He had never had a Golden Book read to him or been taught how to lace his shoes. He never heard about those things he did well, instead just heard all that he did wrong. I quietly thanked Dr. Sasser that day for leading me to my calling.

When people ask me today why I do psychiatric nursing, I reply, “Because I am selfish.” It is truly rewarding every day to help others become self-aware and whole. I feel like I am making a difference and am honored to be helping people in need.

Vanessa Carroll, RN-BC
Our Lady of Peace