

Charlotte Brown – St. Francis Hospital - Maryville

Hello! My name is Charlotte Brown and I'm a housekeeper at St. Francis Hospital & Health Services in Maryville, Missouri. I've worked at St. Francis for almost nine years.

The tools of my trade have not changed a whole lot since the days when the Sisters did almost all the work at the hospital. I still use a mop, rags, and cleaners to do my job. But my skills are not the only thing I bring to work everyday. My heart goes into my job as well.

Because I was brought up to 'treat others as you would want to be treated', I treat our patients with respect and courtesy, and try in every way to meet the needs of each patient. I try to make patients feel comfortable and well cared for, even though I am there to clean their room.

Before I go into a room, I knock on the door. I smile and ask how they are doing. I ask if I can clean their room. Sometimes I

need to come back at a different time. I take time with them so they feel that I really do care for their needs.

I see patients feeling sick and I ask if I can get a cool washcloth to help them feel better.

By talking with them, I help patients feel more at ease with me. I've had patients ask if I'll do something for them such as watering their flowers. Of course, I'm more than willing and love to help in any way.

Part of why I do my job the way I do it is because I was a patient once myself. I know how it feels to be looking at four walls. It's usually not a very happy time. If someone shows they really care for the patient, it makes the time in the hospital a little more bearable.

I also know that what makes one patient feel good may not work for the patient in the next room.

After a while on the job, you get a feel for what the patients want and need. One patient may need rest so you hurry in and out cleaning the room as quietly as possible. The next patient

may want to talk so you take time and listen to what that person has to say, showing that you really care.

If the Sisters who first came to Maryville were to visit St. Francis today, I think they would see that the hospital is still being staffed by very caring people. They would see that patients are being shown respect and compassion, and that all of us, from the administrators to the doctors to the housekeepers, are following in their footsteps.

I want to thank you for your attention. If you ever come to Maryville and visit the hospital, I hope you'll look me up and say hello.

If there is one thing I can leave with you it is to remember – it all boils down to RESPECT – to treat each person like he or she is a member of your own family.

Thank you, again, and have a good day!

Diana Hill – SSM Health Care – St. Louis

Hello, my name is Diana Hill. I am a Financial Counselor at SSM Cardinal Glennon Children's Medical Center in St. Louis, Missouri.

While the clinical staff is tasked with ensuring the physical healing of our patients, a good deal of my time is spent helping those whom our founding sisters referred to as, "Our Dear Lord's." These are our patients and their families who have little or no means to pay for our services. I make sure these families complete the paperwork to determine their child's eligibility for state programs such as Medicaid or for financial assistance. I take great pride in helping these children get coverage for their medical expenses. I believe all children in the United States have a right to health care, yet many never receive the attention they need because their family has no means to pay and are unaware of services available to them. I am always respectful of our patients and their families no matter the financial challenges.

I would like to share a story. I met a little boy who had just been diagnosed with cancer. His family had no insurance and did not qualify for Medicaid. His mother came to my office and told me that her son would soon be discharged from the hospital and would need to begin chemotherapy. She didn't know what else to do but cry. She didn't know how she would afford it. I comforted her and told her we had one more option.

I remembered a patient who had been transferred from another facility, and I called the caseworker. I didn't hear back for two days. When she called, I explained the situation. The caseworker knew both our patient and his mother and told me what we would need to do. I gathered all the required information and immediately sent it to the caseworker. Again, I didn't hear back for two days – and by then the boy had been discharged.

But his mother called me to tell me about the progress of this happy and beautiful little boy, and the caseworker finally called to say he now had coverage – under Missouri Medicaid MC+ for kids! Not only that, his siblings were covered as well! And the coverage was retroactive to before his horrible ordeal began.

His mother came to my office, and we were both jumping up and down and crying at the same time. She kept calling me her “big Angel”; which I took with pride.

Knowing that I had pleased a family with my compassion, caring and willingness to go that extra mile put a smile on my face. I enjoy my job, and when I think about doing other things, I always think, I may not be able to provide medical care, but I try to provide the spiritual and financial care needed to the patients I am honored to work with.

Trenia Clark – SSM DePaul Health Center

My name is Trenia Clark and I work at DePaul Health Center in the Medical Records Department. I'd like to tell you three ways I contribute to our Mission.

When you work behind the scenes the way I do, it can be a challenge to stay motivated. I don't see the immediate gratification of helping others like they do in the ER or ICU. One day I was in a lunch 'n learn class and during the introductions a lady turned to me with a warm smile and thanked me. She told me how important it was to receive "old charts" in a timely manner from medical records. Those few words made me look at my job in a different light. Now I race to get STAT requests to the departments, and I work toward my passport goal of 100% accuracy so everyone looking for charts can find those charts quickly.

I work in a secure department behind a locked door on a dead-end hallway. So if I see someone without a badge, I know they probably need assistance. A cheery "hello" or "you look lost, can I help you?" gives me the perfect opportunity to put my personal goal

into action. If they are coming into medical records, I usher them into the department to the receptionist. If she is away from her desk, I assist them with their needs. If they are looking for another department, I can take them where they need to go. To help these people is extremely gratifying for me. This was a challenge in my first few months at DePaul because I didn't know my way around. So most of the time I was leading people to someone else who knew their way around the facility. This helped me get acquainted with people in other departments, especially HR, which is very close to Medical Records. I have learned from my own experience that when I am in a strange place, a friendly smile and a person who is willing to help me find my way relieves my anxiety.

