



# NOTES FROM GREENLEAF



## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Hello, Saint Francis Medical Center School and College of Nursing Alumni! I'm Dr. Charlene Aaron and I joined OSF last July as President of Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing. I served as Chancellor of St. John's College of Nursing in Springfield for seven years before coming to OSF. I have been a nurse, nurse leader, and nursing faculty for many years. My favorite population to care for is older adults, and my research interest is caregivers of persons with dementia. My career in nursing began in high school as a CNA as I was in the vocational program. I always knew I wanted to be a nurse. Through hard work and a supportive family, I persevered and advanced my education to attain a BSN from Illinois Wesleyan University, an MSN from Illinois State University, and a Doctorate in nursing in aging from the University of Iowa.

### Building Trust

The faculty and staff have had much to deal with over the last two years with transitioning leadership. Trust must be earned, so we conducted a large in-person retreat in the fall and a mini virtual retreat in the spring. The feedback has been positive regarding the retreats, and I continue to hear positive messages during the 1-1 rounding meetings with faculty and staff.

### Enrollment

We have a strong admissions team and they have made such a difference in increasing the number of students in the undergraduate and graduate programs. This fall we will have over 600 students across both programs. Through Austin Blair's leadership and marketing skills, there is more awareness of Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing in the community and beyond, and on social media.

### My Vision

The teaching/learning environments in Greenleaf and White School, including the dormitories, need updating. These spaces need to be attractive, conducive to learning, and allow our college of nursing the ability to compete for students with other colleges of nursing in our area.



MAY 24, 2024

ISSUE 1

I want to continue to assist with increasing enrollment by partnering with local high schools, Peoria Promise, and District 150 to develop a pipeline to Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing. Growing our own talent is important for professional development, and to meet the needs of the nursing workforce. The College is seeking approval to offer an LPN-BSN program in spring 2025. OSF employs nearly 200 licensed practical nurses (LPN) and it will be a great opportunity for them to enhance their education through our LPN-BSN program.

I am looking forward to the Alumni social on May 24, 2024. I hope to see many of you there.

I will share all about the great things happening at the college like our 94% pass rate and how we have invested in our Academic Support Center. I envision having more recent Alumni participating in college activities such as mentoring for current students. Mentoring is a way of giving back to the college, by ensuring student success.

I am enjoying living in Peoria, and I am learning more about the community daily. I have three sisters who live here, and I enjoy attending St. Jude's Catholic Church. Please consider coming to the Alumni mixer in May, as I would very much like to get to know our Saint Francis Medical Center School/College Alumni members.

Peace,

Charlene S. Aaron PhD, RN  
President  
OSF Colleges of Nursing



# New Faces; New Roles



## **DR. RYAN MULLEN, ASST. PROFESSOR**

Dr. Ryan Mullen is teaching healthcare ethics at SFMCCON alongside Theresa Miller. He currently teaches ethics for SACON in Rockford and is an adjunct ethics professor for UIC's College of Medicine. His academic background includes work with philosophy and ethics. Dr. Mullen completed his M.A. in Philosophy at Franciscan University and his Doctorate in Catholic Bioethics at Loyola University of Chicago. Dr. Mullen previously worked within clinical ethics and behavioral health operations prior to joining the OSF Colleges of Nursing.



## **CHRISTINE KARPOWITZ, MSN NEA-BC**

I started my nursing career at OSF Saint Francis Medical Center in 1986. I served as a bedside nurse on a Cardiac Step-Down unit for 24 years.

I then moved to HR. There, I coordinated the Nurse Residency Program for a few years before moving over and serving as a Professional Recruiter who hired all nurses and PCTs for OSF SFMC.

After 6 years, I returned to SFMC as Manager of Patient Experience. We did a bit of restructuring and refocusing on how to be proactive, intentional, and present in the hospital to our patients, families, and each other. We prioritized connecting Mission Partners' actions to outcomes and impact.

In 2020, I joined the Mission Services team. I started as Mission Service Mission Program Coordinator at OSF SFMC and currently serve as the Mission Officer at Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing.



