



ALUMNI NEWSLETTER • NOVEMBER • 2024

THE PULSE OF GREENLEAF

As our newsletter is relaunched after a seven-year hiatus, the alumni database is also being updated. To receive the latest news on events and updates from Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing, please provide your information by scanning the QR code.



FROM THE COLLEGE PRESIDENT

Dr. Charlene Aaron's letter to Alumni reminisces on homecoming celebrations and welcomes new staff in new positions. She also addresses new program development.

LETTER ON PAGE 2



LATEST FROM THE DEANS

Recently returned from the Dominican Republic, the academic Deans are eager to share their latest news. From the BSN through DNP, our programs have been very active!

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AROUND THE CAMPUS

Find out about new programs that will be starting in the near future along with a report from the Student Senate. A Fellowship was awarded to faculty. Check out photos from alumni, students, faculty and staff!

MORE ON PAGE 6





Sofia Hoeft, Nancy Bailey, Charlene Aaron, and Carlene Murali at the Alumni Homecoming Brunch.

FROM THE

COLLEGE PRESIDENT

HELLO SFMC SCHOOL & COLLEGE OF NURSING ALUMNI!

We really enjoyed the excellent fall weather so much for events like our Homecoming which was very well attended. Thank you all for your participation in the basket raffles. Donations to the scholarships for our students are very much appreciated. Big Thanks.

I am so excited to announce Carlene Murali as our Alumni Coordinator. Her event planning skills are top notch and her collaboration with the OSF Foundation is going to be a very productive partnership for the College of Nursing. Carlene is currently working with our foundation staff to update the alumni list, emails, and addresses in an electronic format to ensure accurate communication with alumni to keep all of you informed about college activities and celebrations.

I know those that attended Homecoming met our new College Counselor, Sofia Hoeft. She has jumped right in to support students, providing one on one visits, study skill habits and re-

sources to lead to academic success. Sofia is a welcome addition to the College of Nursing, and she is appreciated by all the mission partners.

We are still enjoying the increased enrollment and anticipating the beginning of the LPN - BSN program in the fall. Our administration, student services, and admissions teams have been collaborating closely with leaders at Monmouth College in preparation of the additional site for the SFMC College of Nursing BSN Program.

I am very grateful for the support shown to the College of Nursing and wish you all a very Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas.

Peace,
Charlene S. Aaron



Charlene Aaron
PhD, RN

TWO NEW FACES AND ONE NEW ROLE

KIMBERLY HAMPE, BSN, RN

Kimberly Hampe is a graduate advisor at the College, where she supports graduate students. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Nursing in 2021 and is currently pursuing a Master of Education, expected to graduate in 2026. Kimberly also holds an Associate's Degree in Registered Nursing and a Licensed Practical Nurse certificate from Illinois Central College.



With a strong background in clinical practice, Kimberly has been an OSF Mission Partner since 2018, serving as the Orthopedic Lead RN

for Total Joint Replacement until 2024. In her new role as Graduate Advisor, Kimberly is focused on guiding students through their academic journey, offering personalized support and resources to help them succeed.

A Central Illinois native, Kimberly is a married mother of one son and two fur babies. She is passionate about making a positive impact on her students' nursing careers and supporting them from entry to graduation.

SOFIA HOEFT, MS, LPC, NCC

I am a Licensed Professional Counselor and happy to be working with the student population at the CON. I have experience working in community mental health and in college counseling centers. I recently moved back here and call Peoria home. I am so glad that I can bring my counseling services and knowledge back to my community. I work with students to create a collaborative plan to approach their academic and



personal stressors. For both of these, I offer supplemental resources as we work towards solutions. This approach often includes incorporating other staff and resources such as the on campus food pantry which I manage. I also utilize other mental health resources in the community. I set up a plan for students to meet with me regularly as we navigate external obstacles and process internal mental health struggles.

I offer a safe and nonjudgemental space on campus for students to process life events, challenges, school stressors, and all that they are handling and navigating in the nursing field. My hope is that with my holistic approach to counseling, students will be able to develop a greater sense of confidence, understanding of self, an awareness of support resources, and an effective and complete tool kit full of coping skills as they continue this career path and into the next stages of their lives.

CARLENE MURALI, AAS

I have served as a College Support Representative at the College of Nursing since 2011 where I coordinated graduation, the graduate recognition dinner, alumni events, and the scholarship reception. I am grateful for my new position as Alumni Coordinator where I will continue to be involved with the planning of events both old and new. I welcome any ideas that you may have for new events.



