

THE Importance of Caring

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my journey into nursing



Andrea Birkel, CNA

ACUTE CARE UNIT

Andrea Birkel was inspired to go into nursing by an experience she had as a patient at Columbus Community Hospital.

When Birkel was having her first child, a son, she had Kasey Konwinski as her nurse. This would prove to be a life-changing encounter for Birkel.

“She was so pleasant and just a beautiful, kind soul, and after I met her, I knew nursing of some sort was my calling,” she said.

Birkel went on to become a certified nursing assistant (CNA). She started working at Columbus Community Hospital on May 27, 2015 – her birthday. Birkel worked in the swing bed/skilled nursing unit for two years and has been working in the acute and intensive care units for the last three years.

As a CNA, Birkel helps patients with their needs during her shifts which usually begin at 6 a.m. and end around 6:15 p.m. She gives patients showers, makes sure patient meals are ordered, makes patients’ beds, helps patients with their therapy along with their therapists, assists nurses with any nursing care that needs to be done, helps feed patients, and more.

Another big part of Birkel’s job is simply being there for patients and their families – providing support or comfort.

“We try to sit down with each patient when we can and just visit with them,” she said.

Birkel loves that her job allows her to interact with people in this way.

“I love people and helping people, especially older people,” she said. **“They remind me of my grandparents, who are no longer with me, but seeing some of them, it feels like I still have them here close to me.”**

Birkel also appreciates the fact that her job allows her to care for people in ways that may seem simple, but actually make a big difference.

“Just to know, that by sitting and talking with them, giving them a shower that they may not be able to do at home, making sure they get a warm meal, or just giving them a warm blanket, it warms my heart, knowing I made a difference to them,” she said. **“Even if it’s just for that short, little while.”**

Birkel is thankful that she ended up working in health care and she is grateful to

work at CCH, which she said has been very supportive.

“They make sure all of our training is taken care of and they are very flexible when it comes to school and work,” she said.

Birkel said CCH also encourages its staff members to further their educations – something Birkel is doing herself. She is currently finishing up her last year of nursing school to become a registered nurse and would like to become an intensive care or obstetrics registered nurse one day. She has also considered becoming a midwife.

No matter which career path Birkel chooses, one thing is for sure – her future will always be in health care.

“Health care is a special field,” she said. **“It is not for everyone, but to be able to be part of something where you can help others daily is a satisfying feeling. It’s a blessed field to be part of. Not only do you make a difference in the lives you touch, but you get to make a difference within yourself.”**

For more information on Birkel or nursing opportunities at CCH, visit www.columbushosp.org.