## **DONNA NEFF, B.S.**

I have over twenty years of experience in higher education. At my alma mater, Eureka College, I spent ten years as a Financial Aid Counselor where I helped students, and their parents navigate the often-confusing aspects of paying for private college. When my mother was diagnosed with dementia, I made a lateral move into Admissions where I was responsible for the communication flow to prospective students. This position allowed more flexibility and work-life balance which was essential in caring for my mother. From there my role migrated into the Admissions Office Coordinator, where I was responsible for the application flow and communicating incoming students' data to the rest of the college community. After my mother's passing, I was ready for a new challenge. I wanted to stay in the higher education environment so my transition to the College of Nursing was a perfect opportunity. I enjoy seeing students achieve their educational goals while overcoming the obstacles that life throws at them. Here at the College of Nursing, I try to remember with every interaction with students that one day they might be caring for someone I love and treat them how I would want to be treated.

# College Updates

## NEW PROGRAMS

The College of Nursing has successfully started the Accelerated BSN program that enrolled two new students this past fall 2023. We are anticipating six more students this fall 2024.

In addition to the College of Nursing's accelerated BSN, we are also seeking approval for our LPN-BSN pathway, a Certified RN Anesthetist, and a 3+1 pathway with Monmouth College for a dual degree. Be sure to keep looking for more information about these programs. If you know anyone who is interested in pursuing their nursing education, please contact Austin W. Blair, at [austin.w.blair@osfhealthcare.org](mailto:austin.w.blair@osfhealthcare.org).

## PROUD OF OUR OWN

Professor Theresa Hoadley, PhD, RN, College of Nursing, along with five additional authors and a large number of article reviewers participated in an international study of the effects of simulation fidelity on healthcare providers and team training. The comprehensive, systematic review assessed the use of high- and low-fidelity simulators when healthcare providers used the technologies to teach team training. The study began January 1, 2021 to January 24, 2023. The review followed PRISM standards (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis) to determine the effectiveness of simulation training.

Nancy Bailey, DNP-L, RN, a faculty member at Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing, was awarded the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) 2024 Nurse Educator Fellowship award in March. The Fellowship awarded \$10,000 to 80 nurse educators throughout the state of Illinois. "The purpose of the Fellowship Program is to ensure the retention of well-qualified nursing faculty at institutions of higher learning by supplementing faculty salaries. Funds may be used for professional development, conference expenses, continued education, professional dues, and other related activities. Participation in this program is open to Illinois institutions of higher learning with a nursing program approved by the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation and accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) or the Association Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN)." (IBHE, 2024). The funds will be used for professional collaboration and development in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion, teaching expertise, nursing leadership, and ethics.

If you have future "Proud of our own" nominations please send them to [austin.w.blair@osfhealthcare.org](mailto:austin.w.blair@osfhealthcare.org)

## LETTER FROM STUDENT SENATE PRESIDENT

This year, Student Senate's mission has been promoting student involvement. Since the pandemic, fewer students have participated in school events, which has led to a decrease in students attending clubs. During the fall semester, one of our big events was hosting a Halloween party for the staff and students. This was a fun event for those who participated because we trick-or-treated among professors' offices, held a costume contest, and ate caramel apples! Throughout the semester, Senate was an active participant in helping decorate the skywalk windows. We set out markers and encouraged students to draw smiley faces and to write what they were thankful for as a way to help brighten up the college. Other activities included a finals breakfast and the fall senior sendoff. First semester, we planned the college Thanksgiving dinner and raised \$400 for Holiday Helping Hands through our raffle baskets. During the spring semester, we promoted student involvement by hosting a welcome lunch and breakfast for the new senators. For Valentine's Day, we decided to celebrate our staff by making and passing out nursing-themed valentines to all professors at the college. We also hosted an Easter egg hunt that included a raffle for different prizes. Lastly, we held our Student Senate executive board election and spring senior sendoff. We are looking forward to introducing our new board members and continuing the tradition of celebrating our graduating seniors!

