

March 5, 2007

Reaching a milestone

GERTI teaches 1,000th long-term care employee, continues to build relationships

By: Heather Swan, Editor

Although the Geriatric Education Resource and Training Institute (GERTI) has only been training long-term care employees for a little over three years, it recently reached an important milestone in its 1,000th "student."

GERTI has been educating long-term care employees since 2003 - the same year the Johnson County Nursing Center came out from under the governance of the county. The Johnson County Nursing Center and GERTI, which is housed there, are both branches of Friends of Johnson County Nursing Center Inc., a nonprofit corporation.

"It (reaching the 1,000th student mark) is a real achievement because every year we continue to build and add more locations, increasing the number of students in each class and the number of classes," said Chris Osborn, RN, MBA, director of education at GERTI.

GERTI offers the 40-hour Advanced Education for Long-Term Care course, which covers topics such as regulations, the survey process, dementia, depression in the elderly, pain management, proper nutrition, meaningful activities, improving quality of life, and personal development for employees. All long-term care employees no matter what department they work in go through the course together.

Osborn, who has worked at GERTI for a little more than a year and has served in his current position since July, often hears the same comments: "Why have I never been given this information before? Now I have the information to do the job."

Osborn said that when he passes out the federal regulations manual during the course, only about 10 percent of the students have ever seen it before.

Oftentimes, he said, long-term care employees receive education on the regulations only after the survey, and when they receive deficiencies, they get trained in those specific areas.

"You're setting yourself up for failure from the very start," said Osborn, who worked at a nursing home for 5 1/2 years as a charge nurse, quality assurance nurse, assistant director of nursing and director of nursing.

He said that when his sister went to work for a telecommunications company, she received eight weeks of training to do customer service calls.

In long-term care, which is one of the most highly regulated industries, it is not uncommon for employees to receive only three to five days of training.

GERTI's mission is to provide all long-term care employees and nurses, CNAs, medical assistants, and those who work in dietary, maintenance, laundry and housekeeping - with the education they need to do their jobs well and to treat the elderly with the dignity they deserve.

"Students feel appreciated by their employer that they are given this opportunity," Osborn said.

Last year, GERTI offered 18 classes at its facility in Olathe and in other locations. Twenty-two classes are scheduled so far this year, he said.

“Marketing and relationship building are very important to getting this out there,” Osborn said. “We are building relationships with colleges and community colleges and technical colleges.”

Some examples include:

- * Instructors have been trained at Wichita Area Technical College to teach the Advanced Education for Long-Term Care course, and the college plans to offer the course four times this year.
- * The course has been approved for college credit at Baker University for students in three majors: bachelor of arts in communications; bachelor of business administration; and bachelor of science in management.
- * Johnson County Community College plans to offer the course as a certificate program.

For more information about GERTI and the Advanced Education for Long-Term Care course, call Chris Osborn at (913) 477-8252.



Ed Graunke/KCNN - Chris Osborn, RN, MBA, has been Director of Education at the Geriatric Education Resource and Training Institute (GERTI) since July. GERTI offers the 40-hour Advanced Education for Long-Term Care course at its home inside the Johnson County Nursing Center in Olathe and in other locations.

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Ann Skilton, RN, and ICU manager at Shawnee Mission Medical Center, was chosen by Critical Care Nursing for its spring 2007 issue.

A journey into the world of 1

Ann Skilton's work as guest editor will be seen in the spring issue of Critical Care Nursing Quarterly

By Lisa Waterman Gray
Contributing Writer

The professional publication Critical Care Nursing Quarterly recently chose Ann Skilton, RN, and ICU manager at Shawnee Mission Medical Center, to serve as a guest editor for its spring 2007 issue. The peer-reviewed, topical journal for critical care health professionals focuses on continuing education and improved clinical practices topics.

The issue Skilton worked on is scheduled to come out in late March. She oversaw the creation of six out of 10 articles.

As a guest editor, Skilton helped to recruit nurses, physicians and other health care professionals from Kansas City and across the nation to write articles for the journal. She guided contributors to “The Emergent Cardiac Patient: A Holistic Approach,” through the writing process, with both research and non-research articles, in addition to editing submitted articles for

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