The third way I help fulfill our mission has to do with roses. My hobby is growing rose bushes – 110 of them. My rose ministry started when I brought in cut roses for my supervisor. Then my co-workers said they would like some, too. So I brought a vase of roses for the reception area and the doctors' area. One of the cashiers in the cafeteria saw me walking by with my roses and requested some. Then, the other cashiers said, "How come she's

the only one who gets roses?” So I brought in small vases of roses for each cashier’s station. Then one of the ladies from another department asked me if I would please bring her a rose every now and then. From that, people started stopping me in the halls to comment about how beautiful and fragrant my roses were. They would often say how much they would like to come by house to see my rose garden, because they could only imagine how breathtaking it must be to see all those gorgeous roses. I tell them all my roses are at DePaul. But that’s OK because that is where I spend most of my waking hours. This way I am able to see the fruit of my labor and bring joy to my coworkers, as well as to people who frequent the cafeteria, the reception area, and the doctors who are in transit to and from their lounge area. Because some of these people may never get an opportunity to experience the beauty and the fragrance of so many different varieties of roses.

These are three of the ways I contribute to our mission:
“Through our exceptional health care services, we reveal the healing presence of God.”

Thank you and God bless you all.

Wendi Kohnert – St. Clare Hospital

I am Wendi Kohnert, Charge Nurse in the Med/Surg Department at St. Clare Hospital in Baraboo, Wisconsin.

Being present and in the moment. This is what I strive for when caring for our patients. I put everything aside when entering a patient's room so that I can be present with them.

When I started out as a new nurse, I was a little afraid that I would not have what it takes to meet the needs of my patients. Being present and in the moment started for me then.

One evening, early in my nursing career, I had the honor to care for a patient whom I will call Helen. Helen had been in our hospital many times. During this stay, I was her caregiver. Our hospital was very busy, and I had come in to work extra that day—which made what happened even more special.

There were so many things that needed to be done - it was hard to think straight. But I knew I needed to feed Helen her dinner. After completing a few other tasks, I grabbed Helen's tray and headed into her room. I took a deep breath and told myself "let go and just be with Helen." I sat beside her bed as we shared our routine for a fifth evening in a row. I asked her if she was comfortable—she did not respond. I asked her if she was ready to have dinner—again, no response. Helen was aphasic. She could not talk. Her son had told me she had not spoken since her stroke five years ago. Her face was expressionless. It was as if her mind was at a faraway place and all that was left with us was her body. Nonetheless, we carried on.

As I had done before, I talked to Helen about the weather, the news and what was happening in the world. I was telling her that her next bite looked to be green beans and to let me know if she liked them. That's when it happened. Helen's face was suddenly full of emotion. She

turned to me and said very clearly: “You have been so kind to me.” (PAUSE)

I was stunned. I wanted her to tell me if she was having any pain or if there was something else I could be doing for her. I hoped that she would comment on the green beans -- anything! But- just as suddenly, Helen’s face became expressionless and she did not speak again.

I started to think I had imagined the whole thing but the patient in the bed next to Helen agreed that she had spoken.

Helen passed away a few weeks later and I attended her funeral. I quietly thanked her for sharing her last words with me.

We share “the healing presence of God with our patients every day. We are there for our patients when they are most vulnerable. For me, being present and sharing each moment with my patients is how I share the “healing presence of God”. Once in awhile, God let’s us know we are fulfilling that mission. I will always remember Helen,

because she confirmed that I had found my calling. My memories of Helen remind me that “being present” is really the most important thing I can do for my patients.

Maureen Fox – SSM Hospice

Good morning. My name is Maureen Fox. I am a licensed clinical social worker and the volunteer coordinator for SSM Hospice—St. Louis.

Two years ago we launched a program called Peaceful Moments, inspired by the following quote, “You matter because you are you, and you matter until the last moment of your life. And we will do all we can, not only to help you die peacefully, but to live until you die.” Peaceful Moments provides a volunteer to be present with a patient who would otherwise be alone in the final hours of life. For our patients, that means a dignified death in an atmosphere of love. Our volunteer’s presence affirms the value of the dying person on his or her final earthly journey.

Our Peaceful Moments volunteers are compassionate, loving, generous people, yet they often say that they receive

more from the patient than they give. They feel it a privilege to be with someone during this most profound personal experience.

Each of our volunteers carries a basket containing, among other things, a Bible, a c.d. player, recordings of soft, relaxing music, a book with inspirational poems and readings, and gift certificates for food, so that the volunteer can get a bite to eat on the way home.

Through Peaceful Moments, our volunteers offer love and comfort in the same way that our founding sisters did when they came to St. Louis from Germany. The baskets used by the volunteers are reminiscent of the basket of Mother Odilia, in which she brought compassion and comfort to the sick and carried food to refresh her sisters.

This is one volunteer's account of her experience: I held the patient's hand, (and) I told him that I was going to pray. (When) I finished praying, I sat holding his hand without talking. Later he started to breathe more heavily. I said "Do

not be afraid. I'm here with you." Then (a) calm came over the room. I knew he was ready. I cried, prayed, and said "Remember me when you are in front of our God." He took another breath, this one more silent. Then he became very calm and quietly took his final breath.

The first time we offered Peaceful moments, I was there. The patient was a tiny, elderly lady curled up in her bed, seemingly unconscious, but comfortable and serene. In a chair next to her was our volunteer, reading passages from Scripture. There was the soft sound of harp music in the background. I knew then that we had accomplished our goal of providing the atmosphere of peace and loving companionship this lady so truly deserved.