I live in Peoria and married to a graduate of our BSN program. Our oldest daughter is a medical doctor in Wisconsin. Our son is a premed student at Bradley University and is studying biomedical science. Our youngest daughter is a psychology major at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

THE BSN PROGRAM...

has had an exciting year! We launched our first cohort in the Accelerated BSN (ABSN) program last fall, which allows students with a baccalaureate degree in another field to complete their nursing education in just 12 months. Our first cohort completed the program in October and is awaiting NCLEX eligibil-

ity, while Cohort 2 started in October. We're also launching the LPN to BSN program in Fall 2025, allowing LPNs to earn additional credits for work experience through a Transitions course. Interest in this program has been high. Stay tuned for more details.



Suzanne Brown
RN, DNP, PhD

Enrollment in our traditional BSN program continues to grow, and the RN-BSN program is expanding rapidly, especially among OSF RNs earning their BSN at SFMCCON. In partnership with Monmouth College, we are planning a 3+1 program that will allow students to complete a bachelor's degree in Biology, Health Science and Human Movement, or Biopsychology in three years, followed by enrollment in the ABSN program. This collaboration will help serve the western Illinois region, with students beginning the program at Monmouth in the Fall of 2025 and entering the ABSN program in Fall of 2028.

Finally, we are proud to report that our 2023 NCLEX pass rate is 94%! We look forward to sharing the 2024 NCLEX pass rate in April 2025.

Wishing everyone a wonderful Thanksgiving!



FROM THE DEANS

THE GRADUATE PROGRAM...

had an exceptional year, with enrollment hitting an all-time high of 300 students. The program consists of eighty-seven DNP students, one hundred ninety-eight MSN students, and fifteen postgraduate certificate students. Enrollment continues to increase in all programs. Our students are participating in outstanding Doctor of Nursing Practice projects that will benefit our OSF Health System and our community. We continue to have an extremely high pass rate for our nurse practitioner program tracks.



Carole Eatock
DNP, APRN, FNP-C

The DNP program was compressed so students could complete their degree in less time. This was made possible by offering additional courses over the summer and increasing the eight-week classes offered throughout the year. The students are progressing well through the compressed curriculum and will graduate in May 2025. This program change was implemented based on our student's feedback on our program. Our dedicated faculty play a crucial role in fostering encouragement and support for our students.



ALUMNI UPDATE

GREETINGS ALUMNI,

It is so good to be once again connected through our newsletter! Hopefully you received the one sent this past Spring. If you know someone who is not receiving this newsletter, please have them contact the college with updated information. Even if your information has not changed in many years, it could have been unintentionally deleted from our system. We all know how technology can work!



Mary Donnelly '79
Alumni Association
President

Our Homecoming Brunch celebration on October 5th was a joyous event. We had one alumnus who came from California to celebrate her 60th reunion! Our silent basket auction provided amazing donations and early holiday shopping for everyone. We had over 70 items! All funds received in the auction go to student scholarships.

I am happy to report that Carlene Murali has accepted the position as Alumni Coordinator. Carlene has assisted with several efforts in the past and knows us well. She has great ideas for helping our association grow into the future! Carlene will be the person to contact with questions and can provide assistance getting in touch with classmates. You can reach out to her and begin

planning a reunion with your classmates at our next Homecoming Brunch on October 4, 2025.

We have changed our meetings to earlier in the day as this seemed to better meet the needs of those who were consistently attending. If there is interest, we can move our meetings back to early evening. Perhaps we can even consider a 50/50 split. Let us hear from you as to when would be the best time for you to attend. We continue to meet at a restaurant and combine our meetings with good food and socialization.

As we move into 2025 and our 120th year, we hope to see more of you at our meetings and events. Please let us know if there is something you would like to see in this newsletter or an idea for an event. We are stronger when we work together. Our alumni association is a great way to carry on the college's tradition of excellence.

The holidays will have begun when you receive this newsletter. During this time of remembering the importance of family, friends and the many experiences that have shaped our lives, our newsletter can hopefully be a reminder of the memories shared during our years at the School and College of Nursing. Let us give thanks and remember how people and events shaped us for a lifetime of friendship, caring and service to others. May you be blessed this season and in the coming year with all that is good.

A TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE IN NURSING EDUCATION SINCE 1905

CAMPUS NEWS

NEW PROGRAMS

In addition to the College of Nursing's accelerated BSN program, approval for several new initiatives is in process, including an LPN-BSN pathway, a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) program, and a 3+1 dual-degree pathway in partnership with Monmouth College. These programs are designed to offer flexible and advanced educational opportunities for those interested in advancing their nursing careers. You are encouraged to stay informed as additional details about these programs become available. If you know of anyone interested in pursuing a nursing education and would like more information, please contact Austin Blair at austin.w.blair@osfhealthcare.org.

GET CONNECTED!

As our newsletter is relaunched after a seven-year hiatus, the alumni database is also being updated. To receive the latest news on events and updates from Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing, please provide your current email, address, and phone number.



There have been many requests for a “Keep In Touch” section in the newsletter, and rebuilding our alumni database is essential to making this happen.

If you know of any fellow alumni who haven't received the newsletter, please encourage them to send their updated contact information to carlene.j.murali@osfhealthcare.org.

