

Volunteer Services

March 2020

Enhancing Patient Experience through Volunteer Gifts of Time and Talent

St. Luke's Volunteers: Where Are They Now?

From Lab Runner Volunteer to RN Trauma Coordinator, meet Brandy Hennessy.

Education and Career Path

I attended in high school at Dike-New Hartford High School in Dike, IA where I graduated in 2003. In 2004, I moved to Cedar Rapids and in 2009 began taking classes at Kirkwood Community College to earn a degree in Nursing. While taking a sociology course, one of the requirements was volunteering for 56+ hours at a location of my choice and I chose St. Luke's Hospital. Growing up, I was very close to my uncle who was treated here at St. Luke's Hospital and while visiting him I was very impressed with the staff and volunteers and how they cared for him so I knew that St. Luke's would be part of my journey.

Impact of Volunteering at St. Luke's

I began volunteering here as a way to network and get to know as many people as I could in the hospital knowing that one day I wanted to have a career here. I volunteered as a lab runner so I was exposed to several units of the hospital but really began making connections in the lab. In December 2011, I accepted a position as a phlebotomist in the laboratory which gave me further exposure to various units. It was during my time with the lab that I found a passion for emergency care. I frequently worked in the Emergency Room alongside many talented techs, nurses, physician's assistants, nurse practitioners, and doctors. It wasn't long before the ED had a pull on me mentally. I applied for a patient care technician position and in late 2012 began working in the Emergency Department. During this time, I was also taking core classes towards my nursing degree and the experience I was gaining in the ED was crucial to my education as everything I saw at work, I

St. Luke's Volunteer Services
 October 2010 – December 2011
 Lab Runner
 96.50 hours



was able to go home and study for class. In 2015 I graduated from Kirkwood Community College with my Associates Degree of Nursing and accepted a position on 4C orthopedics. Yes, my passion for emergency medicine was still there but I wanted to experience more than emergency nursing. I knew that key skills could only be learned on an inpatient unit and I thoroughly enjoyed my time on the



2019 State Trauma Conference

orthopedics floor. In January 2017 I accepted a staff nurse position in the Emergency Department fulfilling my dreams of working at St. Luke's Hospital in the Emergency Department! For two years I did bedside nursing and focused on my bigger dream of working for LifeGuard Air Ambulance but, as often happens in life, dreams changed. The position for Trauma Nurse Coordinator opened so I applied and in June of 2019 I started a new career path as the Trauma Coordinator for St. Luke's Hospital. During my time at the bedside in the ED, I built a passion for trauma and disaster management and planning and the trauma coordinator position was the push I needed out of my comfort zone to find something that I truly love.

Looking back, I know that my time as a volunteer was pivotal in me achieving my dreams. Had I not volunteered here; I may never have gotten a job in the lab. I took volunteering as seriously as I took a paying job because I knew that professionalism, rapport, and attitude were key components that are looked at by employers and all that work really paid off.

Advice to Current UnityPoint St. Luke's Volunteers

Volunteering is an amazing experience, but you can only get out of it what you put into it. Find the volunteer opportunity that you enjoy and take it seriously. I never would have thought that volunteering would get me to a position that I can see myself retiring from, but it has! It gives you so much more than a cushion on your resume or checking a box for a requirement for class; it gives you life-lessons and tools that you can build on for years to come.

Do you know someone who would be a great volunteer?

They can fill out a volunteer application at <https://www.unitypoint.org/cedarrapids/volunteers.aspx>.

Who knows what impact they could make in the future of healthcare!

#volunteersmatter