

A Century of Creating Caregivers

OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony College of Nursing graduates its 100th class.

Five students receive their diplomas as the first graduating class of the Saint Anthony Hospital School of Nursing. The year was 1918.

This month the 2018 class - 99 students - of the now OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony College of Nursing, will receive their degrees.

Over the last 100 years the Saint Anthony College of Nursing has graduated nearly 4,000 students. College President Sandie Soldwisch, says it's a legacy that's unmatched by many colleges or universities in the country. She also says it's testament to the commitment of the Sisters and OSF HealthCare.

"Offering a nursing education program is very expensive," says Sandie Soldwisch, President of OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony College of Nursing. "And yet, they were aware of the fact that we could insure good quality nursing education right here, where we would provide care back to patients in our own region."

As a long-term educator and a former nursing student, Soldwisch has seen many changes in the profession and the training for it. She says the breadth of knowledge required to become a nurse is much more than what it was just 20 years ago, let alone 100 years back. However, she says the core values of providing care have remained the same.

"What has not changed is that personal relationship that develops between the nurse and the patients," says Soldwisch. "The relationships between the nurse and the physicians, or other health care providers, has also changed. Recognition of the nurses as one of the major leaders in the delivery of the excellence in health care has been astoundingly growing."

Along with doing its part in addressing the expanding need for nurses, OSF's commitment also provides area students a local opportunity to learn skills in a career that is stable and expanding.

"They are able to stay in nursing their entire working lifetime," says Soldwisch. "Because any opportunity that a nurse could dream of is a place a nurse could work. Whether it is in a nursing home, or a hospital, in a clinic, in a stadium - there are stadium nurses, flight nursing - with anyone from an absolute newborn or premature infant through the person's end of life. So, a nurse could become anything that she would like to do and she can change, within her field, as many times as she needs to."

Subscribing to adage there is "strength in numbers", the OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony College of Nursing last year moved to the campus of Rock Valley College (RVC). The collaboration is already proving to be a benefit to RVC students pursuing their associate degree in nursing and wanting to continue to a bachelor or master's program.

For more information, go to www.osfhealthcare.org/sacn/.