Betsy Aderholdt – St. Mary’s Jeff City

My name is Betsy Aderholdt and I am the President of St. Mary’s Health Center in Jefferson City, Missouri. Of the 22 presidents St. Mary’s has had, 15 were sisters. Their stories are a reminder that I have a sacred responsibility.

I work from an office in the oldest part of the hospital, with 3-foot walls of soapstone – the original building the sisters constructed purely from optimism, perseverance and pennies they raised by begging door to door.

I hear stories from long-tenured staff about what it was like to work when the president and every department head was a sister. They speak of a time when ‘You stood a little straighter and made certain your work area was tidy when you heard the sister’s rosary beads clicking down the hall.’”

I hear stories from the community about how the sisters not only healed patients, but housed, taught and employed families, especially in difficult economic times.

One of the stories is about Dr. Harold Kanagawa, a Japanese American physician who was interred in an American concentration camp during World War II. After his release, no hospital would offer him a position . . . because of his race. . . none except St. Mary's. . . Dr. Kanagawa and his son served on our medical staff for years.

The spirit of Mother Odilia and the sisters surrounds me every day. When making difficult decisions about allocation of scarce resources, I think about how the sisters cared for the whole person and the whole community. It is far easier to use financial performance as the only yardstick for success. Instead, we struggle to balance quality and community need -- especially for the underserved -- with the need to improve financial performance.

Last year, we had to make a difficult decision about Villa Marie – our 30-year-old skilled nursing facility. It was losing over \$1M per year and needed a new physical plant. In a different tradition, the decision to close would have been swift and certain. Instead, we worked to find a different solution, one that had to do with more than simply fixing the bottom line. We found a partner to assume day-to-day management

and to build a state-of-the-art facility. As a result, the 100 or so residents, many of whom qualify for Medicaid, did not find themselves “homeless.”

I wonder about how the sisters communicated with clinicians and other hospital employees. In another life, my words would have been candid and direct. Now, while I set high expectations and provide frank feedback as the sisters did in their habits and clinking rosary beads, I use non-violent and encouraging language.

Our Jefferson City campus has a history of highs and lows. St. Mary’s has weathered nursing shortages, intense competition, DRGs, the Balanced Budget Act, and Missouri Medicaid reform.

Today the pressures can seem overwhelming, but I draw strength from the sisters who sat at the desk that I now use. They were charged with an incredible task: opening the first hospital in Jefferson City. They had to raise thousands of dollars to build and furnish a building and then find nurses and physicians to staff it. It took courage and optimism and perseverance – and I can give no less.

I am part of a long tradition of courageous, passionate, optimistic, persevering, loving servant leaders who have cared for generations of people in central Missouri. I draw on their values and examples every day. In every decision I make, in every conversation I have, I can hear the clicking of their rosary beads calling to me.

Mark Roberson – Bone & Joint

Hello. My name is Mark Roberson. I am the Food Service manager at Bone & Joint Hospital in Oklahoma City.

I went into health care to make a difference in people's lives. My first job in health care was at a large nursing home with very poor patient satisfaction. Within a year, I brought customer satisfaction scores to 100 percent. I know this was only possible because of my faith.

There is something deep inside me that's given me a desire to work with people who deserve to have the best possible care. I consider myself to be a servant through whose hands the healing presence of God is revealed.

The Catholic Sisters who founded our healing ministry were known for not only feeding the body, but also for feeding the soul. For me, working in Food Services is really an opportunity to continue that ministry -- to nourish our

patients, our guests and employees, not only with food, but also with kindness and compassion.

By smiling and talking to patients as we deliver food trays or take orders, we show our concern for them as people. We show respect by recognizing a patient's need for privacy.

In the Food Service department, it's our goal to demonstrate our excellence by continuing to maintain our 99th percentile patient satisfaction ratings for all aspects of food service -- not only the temperature and quality of the food, but also the courtesy of the person who serves the food.

I want to share a story – that happened to me. It goes back to the sisters' ability to feed more than the body – to also feed the soul.

I used my food-service experience to help feed the soul of one of our patients. She was an elderly woman, and she was unfamiliar with room service ordering, so I helped her

complete her food order. When I delivered her food, I noticed she was only able to use one arm.

I helped her open the condiments, because she could not do it on her own. It may seem like a little thing, but I felt it was in my hands to help her get started on her meal while it was at the right temperature. At that moment I realized that we all face obstacles every day, and sometimes we need a little help. Helping that patient was one way to feed her soul - and to give exceptional service.

By being part of SSM, I'm honored to share in the responsibility of carrying out the mission which states:
Through our exceptional health care services, we reveal the healing presence of God.

Thank you.

Brian Freund – SSM Rehab

My name is Brian Freund. I am the Network Director for SSM WorkHEALTH, the occupational medicine program in St. Louis.

I came to work for SSM Health Care by accident -- as a way for my wife and me to move closer to home. When I arrived for my interview at SSM Rehab, the first thing I noticed was the mission statement and the values. At that moment I knew I was supposed to be here. However, at that moment it was still about me.

During my second year at Rehab, I had the opportunity to treat a 15 year old young man in physical therapy. He had had cardiac problems from birth, and over the years had several heart surgeries. A few months before he came to us, he had a severe blood clot and nearly lost his leg below the knee. He was seeing me to regain the function of his leg.

This young man showed tremendous resolve and was recovering wonderfully. But on a visit to Cardinal Glennon, a physician discovered that he would need a heart transplant. A

week before Christmas, he received a new heart. But just 24 hours later, his body began to reject it, and the young man passed away on Christmas Eve.