Thank you for helping us stay connected!



FELLOWSHIP AWARDED

Nancy Bailey, DNP-L, RN, a valued faculty member of the Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing, was awarded the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) 2024 Nurse Educator Fellowship in March. This prestigious fellowship recognizes 80 nurse educators across Illinois, awarding each recipient a \$10,000 grant to support their professional growth and retention in the academic field.

The IBHE Nurse Educator Fellowship is designed to support the retention of qualified nursing faculty by supplementing their salaries. The funds can be used for a variety of professional development activities, including conference attendance, continued education, professional dues, and other related initiatives. Eligible participants must be from Illinois institutions with nursing programs accredited by either the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) or the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), and approved by the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation.

Dr. Bailey intends to use the award to further her professional development and collaboration in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion, nursing leadership, teaching expertise, and ethics. We are incredibly proud of her achievements and the contributions she continues to make to the nursing field.

Please share information with the association of any fellow alumnus or alumna who deserves recognition for their accomplishments. Consider nominating outstanding individuals who are making a difference in the nursing profession. For future "Proud of Our Own" nominations, kindly reach out to Carlene J. Murali at carlene.j.murali@osfhealthcare.org.

We look forward to celebrating the remarkable achievements of our alumni!

CAMPUS NEWS CONTINUED...

STUDENT SENATE

The Student Senate has been working this year to continue on promoting student involvement. It has become our mission to get the commuter and dorm students involved as much as possible. This not only helps students get involved with each other but also with events at the college. We have seen an increase in student involvement when it comes to attending meetings and bringing student-based issues forward. During the fall semester, we hosted a fall festival for the students and staff. This event allowed students to trick or treat offices at the College, participate in a costume contest, and eat delicious treats!

The Student Senate hosted a Thanksgiving dinner. In addition to food being served to students, a raffle was also held to raise money for Holiday Helping Hands. Student Senate gives students ample opportunities to continue serving the mission through volunteering. Students have had the opportunity to do Coats for Kids and collect coats from around the hospital for those who need them. Our upcoming events include the senior send-off where we celebrate the graduating seniors! With the semester coming to an end soon we can not wait for what's to come in the spring!



Zowie Freese

Student Senate President

JOIN THE ASSOCIATION!

Our Annual membership (Sept-July) is \$10 and our Lifetime membership is \$250. Please make checks payable to the SFMCCON Alumni Association. You can send via mail to Paulette Archer, Alumni Treasurer, 1217 W Oakglen Dr. Peoria, Illinois 61614. If you have any questions, email her at archoop@aol.com. Please include your name, maiden name (if applicable), class/graduation year, address, city, state, zip, phone, and email. If your contact information changes, please let Paulette know as well.

The SFMCCON Alumni Association is a 501c charitable organization. Scholarships are awarded to graduate and undergraduate students each year. Consider contributing by sending a check out to "SFMCCON Alumni Association" and mailing it to Paulette Archer, at the address above. If you have any questions regarding this fund, please reach out. A receipt will be sent to you for tax purposes.

ALUMNI GEAR

If you are interested in purchasing a pewter pendant, ornament, or window decal, please contact Paulette Archer, Treasurer, at archoop@aol.com.



Additionally, Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing will be hosting "pop-up" online stores offering Alumni gear as well as traditional College of Nursing merchandise. These shops will be accessible through social media channels.

For inquiries, please contact Austin W. Blair at austin.w.blair@osfhealthcare.org.

FOLLOW US:



ALUMNI HOMECOMING BRUNCH

CLASS OF 1957



**Peg Thomas,
Mildred Biederbeck,
Carlene Hebel**

CLASS OF 1962



Mary Jo Gebhardt

CLASS OF 1963



**Julie Stickelmaier Kirchgessner,
Janet Whittington,
Mary Ann Schelkopf Smith**

CLASS OF 1964



**Pat Falcon Geltmaker,
Ellen Fidler Hallack,
Cary Johnson Vincent,
Eileen Briggs Schaefer,
Karen Eagleston Youngren**

CLASS OF 1965



**Pat Onyun Henkins,
Mary Gilles German,
Kathy Johnson Rosenbohm,
Mary Mundy Phelps,
Marry Ann Jennings Vieweg,
Janet Shipley**

CLASS OF 1966



**Pat Falcon Geltmaker,
Carol Phillips Doyle**

CLASS OF 1968



Diane Wheelwright

CLASS OF 1969



**Sharie Hahn Metcalf,
Peg Fuller,
JoAnn Covash,
Carole Frasco Gilfillan**

CLASS OF 2017



Nancy Bailey

SCHOLARSHIP RECEPTION



WHITE COAT CEREMONY



ALL HALLOWS' EVE





SAINT FRANCIS
MEDICAL CENTER
COLLEGE OF NURSING

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