

THE Importance of Caring

FEBRUARY 2021

my journey into nursing



Ginger Westfall, BSN, RN
 CARDIOPULMONARY REHAB NURSE

Sometimes mother knows best.

When Ginger Westfall, BSN, RN, was growing up, she didn't know what she wanted to do for a career. Then her mother pointed her in the right direction.

"I really liked science and my mother said I had a caring personality, so she suggested I try nursing because there was a huge need for nurses," Westfall said. **"I got a job as a CNA (certified nursing assistant) and it just worked out."**

Westfall worked as a CNA throughout her high school and college years in North Dakota. After graduating, she knew she was going to move to Nebraska with her husband, so she waited to take her boards until she moved here.

In college, Westfall had been interested in becoming a nurse midwife because she loved obstetrics. That didn't work out though, because at the time, there weren't many jobs available in that field. So instead, Westfall's first job as a registered nurse (RN) was in acute care at Columbus Community Hospital.

Westfall was hired by CCH in October 1997 and over the years, she has also worked in intensive care and served as a charge nurse. She moved into her current position as a nurse in the cardiopulmonary rehabilitation department about six years ago.

"That's the thing with nursing, there are so many different avenues you can take. It's so flexible with what you can do. There are just so many different jobs," she said. **"Your ideas change and so does what you like, so that's what's great about nursing, if you get bored in one area, you can always move to another and try something new."**

In her current role as a cardiopulmonary rehabilitation nurse, Westfall starts her work days at around 6:30 a.m. and ends them around 5:15 p.m.

As a team with the rest of the cardiopulmonary rehabilitation staff, Westfall works with patients who are have heart or pulmonary issues. For example, these are patients who are recovering from heart attacks or heart surgeries and people who have pulmonary issues like emphysema or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

The cardiopulmonary rehabilitation team offers rehabilitation programs that include exercise, education, counseling and support tailored to patients' abilities, needs and limitations. The department's staff also helps patients with stress and nuclear stress testing.

"I love my job because it's a specialty where I get to have the satisfaction of watching patients improve and become stronger and happier, all while they reduce their risk factors for chronic illness," Westfall said. **"It's a happy place to work."**

For more information on Westfall or the cardiopulmonary rehabilitation programs available at CCH, visit www.columbushosp.org.