On Christmas Day I received a call at home from his family to let me know this sad news. His mother told me how much of an influence I had been for this patient and his family. Right then I realized I was part of a special organization, and my reason for being here was much larger than to just fill a job.

Over the past seven years I have come to realize an extremely important fact. It is this: The work I do every day has absolutely nothing to do with me. Rather, it has everything to do with the people I serve. The people I serve include everyone I come into contact with on a daily basis. Whether it be the people who report to me, our staff, or our customers, it is my duty to make sure I serve these individuals in a manner consistent with our mission.

Certainly I want to grow my career and be successful in this organization, but my primary responsibility is to the people I serve and to contribute to the success of the organization.

As I have learned more about our heritage, I have come to realize that what I do is much larger than coming to work every day and doing my job. I am a servant leader who carries on the mission and heritage of our system. I carry on the healing that the sisters began 135 years ago. And I do it by serving. I have been given the opportunity to carry on a history of care like no other, and how I choose to serve the people I care for . . . is in my hands.

Donna Anderson, SSM St. Joseph Health Center - Wentzville

Good morning, my name is Donna Anderson, and I am a registered nurse and clinical director at St. Joseph Health Center - Wentzville.

I work with children age 7 to 17. Most of them come from poor areas in southeast Missouri. Many have either been removed from the custody of their parents, or their parents are unable to care for them anymore. They often come to us with only the clothes they are wearing.

Many of them face very severe challenges. They may be angry about being admitted – and their anger is directed at our staff. They may feel abandoned by the adults in their lives and have made up their minds not to trust anyone -- especially our staff.

We have had tragic events happen to some of our children, while others have gone on to lead positive and rewarding lives. However, we usually don't know if we've

helped them improve their quality of life. When we get a letter from a former patient telling us about their graduation from high school or that they have been reunited with their family, it makes it so much easier to go on doing what we do.

I feel I am representing our whole exceptional treatment team here and telling our story. I truly believe that the SSM Mission is projected every day on our unit and that if you visited us, you would be able to observe the SSM Values at any time.

We show COMPASSION by being non-judgmental and accepting each child for who they are. We RESPECT each child regardless of their circumstances or background. Our treatment team demonstrates EXCELLENCE by working with the children to improve the quality of their lives. And we show STEWARDSHIP by providing a safe and healthy environment.

Last is COMMUNITY. The St. Joe's Health Center community has come together to help our unit many times.

Several years ago the Foundation held a benefit that allowed us to improve our educational material. Every day, employees bring in clothes for the children who have nothing to wear. They bring birthday cakes for children who are hospitalized during their birthday with no family to bring them a cake.

During Christmas, we feel a strong sense of community. The St. Joe's Auxiliary has adopted our unit for the last 3 years, providing numerous gifts for the children. . . and one of our physicians brings in gifts, as well. Last year the Mission Awareness Team sang Christmas carols on our unit.

There is no greater joy than hearing a child say it was the best Christmas he ever had. To me, that speaks volumes about our patients — when they say a Christmas in the hospital was their best Christmas ever. . . . Through their acts of generosity, the SSM community has shown these children that they are important.

We touch the lives of our patients for only a few days or weeks, but we trust that our investment and our commitment will reap long-term benefits. At any rate, that's our hope. We are extremely proud of our opportunity to serve these children and to promote our mission and values.

Orpah Winfrey recently said that she started her school in Africa because American children had a sense of entitlement. We believe all children are entitled to the values of compassion, respect, excellence, stewardship, community. We also believe that, despite their challenges, the children we serve are worth our time, our energy and our commitment. It is our hope that – with every one of our children, in some way -- we reveal the healing presence of God.

Carmela Mulroe – St. Mary’s Care Center

My name is Carmela Mulroe. I am the Director of Activities and Volunteers at St. Mary’s Care Center in Madison, Wisconsin.

First, I’d like to share a story with you about Jimmy Durante, one of the greatest performers of the past century.

On one occasion, Mr. Durante regretfully informed a director that he would only be able to perform for 10 minutes. Grateful to have some of his time, the director agreed. On the night of the performance, Jimmy Durante stayed on stage longer than expected...15 , 20, 30 minutes passed. As he exited, the director stopped him. “I thought you only had 10 minutes? You gave us half an hour?”

To which Mr. Durante replied, “You can see for yourself if you look in the front row.” Seated there, were two veterans, each of whom had lost an arm in the war. One had lost his right arm and the other his left. Together they were able to

clap, and that is exactly what they were doing—loudly and cheerfully.

So much of the work we do at St. Mary's Care Center involves team work- much like the clapping hands. Now, I'd like to share a story about Sarah.

Sarah was leaving us. Sarah who loved chocolate, lollipops, cigarettes and good music was going home -- not to her earthly home, but her heavenly home.

God knows every hair on our heads. He knows those on Sarah's—every crisp, beautiful shiny white one on her pink scalp. He also knows one of her favorite songs. Like any good father he wants to give good gifts.

This past summer, Sarah attended a concert at the Care Center. She clapped; she tapped her feet and sang along. Best of all she smiled the bright smile she always smiled when there was good music. Her blue eyes sparkled like stardust.

She had but one request—that they play ‘Sunrise Sunset’ from Fiddler on the Roof. She asked again and again, but they kept insisting –“sorry, we don’t know that one.” Although Sarah enjoyed her time, she went back to her room a little empty.

On a day last December, as I sat by Sarah’s bedside, I knew that somehow, she should hear that song. I thought of Mary, our in-house songster. I knew Mary was in all-day orientation, but it was worth a try. I dialed her number and as the phone rang, providence took over. Mary appeared in the hall outside Sarah’s room.