- Nora Hodges, Student Senate President



# Alumni Association

## LETTER FROM THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

Greetings Alumni,

It's so exciting to have the ability to send out a newsletter finally! Due to many factors, including Covid, we have been unable to send one for quite some time. Kudos to the team that has worked to make this happen. We now plan to publish twice per year so we can once again look forward to updates and connections.

**Important note:** Please note the section in this newsletter requesting updated contact information. We are missing several alumni from our database and are diligently working to update it. You can help us! If you are in touch with other alumni, please reach out and ask if they have received this newsletter. If not, have them send us their updated information so they can receive our communications. Thank you!!

The Alumni officers have been able to continue with some of our activities. We continue to hold 5 meetings per year. (see future meeting dates in this newsletter). All alumni are welcome! If you can't attend and have an idea for an activity or event, please reach out and share it with us.

For the last two years, we have held a Homecoming Brunch and Basket Auction. While well attended, we realize that difficulties with our database may have prevented awareness of this event. Our 2024 Homecoming will be on October 5 from 11-2. Please save the date and spread the word. If you would like to have assistance with contacting individuals from your class for a reunion, send an e-mail and we will assist.

Our current Alumni Association officers are:

Mary Donnelly (1979) -president

Kathy Rosenbohm (1965)-vice president/secretary

Paulette Archer (1970 )-treasurer.

Our current Alumni e-mail is: [sfconalumni@yahoo.com](mailto:sfconalumni@yahoo.com)

One thing Covid seems to have emphasized is our need for connection. As this newsletter will show, CON is moving forward in many ways and continues our excellent tradition of education. With the resurgence of this newsletter, we will be better able to keep in touch and hopefully see more of each other at various events.

Blessings to all as we walk into these beautiful Spring Summer months!

Mary Donnelly, Class of '79



## HOMECOMING 2024 NEEDS

Baskets for raffle:

- Cash
- Gift Cards
- Volunteers

If you have any questions, please reach out to our current alumni email [sfconalumni@yahoo.com](mailto:sfconalumni@yahoo.com)

# Ways to Get Involved

## KEEP IN TOUCH/DATABASE

Since we have not run a newsletter in almost seven years it is time for us to start collecting information. If you can provide us with an updated email, address, and phone number we will begin getting more information about Alumni events and what is happening at Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing. We would love to be able to share more with you as this will allow us to more easily share information.

By popular demand, we have been asked about the "Keep In Touch" section of the newsletter and this will be critical to have more updates from alumni. We must first do our work to rebuild this alumni database.

If you know of a fellow alumni who did not get the newsletter be sure to let them know we need their updated information from above. You can email [carlene.j.murali@osfhealthcare.org](mailto:carlene.j.murali@osfhealthcare.org) to get your information updated in our database!

## ALUMNI GEAR



If you are interested in ordering a pewter pendant (first picture), pewter ornament (second picture), or a window decal (third picture), please get in touch with Paulette Archer, Treasurer, [archoop@aol.com](mailto:archoop@aol.com).

Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing will begin running "pop-up" shops where you can order Alumni gear through an online shop. These emails will come from the College of Nursing and will be sent to those who have updated email addresses in our system. These shops will not only have Alumni gear, but also our traditional College of Nursing Logo! We will also post these on our social media moving forward! If you have questions, please reach out to [austin.w.blair@osfhealthcare.org](mailto:austin.w.blair@osfhealthcare.org)

## JOIN ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

We would love to see you join the Alumni Association! Our Annual membership (Sept-July) is \$10 per year and our Lifetime membership is \$250. Please make checks payable to the SFMCCON Alumni Association. You can submit this via mail with an application to Paulette Archer, Treasurer. If you have any questions please email, ([archoop@aol.com](mailto:archoop@aol.com)), 1217 W Oakglen Dr. Peoria, Illinois 61614. We need you to 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. We would love to have you contribute by making a check out to "SFMCCON Alumni Association" and mailing it to Paulette Archer, Treasurer at the above address. If you have any questions regarding this fund, please reach out. A receipt will be sent to you for tax purposes.

## FOLLOW US

One of the best ways to continue learning information is to follow our social media platforms. We currently are on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. The College of Nursing can be found when searching for SFMCCON or searching with the full Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing name.

