

THE Importance of Caring

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my journey into nursing



Jill Janssen, ADN, RN
 HEALTHY FAMILIES PROGRAM MANAGER

For Jill Janssen, RN, it all started when she was 17 years old. That's when Janssen's younger sister was born three months premature, weighing only 1 lb. 11 oz.

"It made a huge impact on me, watching those nurses working on those tiny babies, all while tending to the emotional needs of the families," Janssen said. **"I watched that for three months until we were able to take my sister home, and I knew from then on I wanted to be like those nurses."**

And now she is.

As a nurse and the program manager for the Healthy Families Program, Janssen helps area children get their best start at life – just like those nurses did for her sister all those years ago.

Healthy Families is a home visitation program through Columbus Community Hospital (CCH) that works with young, at-risk families in Platte, Colfax, Boone and Nance counties. It helps young families who need support and education, and teaches parents about the importance of the first four years of a child's life.

It offers home visits to mothers, starting in the second trimester and those services continue until the children are three years old. The program is offered to the community at no charge to the families.

As program manager, Janssen is involved with the families right from the start. She takes referrals and goes out to homes to do what's called a parent survey. That's where she gathers information to see if a family qualifies for the program. From

there, Janssen admits the families who qualify for services into the program.

"Our amazing home visitor, Karla Rosendahl, takes over after I have the family admitted and works with them for the next three years on positive parent child interaction, goal setting, safety and many social issues," Janssen said.

As a team, the Healthy Families staff discusses the families in their program and makes referrals as needed – whether it's for drug and alcohol counseling, help with the electric bill, quality day care or immunizations.

Janssen also works closely with other CCH departments and area agencies that focus on early childhood development to connect families to needed services.

Families in the program are taught a specific curriculum that focuses on their child's development. Janssen works closely with Rosendahl on this curriculum, as well as its related home visitation trainings and supervised visits.

Janssen has been with the Healthy Families Program for 14 years, since it started out in the Home Health department. Before joining the program, Janssen had worked at CCH since 2000, also working in its Acute Care and Emergency departments.

But it was Janssen's experience working with children with chronic illnesses in a home care setting that led to her job with the Healthy Families Program.

"Since I had some pediatric home care background, I was asked if I would be

interested in helping out part time with this new prenatal to age four home visitation program," Janssen said. **"I thought it sounded really interesting and like something I would really like, so I said sure and haven't looked back since."**

Janssen enjoys working at CCH, in part, because it offers programs like Healthy Families.

"I think it's amazing that CCH offers outreach programs like Healthy Families to improve the health of our community," she said. **"There is a lot that goes on outside the walls of the hospital. CCH is truly out in the community getting involved."**

Janssen also enjoys working at CCH because of her supportive supervisors and coworkers.

"CCH is a wonderful place to work," she said. **"My director, Theresa Hilton, is a supportive, caring leader who gave me the confidence that I could do the management piece. I have also made lifelong friends and have had the privilege to work with some of the best nurses out there."**

Janssen encourages other young people who are interested in health care, like she was, to utilize the job shadow program at CCH.

"Get in there and see if it excites you," she said. **"If you are interested in health care and you have a desire to help others, there are so many possibilities."**

To learn more about Janssen, or the services offered at Columbus Community Hospital, visit www.columbushosp.org.