Did she know the song, Sunrise Sunset? Mary hesitated. “From Fiddler on the Roof?” . . . I nodded. With the resolve that she so often exhibits, Mary knelt at Sarah’s side and lovingly sang the song that Sarah had longed to hear.

Sarah will leave many things behind in this world, but she will go home with a song in her heart and the knowledge that God loved her enough to give her a gift.

So it is...

I reveal,

You reveal,

We reveal the healing presence of God—heart to heart and hand to hand.

Chris Bullerdick – Integrated Health Technologies

Hello, I'm Chris Bullerdick, a computer programmer at Integrated Health Technologies. I help shape the future of our mission every day.

To me, one of the most remarkable characteristics about the early days of the Franciscan Sisters of Mary, was the sisters' ability to identify a need in the community.

Whether it was an epidemic--such as small pox, yellow fever, tuberculosis, influenza—or simply a lack of available care for the poor, the sisters would see a need and respond.

Their response involved every resource available to them. No matter how large the obstacle or constraint, they worked with faith to find a way to meet the community's need. They were true visionaries of healing.

As part of Project Beacon, I feel a very deep connection to that pioneering spirit. True to those first visionaries, today's staff identified a need in the community--the need to

provide every caregiver with the most complete, accurate and accessible patient information possible. I am so proud to be part of the team working to make this vision a reality.

To me, the most phenomenal part of the project is not the complex software or hardware infrastructure. To me, the biggest success story of this project is the commitment behind it.

I have been lucky enough to sit in the design meetings for the software. I wish that everyone in this room could witness these sessions. The energy and spirit of SSM truly live there.

The overarching theme is: “Do what is right for the patient.” Every person in that room is actively working toward that goal. The interactions are remarkable. It is not uncommon for a session to have discussions among unit secretaries, IT staff, physicians, dieticians, pharmacists, medical technologists, radiologists and nurses, just to name a few.

Discussions can be quite lively. People may disagree. At no time, however, does ANYONE lose sight of our mission. I have lost count of the number of times our mission statement has been quoted and used as part of the decision-making rationale.

The level of dedication and commitment is both extraordinary, and yet typical of every SSM employee. The Electronic Health Record is being created by people who truly care about their patients. It is that commitment which will insure the success of this project.

I have worked at SSM for 19 years. What I have discovered is, just as those sisters did in the early days, I have the privilege of impacting the lives of entire communities. I am shaping the future of our exceptional health care services.

It's In Our Hands – Guy Venezia, MD

I am thankful for the tremendous leadership at Kirkwood, who is fostering a change in our culture. They have encouraged and supported one of our quality initiatives to improve the St. Joseph's Obstetrical department.

Many of the ideas I will be sharing are certainly easier to state than to live them out daily. There are days I am thankful for God's grace in my shortcomings.

St. Joseph's OB STAT Response Team is a multidisciplinary group of physicians, nurses, and support staff who receive timely communication and follow a predetermined process to expedite quality care.

You can learn more about the logistics of this "first of its type" innovative team at the exhibit display. I want to focus on another important aspect of quality process development,

which emphasizes the mission of SSM – “revealing the healing presence of God.”

This visionary mission is accomplished through the OB STAT Response Team’s use of multiple interdepartmental staff. When an OB emergency is called, pastoral care is immediately notified and meets with the patient’s family. This gives the family a chance to be comforted in real time as the emergency is occurring. I have been pushing a mother to the OR in an emergency and watched a Father fall to his knees in the hallway and cry out in despair. Having Pastoral care immediately available is a small beginning!

This attention to exceptional care is what the Sisters are calling us to pay attention to; that involves relationships. Life is really about relationships and how we express our Love in those relationships. **God can accomplish** uncommon works through common deeds or a simple beginning. You may grow weary at times when you think there is no way to make a difference. Scripture explains in

Zechariah “Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin.” We all have the ability to begin a small work, that through our hands, God can transform a person, department, hospital, or organization.

Some other small beginnings I employ to inspire relationship building include; giving out candy/stickers to children when a mother arrives, giving encouragement cards to Housekeepers/Nurses, and developing Department Picture Contests. We have a dedicated Picture Contest Board, where every other month employees bring in personal pictures to represent their voice/personality. These common deeds develop into uncommon works that improve morale and relationships.

These common deeds really reveal our desire to Love. All our conversations with people really occur on two levels. One level is the surface level, such as discussing the weather or sports. But the more important conversation taking place at the same time, is the conversation we are

having on a heart level. People know if you respect or care about them, and they get that sense on the heart level conversation taking place. We need to carry on both our surface and heart level conversations in Truth and Love.

These are very humbling ideas; some of us will wonder if we have made a significant difference, **our founding Catholic Sisters don't have that problem!** They have set the standard for allowing God to do Uncommon Works through Common Deeds!

The Sisters are now asking us to be the next generation of inspired people to “Carry On” and to “reveal the healing presence of God”.

Pam Boshers – St. Mary’s Good Samaritan Inc.

My name is Pam Boshers and I am Assistant Director of Nutrition Services at St. Mary’s Good Samaritan, Inc. in Southern Illinois.

As a member of our Mission Team Spirit Committee, I feel Blessed not only by the opportunity to serve others in our organization and community, but also by the little miracles that I get to experience along the way.

I would like to share one such miracle that occurred during our Caring Tree for Children program in December of 2005. The program lets hospital employees extend their generosity at Christmas by providing presents to children whose families are experiencing financial difficulties. A Christmas Tree with paper ornaments is placed in our cafeteria. Each ornament describes a child.