We always appreciate when alumni or current students tag us on social media! We would love to see your post about Saint Francis so please tag us by simply putting the [@SFMCCON](https://www.instagram.com/SFMCCON) in your post.

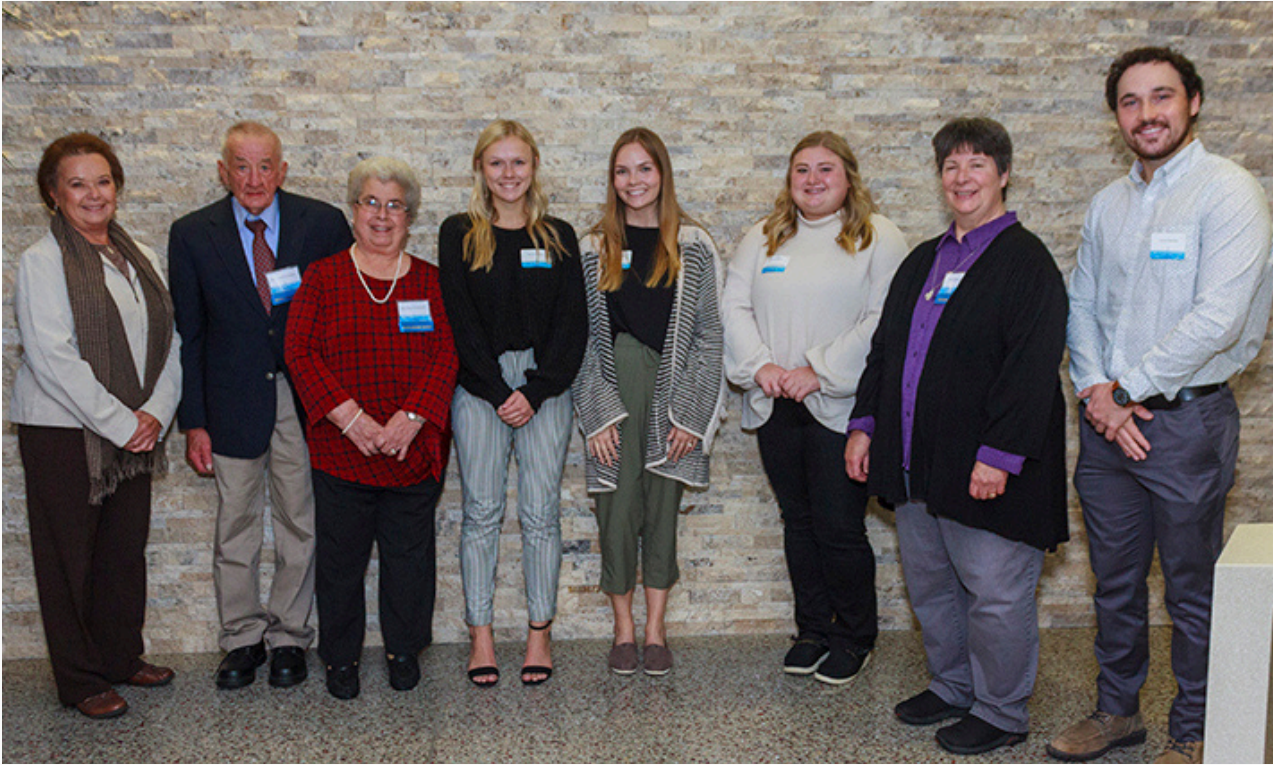
Our new marketing campaign is also using social media to recruit the next generation of nurses! If you know someone who would be a great fit for Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing, please have them contact us via one of our platforms, and a recruiter will get in touch with them about the application process.

The College of Nursing is always looking to get more information and content out to its followers. If you have something you think would be worth posting, please send it to [austin.w.blair@osfhealthcare.org](mailto:austin.w.blair@osfhealthcare.org) and it will be reviewed to be posted.

# College of Nursing



# Alumni Scholarship Recipients





# Homecoming 23-24



# Thanksgiving Dinner



# Tres Rojas Winery



# Tres Rojas Winery

