

'A rewarding career'

MCC Nursing Instructor Nicole Kalinowski brings 20 years of experience to the classroom

By Shanika P. Carter

"I want to foster an environment where the students trust me to guide them in their knowledge and skill development in becoming successful maternity and pediatric nurses," shared Nicole Kalinowski, RN who joined Montcalm Community College in August as a full-time Nursing and Allied Health instructor.

With 14 years of RN experience, Kalinowski holds the knowledge and hands-on expertise to successfully guide students in the field of nursing. She knows firsthand the challenges of being a nursing student in a rigorous program, stating that it took discipline, determination and dedication to make it through.

A graduate of Rockford Public Schools, Kalinowski earned her Associate of Science degree from Grand Rapids Community College, and both her Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Nursing degrees from Grand Valley State University (GVSU). Finally, she earned her Master of Science in Nursing from Michigan State University with an advanced practice degree as a Clinical Nurse Specialist with an education emphasis.

Fortunate that she chose this path of nursing, Kalinowski has been able to work in various roles in the field, including serving as a bedside RN for adults and pediatrics, working in emergency medicine, and working as a nursing supervisor, an advanced practice RN and clinical nurse specialist, and now a nursing instructor.

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Besides teaching at MCC, Kalinowski has taught at Grand Rapids Community College, leading nursing students in clinicals. She knew, even growing up, that she always wanted to be a teacher, but instruction has also had its challenges.

"As an instructor, you put a lot of pressure on yourself to make sure your students are going to be successful and safe nurses," Kalinowski said. "You want your students to learn and do well, but you can only bring them so far, and then the rest is up to them."

An active mother residing in Cedar Springs, Kalinowski has worked for Corewell Health (formerly Spectrum Health) for more than 20 years, having served in leadership and currently serving as a clinical nurse specialist in a pediatric emergency department. As a college student, Kalinowski had the realization that the best nurses were the ones who were the best teachers for their patients.

Even with the challenges that come with working in various roles in the field of health care and nursing, Kalinowski said it has all been worth it because nursing is a rewarding career.

"You are always learning, you are challenged daily, and you literally make a significant impact on the lives of the patients you care for and the community you serve. You'll never feel a greater sense of appreciation than you do as a nurse." ■