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MCC instructor shares 60 years of medical knowledge

Sharon Schafer utilizes 60 years of nursing experience in the classroom at Montcalm Community College, where she has been a part-time nursing instructor for 15 years.

“I always loved learning and was interested in it,” she said. “I had to train younger people on the job as I got older, so becoming an instructor was a natural fit.”

Schafer has enjoyed taking care of people since she was 15.

“I did a lot of babysitting when I was young,” she said. “Then I got a working permit in 1957 and started working at Carson City Hospital, now Sparrow Carson Hospital. Four older ladies showed me what to do on the job.”

Schafer graduated from Saint Mary’s High School in Carson City in 1960 and earned her Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) certificate from Lansing Community College in 1961. She worked in every unit within the hospital, learning the ins and outs in obstetrics, pediatrics, the emergency room and more.

“I have seen numerous changes in the medical field over the last 60 years,” she said.

“You have to have a good attitude to be in nursing,” she added. “The job requires a lot of hard work and teamwork.”

Schafer teaches Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) and Medical Assistant courses at MCC.

“I like my students to learn in a relaxed way,” she said. “Students must control their emotions during difficult situations, and to do so, they must be calm in every situation, which starts in the classroom.”

Schafer’s main goal for her students is that they pass the state test to become licensed nurses. She hopes that when they leave the class, they feel like it was worthwhile.

“I want my students to go into the working world feeling as if they have been given the tools to succeed and are ready to apply them,” she said.

Nursing students learn theory, watch demonstrations by instructors and practice real-life situations with lifelike manikins during class. Schafer said many MCC nursing instructors also offer optional review sessions before students take the state test.

“We tell our students that every day is going to be different,” she said. “Nothing happens according to the book and they need to expect the unexpected. We share various situations that they need to be aware of, what can happen and how to handle each situation.”

At the age of 75, Schafer is still active in and out of the classroom.

“Teaching at MCC has been a great experience,” she said. “I enjoy the students and I couldn’t ask for a better group of instructors to work with.”

“This job has been a blessing in disguise,” she added. “It has helped me balance my home life during retirement and has offered me a lot of enjoyment.”

Schafer is an active member of St. John the Baptist Parish in Hubbardston. She resides in Hubbardston with her husband, John. They have five children and 13 grandchildren.