

THE Importance of Caring

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my journey into health care



Stacie Johnson, MPT

PHYSICAL THERAPIST

Stacie Johnson, MPT, a physical therapist with Columbus Community Hospital's Rehabilitative Services, doesn't just like her job – she loves it.

“I love my job. I love CCH,” she said. **“I love helping a patient get better and stronger.”**

Johnson has been a physical therapist for more than 25 years. She's spent the last six years working as a physical therapist for acute care at CCH.

In this position, she provides a wide range of physical therapy services for patients in the hospital. She works with patients in the intensive care and swing bed units, as well as patients in the emergency department and same day surgery. Johnson also provides therapy through CCH's Surge Center for people who are undergoing joint replacement surgeries.

She evaluates the patients and provides therapeutic exercises, gait training, transfer training, balance training and any other physical therapy support they may need. She also develops a plan of care for the patients and works closely with her physical therapy assistant, Jose Velasco, to provide physical therapy and rehab to the patient so they can be discharged from the hospital at their optimal level. Johnson also recently started providing home health physical therapy.

The variety of her work keeps Johnson

moving as she travels to different areas of the hospital to provide therapy.

“The hospital staff usually see me running from place to place,” she said. **“Each day I may go from same day surgery to a Surge group orthopedic class to acute care and ICU patient rooms and swing bed rooms. It is very busy, but I love that fast pace.”**

Johnson also loves interacting with a variety of patients and educating them on how they can exercise and help themselves after their hospital stays. She also appreciates the fact that her work allows her to get to know patients on a personal level.

“I love listening to their life stories, the ups and downs. Sometimes that is my favorite part of my job - developing a friendship with the patient,” she said.

Growing up, Johnson had watched her mother develop this same sort of relationships with her patients. Johnson's mother was a nurse at Schuyler Hospital for 40 years and she would frequently talk to her daughter about her work on the extended care unit and the joy she got caring for her patients.

This experience was one of the things that inspired Johnson to go into health care. The other was Johnson's own experience as a physical therapy patient. When Johnson was in high school, she got an

injury that required knee surgery and physical therapy for rehabilitation. Talking with her own physical therapist is what initially interested Johnson in physical therapy and then she job-shadowed other physical therapists to make sure it was a good fit for her.

It was.

“I love patient interaction and helping people and I felt physical therapy would get me everything I wanted,” she said.

Inspired by her own experience in physical therapy, Johnson went on to receive her master of physical therapy degree from the University of Nebraska Medical Center in 1993. She then spent her career providing home health, inpatient, outpatient and pediatric physical therapy in hospitals, a school system and in skilled nursing homes.

Though she has always enjoyed working in physical therapy, Johnson particularly enjoys working at CCH.

“CCH is such an awesome place to work. I wish I had worked here all 25 years of my career,” she said. **“CCH and all the staff provide a very positive environment. Just in the six years I have been here, I feel I have made connections and friends with staff in every department.”**

For more information on Johnson, CCH's Rehabilitative Services or why CCH is a great place to work, visit www.columbushosp.org.