

Works of Wonder



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IOWA HEALTH SYSTEM

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Old-Fashioned Caring

Have you ever had a seemingly minor experience stick with you for years? The one I want to share with you is – in many ways – insignificant. But the reverberations may prove to be ripples on a pond, moving ever farther out, affecting people in far-flung places, long after the event itself.



Berlinda
Tyler-Jamison

It happened just after Christmas several years ago. I was working in my office, trying to finish up some hectic, year-end business, nose to the computer. In fact, I was so intent that I didn't notice someone had come in until he cleared his throat. I looked up and saw a father with his young daughter, smiling.

The little girl – she was maybe 5 or 6 years old – had something for the Foundation, he explained. She had been upset to learn that people in our own community – our neighbors! – were too poor to afford medicine for their sick children. So she had gathered every penny of her Christmas money to give to them. She put the money, ten dollars or so, in my hands, and they left.

What a powerful moment that was and continues to be for me. Indeed, as I sit here now reliving it, I think of how it illustrates the devotion and contributions of our entire Trinity family. We care for one another. And when one of us is in trouble, we try to help.

Which is why I am extraordinarily proud to be affiliated with every program funded by Trinity Health Foundation. In one way or another, they all represent old-fashioned neighborly care, whether for those who need help financially or for those who need help physically, mentally or spiritually.

In this issue, we feature a story on a quiet but powerful program that does just that. Trinity's interdenominational Parish Nurse program, funded by the Foundation since it began here in 1989, has grown into the largest organized Parish Nurse program in the country. Its purpose is to promote wellness within church congregations, while enhancing outreach ministry and strengthening awareness of the connection between faith and health.

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Trinity Parish Nurse Dorothy White, center, loves visiting her parishioners, including Ralph and Ruth Foss, above. Ralph says Dorothy helps keep them out of the nursing home, where he would "be made into an old man fast."

Stories from A Band of 49 Dedicated Nurses

Eight years ago on a hot mid-summer afternoon, a distraught woman slipped into Julie Blew's office at Trinity Lutheran Church in Moline. Julie was used to urgent questions – she's the Parish Nurse there – but this was different. The woman was near tears after a blow-up with her daughter. "I don't know what to do," Julie remembers her saying. "I know the fight was because of my drinking. I need help. I need to go into rehab."



Linda Guebert

While Parish Nurses won't face such intense cases every day, they all do their share of saving – and improving – lives regularly. Founded nationally in 1984 and at Lutheran Hospital (a predecessor of Trinity) in 1989, the program pairs the caring ministry of nurses with the physical and spiritual needs of church congregants. Ask anyone who knows: it's a perfect match.

"Parishioners see us at worship every week," Trinity Parish Nurse Manager Linda Guebert, RN, MS says. "They get to know and trust us, which allows us to help them when they need it.

How Parish Nurses Help

Stories abound. "I was chatting with an older gentleman at our flu shot clinic," Julie

offers. "Suddenly he said, I don't feel so good. I'm dizzy. I put a blood pressure cuff on him, and the reading was bad. He started slurring his speech. He was having a stroke. We got him to the hospital and they swept him right in. Early intervention saved him from permanent damage or death."

Joanne Stice, RN, who serves at South Park Presbyterian, offers another story: "An older lady had slammed her car door on her leg and had a lot of swelling," she says. "As she was driving past the church, she saw my car and decided to come in and show it to me. I sent her to the ER and she had surgery."

Mary Oelschlaeger, RN, says parishioners from Rock Island's inner city Church of Peace rely on the church for a range of services. "We run a food pantry and do outreach," Mary says. "I helped a woman get an expensive piece of equipment that she needed for complications from breast cancer. Most of my work isn't very dramatic, though. I go on a lot of home visits."

The Elderly Benefit Most

For the growing elderly population of most parishes, home visits represent a critical connection with the church they relied on throughout their lives.

"Church used to be their life," Julie says. "The older generation worshiped, raised families, had social and volunteer

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Berlinda cont'd.

It's a labor of love, really. Many parish nurses are volunteers, and most of those who are paid enjoy only nominal salaries. They do it because they - like the little girl years ago - want to help.