While it’s mainly for hospital staff, visitors sometimes take ornaments from the tree and bring back gifts for the children.

One afternoon shortly before Christmas in 2005, I was summoned to the cafeteria by one of the kitchen employees. I was greeted by a man, woman, and two teenage children whom I had never met before. They did not appear to be employees of the hospital. Each was holding a bag filled with items. The man asked me if I was the person to give their gifts to for the needy children, and I responded, "I am".

As humans, we tend to judge others based on appearances. Based on this family's appearance, I expected them to ask for help from our program. The man explained that his family had been very much in need last Christmas and had been blessed by help from others. This year, he said, he had noticed our Christmas Tree with the little paper ornaments. He had approached the tree to read the sign and was deeply touched. He wanted to help, so he and his family had bought gifts, which they held out to me. I was speechless (a rare occurrence) and deeply touched by their generosity. They were giving from their heart!

This story touches my heart just as does the story of Mother Odilia and the other sisters who at times were not sure where their next meal would come from. Instead of refusing others in need, Mother Odilia uttered without hesitation, “Give the poor man what he asks...The Lord will provide for us”.

I feel so honored to have the opportunity to serve in a manner that reveals the healing presence of God. And as Sr. Mary Clara proclaimed with such vibrant passion, so too do I: “What a blessing it is to serve those in need!”

Elaine Kowalke – St. Clare Meadows

Hi, I am Elaine Kowalke. I have worked at St. Clare Meadows Care Center in Baraboo Wisconsin for 25 years as a registered nurse. One of my hobbies is sewing. Over the years, I noticed that some of the residents had seams that were torn. I would take the clothing home and sew the seams up. But then they would tear again.

By watching the CNAs assist the residents with dressing, it was plain to see what the problem was. Many residents have arthritic joints that are painful to move, arms or legs that don't bend enough to get the clothing on, or the resident was confined to bed. As a result, the clothes were being torn from the excessive stress when dressing. In some cases, the clothes were being put on backwards because there was no other way to get the resident dressed.

When commercial adaptive clothing became available, it was costly. Our residents on Medicaid have an allowance

of \$45 per month to cover their “other costs” which include cable TV, telephone, haircuts and sets, and clothing. When a shirt from the adaptive clothing catalog costs an average of \$20, it is unaffordable to the resident.

Another drawback to commercial clothing is that it has an institutional look. Can you imagine what it would be like to give up your favorite pair of comfortable Levi’s for a pair of gray knit slacks? Or your favorite shirt for a floral polyester top? Most of our residents prefer their own clothes.

After experimenting, I found the easiest solution was to simply split the back of the slacks and add a snap or hook as a fastener. Dresses and shirts can be partially split up the back giving the room for stiff or contracted arms.

Now residents are comfortable in their own clothing. They are able to dress without tugging on fragile arms and legs. Our staff can help, with less stress on their own backs and bodies.

The biggest advantage and time saver is in toileting for our immobile residents. Have you ever thought of all of the steps involved in going to the bathroom if you are unable to stand or walk? Immobile residents must use a mechanical lift to move from the bed or wheelchair to the toilet. Without adaptive clothing, the resident would need to be transferred to bed for the clothing to be removed, transferred to the toilet and then back to bed to be redressed. The resident would be rolled back and forth, side to side to work the clothing up from the ankles to the waist. With adaptive clothing, residents are brought upright in the mechanical lift, the snap or hook is unfastened and undergarments are removed for toilet use and then refastened when toileting is completed.

It is rewarding to know that residents have an improved sense of self-esteem and dignity with adaptive clothing.

Adaptive clothing fits smoothly without bunching up and residents can get dressed without pain or discomfort or even any injury to fragile skin.

For me there is much satisfaction in knowing that I have made life a little easier and more comfortable for our residents and staff. A warm thank you and a big hug let me know what I have done is appreciated.

Angee Brewer – St. Mary's Health Center

Hello! My name is Angee Brewer and I am a registered nurse from Saint Mary's Health Center in Saint Louis on a surgical floor.

I believe nursing is a great and rewarding profession. Although charting, passing out medications, and attending to the physical needs of patients consume the majority of a nurse's day, the other part deals with the emotional side. Whether it is a grieving family, an elderly person with no support, or a patient who has lost all sense of hope, a nurse's compassion can be the start to a great recovery.

I can think of no better way to illustrate this than to tell you this story. On an extremely busy day with call lights buzzing, doctors calling, orders piling up and patients being whisked off to surgery, I remember seeing my patient care manager looking for help with a difficult dressing change on a former patient. I was busy, but I knew I could help her. As

we arrived in the outpatient area, we were met by a visibly upset and confused woman. It took only minutes to console her, apply the dressing and explain what we were doing, but we watched her demeanor change from despair to happiness and then eagerness to move forward with her recovery.

I told the patient to notify her physician if she had any problems, and, as it turns out, she did. Two days later, I was very surprised to learn that she was one of my patients. I walked in her room to reintroduce myself, and she said she was happy to see a friendly face. It turns out that this was the only good news she would receive that day. She was in for a long recovery from a difficult diagnosis. As her days as a patient turned into weeks and weeks turned into months, I listened to her, laughed with her, attended to her needs, and did my best to make her hospital stay more pleasant. I'll confess that she became an anticipated part of my daily routine.

