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For Immediate Release

June 26, 2019

Health Science Program Marks 20 years



Amanda Sonnenberg RN always knew she wanted a career in healthcare. To prepare, Sonnenberg (nee Voigt) transferred from Delhi District High School to Simcoe Composite School to take advantage of the Health Science Program: a collaborative education program with Norfolk General Hospital. That was 19 years ago.

“They (DDHS) weren’t able to provide all the programs I would need, so I switched to Simcoe and enrolled in the Health Science Course to try and see what I wanted to do

in healthcare. Just taking that course reiterated that it was nursing.” said Sonnenberg Registered Nurse and newly appointed Director of Obstetrical, Medical, Surgical and Rehabilitation at NGH.

“Many grade twelve students are unsure about their post-secondary path. This unique program helps those interested in learning about health care career options discover whether they are suited to pursue a health care career” notes Brian Snow SCS Head of Science who has been with the program from the beginning. The curriculum for the semester involves several required case studies; from Long Term Care to Mental Health, Emergency Room to Rehabilitation; the students are exposed to the reality of care at NGH. Sonnenberg, the former student is now the teacher. She led the medical case study about Congestive Heart Failure and Atrial fibrillation and was involved last year in the Labour & Delivery case study.

The 2019 semester wrapped up with a Yearend Roundtable on June 11. Each student took the opportunity to share their experience; why they took the course, what they learned, their favourite case, and plans for next year. Erika Leatherland has always loved healthcare and medicine, but never had a lot of experience in it. “I learned that I really do love this and I do belong in this field” she explained, “My favourite experience was that I got to go in the OR twice because I did it as my shadowing opportunity.” Next year Leatherland will attend the University of Windsor for her Bachelor of Science in Nursing with the goal of becoming a Nurse Practitioner. Many others expressed a keen interest in mental health and elder care.



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Looking back to 2010, of the 139 students involved with this program, many have gone on into nursing followed by biomedical science, a couple of paramedics, Nutrition, Criminal Justice, a Phys Ed teacher, one in Funeral Services, and still more in related health disciplines while a small number have chosen non-health related careers. The program has had a reciprocal effect for NGH. “In the last 10 years, well over a dozen of these students have returned as employees once they have completed their post-secondary education” remarked Carolynn Beam NGH Education Coordinator.

In his closing remarks Snow concluded “This program has been a success for 20 years thanks to the dedicated professionals at NGH. The doctors, nurses, staff and directors have been very open to giving their time to these kids making the case studies engaging and really challenge the students to be their best.”



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