Our Trinity family has always stood ready to help our neighbors, by bringing the best equipment and technology to our own hometown, by funding emergency medications for those who have no money to pay, by standing with those who are suffering, as we all occasionally must. I am humbled to be a part of this family as it ripples out, yours, mine and ours, into the future.

Blessings,



Berlinda Tyler-Jamison
President, Trinity Health Foundation

Save the date!

Stylin' Against Breast Cancer

**New Jumer's Hotel and Casino,
Rock Island**

**Wine and cheese party
Wed., April 22, 2009, 6:30 p.m.**

**Luncheon and fashion show
Thurs., April 23, 2009, 11 a.m.**

Stories from A Band cont'd.

involvement within their parish. As they age and can't participate as fully, they feel a huge loss and void. Parish nurses visit with them and take the time to listen to their concerns. Thanks to this band of 49 dedicated nurses, the elderly members of our churches are receiving wonderful TLC."

Ruth and Ralph Foss of Riverside Methodist, Moline, say Amen. "I have had a number of health issues," Ralph, a WWII veteran who suffered permanent hearing loss at Iwo Jima, says. "Every time something happens to me, I call Dorothy and she comes to the doctor with me."

Dorothy White, RN, nods. She loves her job, and loves these particular parishioners. Any time she visits, they prepare jokes and brownies in advance. "Ralph has had circulation problems and a mild stroke that have created challenges to living at home," Dorothy says. "And Ruth had a seizure a while back which prevented her from driving. But they're doing wonderfully."

You Can't Put a Price Tag On It

The Fosses give Dorothy credit for their continued independence. They have given her - and the Parish Nurse program - something else, too: a sophisticated Pulse Oximeter that allows her to quickly and painlessly check the oxygen level of parishioners in their own homes - including theirs. Ralph is on oxygen and needs it.

After a wellness check during a recent visit, Dorothy, Ruth and Ralph sit down for coffee and brownies. Dorothy offers a prayer of gratitude for the opportunity to come together to share lives and, of course, Ruth's fresh-from-the-oven treats.

"This is the kind of relationship we like to have with people," Ralph says as he sips his coffee. "You can't put a price tag on it." What he means is a whole relationship, body, mind and spirit, and that's what the Parish Nurse Program is all about.

Gifts of Gratitude

For all they do for others, though, parish nurses say the real beneficiaries are themselves. The day that Julie Blew drove her parishioner to rehab is a case in point.

"Every year on the anniversary of that day, she sends me a card or flowers," Julie says. "I tell her, I didn't do anything. You did all the work! I'm grateful to have been able to help in even a minor way, though. It's very powerful to me to know that she has a wonderful relationship with her family and is living a happy, productive life. It's my gift to myself to be involved in this program."

Trinity's Parish Nurse Program was founded in the Quad-Cities in 1989 by Harriet Olson, RN, Benedictine Sister Sheila MacGrath, and others who shared the vision of making this program a part of our community. Funded by Trinity Health Foundation since the beginning, the program promotes the wellness of body, mind and spirit within church congregations.



Dorothy checks Ruth's oxygen level with a pulse oximeter donated by the Fosses to Trinity's Parish Nurse Program.

New Vice President Speaks to Retirees

Michael Patterson, recently-appointed Trinity Vice President of Hospital Operations at West Campus, spoke to attendees of the recent Trinity Retirees Luncheon. In addition to offering an update on Trinity services, he discussed recent developments in health care and nursing. He also shared information on Trinity's recent Magnet recognition status by the American Nurses Credentialing Center, a distinction bestowed upon hospitals whose people, processes and culture combine to set the highest standards for the profession of nursing. Trinity joins fewer than 5 percent of the country's hospitals with this recognition!

Those luncheon attendees who are pictured here include, from top row, left to right: Pat Rittenhouse, Nursing Executive, Carol Dwyer, Rebecca Johns and Sandra Delles; Helen Randall, Mary O'Day, Verna Bergstrom, and Deanna Krutz; Marilyn Terry, Janice Franks Morgan, Loa Teckenburg, and Mary Depover; Diane Fry, Ruby Culbertson, Joyce Allen, and Sandra Delles.



Michael Patterson