It was late fall, and as all of us in the medical field know, holidays in the hospital can be hard. It became clear that this patient was struggling emotionally and could use some holiday cheer. Our 2 west-team decided to make her a basket of gift certificates and day-to-day products. We all felt that she was not just a patient, but a part of our adopted family. I believe we were able to bring some joy to her during those difficult days. We made it through the holidays, and finally the day came for her to go home. I am happy to say that we still see her on 2 West not as a patient, but as a friend.

This story reminds me of why I became a nurse. It is a great feeling to know that, as a nurse, I changed someone's life for the better. I know that the sisters delivered both spiritual and physical care and were inspired every day by their patients. I am proud to be a part of the 2 west family and together we can continue the tradition of the sisters.

Joan Boomsma – St. Francis Blue Island

Good morning. I'm Joan Boomsma, Vice President of Medical Affairs at St. Francis Hospital and Health Center in Blue Island, Illinois.

For me, "it's in our hands" means keeping our patients safe. I'm a pulmonary and critical care physician. When I was in clinical practice, I would care for one patient at a time. In a very literal sense, each patient in the ICU was in my hands. It was up to me to make sure that the care I provided was as good as it could possibly be and the rest of the ICU team felt the same way. We did everything we could to make sure that our patients got the best possible care and were safe from errors and needless complications.

As Director of the Intensive Care Unit I would often get frustrated when I saw patients who ended up in the ICU because of a medical error. I felt like we'd failed those patients and wanted to figure out what to do to make sure it

never happened to another patient. That's how I got interested in hospital management – to be able to have an impact on improving the systems and processes that the care of our patients is dependent on.

In my job now, at St. Francis in Blue Island, even though I no longer provide one-on-one patient care, I feel like I can impact the care of *all* of our patients. The safety of every patient at St. Francis is, in a sense, in my hands. Of course I'm not alone. Everyone of us has a role to play in keeping our patients safe. It's in all of our hands.

Over the last few years, there have been a number of articles with titles like: “The Business Case for Quality” or “The Business Case for Patient Safety.” And yes, I believe it really does make good business sense to provide the highest quality care. The best performers provide the highest quality and the lowest costs after all. But, in the end, we don't really need a business case to strive to provide the best possible care and make sure every patient in our

hospitals is safe, do we?? I don't think the early sisters needed a business case to decide to help the victims of yellow fever and influenza. They knew it was in their hands. The safety of our patients is in our hands.

Carl Dodd – St. Mary's Hospital - Madison

My name is Carl Dodd, and I am a Patient Account Counselor at St. Mary's Hospital in Madison, Wisconsin.

When I started with St. Mary's 27 years ago, I was a bill collector. In those days, we leaned more towards collections than charity. But the program we have in place today focuses on charity. Its guidelines make it very fair, and it helps a lot more people than we were able to even 10 years ago. It's the model for our community.

As a representative of St. Mary's charity care program, I help patients and their families after they have received care from our hospital. When they are recovering, they are sometimes overwhelmed by their health care costs. This can be as traumatic as the hospital stay.

At St. Mary's, we help not only people who are uninsured and underinsured, but also patients with large deductibles and co-pays. Our program can help in several ways. Sometimes we are

able to eliminate the bill entirely. We can also offer discounts ranging from 20% to 80% of the cost of the hospital stay. Some people who may feel they would not qualify for assistance are pleased when they learn we can help them, even if it's in a small way. We also look at catastrophic medical costs that can't be paid in four years.

One particular story comes to mind. A 52 year old man who owned his own construction business died at St. Mary's Hospital. His wife not only had to deal with his death, but with the loss of his construction business – which was her livelihood, as well – along with a mortgage she could no longer afford, her husband's burial expenses, and hospital bills totaling more than \$100,000.00.

It was sad and humbling to hear this woman's story. She was distraught, confused and scared. It was one of the few times I shared tears and hugs with a person I was helping.

We were able to write off the entire hospital bill. I also contacted the other entities that had provided care for the

husband, and explained her situation. They all agreed to write off her bills. I didn't have to contact them, but I have a good relationship with them, and I felt I would relieve the woman from going through this time and time again. She already had enough to deal with without having to do that.

This is only one case of the 1456 applications we dealt with last year.

I know what it's like because I grew up in a poor family, and I saw first hand the struggles my parents went through. It was very humbling, so I can relate to the people I deal with on a first hand basis. I understand where they are coming from and what they are going through.

I look at the positives. To know that you have made someone's life a little easier makes it all worth it.

Adrienne Oden – Saint Anthony Hospital

Hello, my name is Adrienne Oden. I am from Saint Anthony Hospital in Oklahoma City. My job title is “Director of Patient Care for Perioperative Services”. It sounds very official but most people don’t really know what it means. The people I work with just think of me as the “head of surgery”. And I am the “head” of surgery. I’m also the feet of surgery. And the hands....and most importantly the heart of surgery.

What I mean is that every day, I come to Saint Anthony hospital and my head makes decisions. I think of ideas to improve patient care. I’m always thinking of some new way to either spend or save money. I think up new things for my staff to do and I also think of ways to reduce the amount of call my employees have to take. I *am* the “head” of surgery.

My feet come to work every day too. It’s my feet that run down the hall when someone says “get the crash cart.” And my feet take me, sometimes reluctantly, into the

operating room where a surgeon is speaking very loudly and saying something like “get me whoever is in charge of this place”. My feet carry me into budget meetings, verification meetings, nursing meetings, Operations meetings. Usually late but they get me there. And it’s my feet that walk out of the hospital as I leave at night with a family member who has anxiously waited for their loved one to get through surgery that day.

My hands are the hands of the surgery department too. They are there writing a report, or starting an IV or pulling supplies for a surgical case. And my hands are there to hold the hand of a frightened patient as they drift off to sleep before their procedure.

I am the head, the feet and the hands of the surgery department, but my most important job is to be the heart. Our mission statement says “Through our exceptional healthcare services we reveal the healing presence of God.” And it is because God is in my heart that my head and my

hands and feet and my back and my legs and my spleen are able to do the work they do. Every day I am thankful my job makes a difference in someone else's life. What a wonderful way to live - to be the head and feet and hands and heart of God for my patients. Thank you.

Mary Ann Collins – SSM Cardinal Glennon

Good morning. I am Mary Ann Collins, director of Mission and of the Footprints Program for SSM Cardinal Glennon Children's Medical Center.

Last summer, Cardinal Glennon had its 50th Birthday and allowed us the privilege of gathering with a number of groups to celebrate. One group in particular stood apart from all the rest. That group was our Franciscan Sisters of Mary.

The Sisters were invited to join us for a special Mass in their honor to be followed by lunch in our beautiful atrium. About 40 women were able to be with us, some of whom had graced the halls and the heart of Glennon as staff members and others who were part of our heart and spirit through the prayers they offer for our Ministry, our children, their families and our staff.

Some of my colleagues and I had prepared a musical blessing for the Sisters, and as I walked to the microphone to introduce that blessing, I was touched to my very core. As I looked

at these women, I saw countless years of service, commitment, dedication, compassion and caring...countless years of a deep desire to bring God's healing presence to all of us! I saw simplicity and joy in the life they have given to their ministries. And in that moment, I experienced a new realization of what I have known and try to share in my orientation of new staff, and that is, that if our Mission is to continue, if we are to deliver care the way the Sisters do, I need to make a conscious choice each and every day to share my heart and soul as I deliver care, because it is in that heart and soul that others will experience the compassion of God.

This is the gift that characterized the Sisters. They didn't come with armloads of degrees and technology...they came with a deep passion to bring God's healing to the people they served. I realized anew that I need to be "present" as they were -- in every encounter I have during the course of my day, when I am listening, when I ask what I can do for someone -- be they patient, family member or co-worker -- because it is in that presence that others will experience our Values.

The Sisters often had only their presence to offer. I am certain that as our original five women went through the streets knocking on doors, they didn't know who was behind the door, but greeted all as though they were the most important person. And of course, they were able to share whatever material things they had gathered in their baskets, but most of all, they gave their precious gift of self.

And so, again I became aware as I looked at the women before me , that the true gift of healing in our workplaces is *my* willingness to share not just my skill or expertise in a particular area, but my person; to give of myself as they did. *I* need to care enough to make a difference to every person I meet. *I* need to recognize that every person is a reflection of the Face of God! In turn, if I am to deliver exceptional care, I must honor and respect the God I see before me, in that moment. And if I don't, nothing else much matters because I will not have been respectful enough, I will not have been compassionate enough, and I will not have cared enough to share the healing presence of God that is within me.

Wayne Laramie – SSM St. Joseph Hospital West

Good morning. I am Wayne Laramie and I am clinical director of the Emergency Department at SSM St. Joseph Hospital West.

Mother Odilia and our original sisters took care of the sick in poor conditions and with few resources. They believed that if they trusted in God, took care of the poor, then all would be well. Their hard work took its toll on their emotional and spiritual well-being, but they relied upon Prayers, Inspiration from the Holy Spirit, Encouragement from each other, and Strong Leadership to stay focused on their Mission.

We must do the same in our times. The daily stress and frustrations can become overwhelming, and it is easy to lose track of why we ever wanted to work in health care. When the emotional and spiritual rewards seem few and far between, people “burn-out” and decide to leave health care.

It is our role as leaders to provide the support employees need to not only stay in health care, but to thrive – so that they, in turn, can be exceptional for our patients.

We must pray with employees at every opportunity -- before meetings, on special occasions, and with grieving families. We must see the good in all employees and let them know they are making a difference. We must remove all frustrations so they can do their best. We must be fair and supportive to all and show no favoritism. We must be willing to make difficult decisions even if it means losing someone from the team. We must be willing to admit when we are wrong and ask for forgiveness.

Most people in health care were called to service and truly want to make a difference in the lives of others. Interacting with people energizes them and keeps their passion alive, so they come back shift after shift, day after day, year after year.

Many of us were exceptional providers of nursing care for many years before we were given roles in management. It took me a few years to figure out what part I played in our Mission in my new role, but it has never been more clear than today.

We are the vehicle God is using to assemble and maintain a team of committed health care workers who are passionate about easing the pain and suffering of all who come through our doors.

We are responsible for providing the resources our staff needs so the patient experience is exceptional. We are Nurse, Coach, Teacher, Counselor, Cheerleader, Advisor, and Listener for our staff. We hand write Thank You and Mission Exceptional Cards to say how proud we are of the work our staff does. We are not above begging as Mother Odellia did, but usually it is for FTEs and Capital. We come in willingly when our staff needs support. We encourage employees to seek higher education and then accommodate

their school schedules. We treat employees as we would want to be treated.

In Summary....We are servants. We serve the people who serve our patients. We must create a little bit of heaven on earth for our patients -- through the hands of our staff!

The emotional and spiritual life of health care workers is at risk if we lose our focus of caring, compassion, and making a difference. We will accomplish great things as long as we remember our role:

As Exceptional Health Care Servants, We Reveal the Healing Presence of God.