

Nurses Work Tirelessly To Protect Patients During Covid

By: Karen Carpenter

During the uncertain year that our world has gone through, it is a comfort to have everyday heroes that one can count on.

Nurses are the first point of contact when one visits a clinic or hospital. They help deflect the anxiety that such a visit sometimes produces in one.

During the pandemic that we have endured, and are still dealing with, nurses are the ones who were on the front lines of the incurable covid virus. They stepped up and took care of infected people at the danger of coming down with the virus themselves and exposing their loved ones.

It takes courage and selflessness to keep working under such conditions. These men and women are heros to the general populous that they sacrificially serve every day of their career. In the last year they have been asked step up and to give more, even at the expense of themselves and their families.

It is important to recognize the dedication shown, and sacrifices made, by these men and women in the nursing field.

They were never more appreciated than during 2020 as the country and world was paralyzed by Covid 19. They were heros to countless individuals.

For local resident Lindsay Bontjes, her work was not directly connected to covid patients. In her job capacity she did influence nurses and patients.

Bontjes has been a nurse for 17 years. She is an Assistant Professor of Nursing in the RN-to-BSN program at Mayville State University (MaSU). Bontjes also works as a program manager for Essentia Health within their women's and children's unit.

"Those people who are in our nursing program are obtaining their Bachelor's Degree in Nursing, and work as a registered nurse while they are enrolled in our program," said Bontjes about how she sees covid affected work. "These students who were already working full-time, were being asked by their employers to increase their hours to care for patients and also attend additional training due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Many of our students were also trying to balance their children at home due to school moving to distance delivery.

"My work routine was certainly changed due to more fluid time lines and due dates and in some situations changing the curriculum to allow these nurses continued enrollment and also the leniency they needed to work on the front lines where we needed them," continued Bontjes.

In her role at Essentia Health the work Bontjes performs influenced Covid-19 patients, non-Covid-19 patients and nurses in the community.

"As a program manager at Essentia, one project I was charged with was ensuring that all staff within our unit were up-to-date on evidenced based information regarding personal protective equipment (PPE) and the proper procedure for putting it on and taking it off to protect other patients as well as themselves from a breach

in isolation," stated Bontjes.

"A breach would subject a nurse to contracting the illness, passing it to others within the hospital, passing the infection to other patients, and possibly infecting his or her own family.

"A breach would also short-staff the hospital due to an immediate quarantine, and with the influx in patients this was critical," said Bontjes.

Among the many other processes that she assisted in putting into operation was how to transfer a positive Covid-19 patient to an operating room when a cesarean delivery was needed. "This ensured the room and personnel from the operating room were prepared for a cesarean delivery and that it occurred in a negative pressure room due to the isolation requirement," commented Bontjes.

"Other necessary tasks were outlining the steps necessary to take with the new baby, which at the time there was very little to no research regarding if the disease was spread in-utero," stated Bontjes. "Also the logistics of the support person and his or her status of active illness, in quarantine, test-pending, etc.

"Keeping the staff healthy as well as providing safe patient care was always the clear focus, but it certainly was a work in progress with protocols, policies, and recommendations changing sometimes by the hour," continued Bontjes.

While all of these stressful changes were going on in the work environment, Bontjes was juggling life at home with her family.

Lindsay and her husband, Dana, have four children. They are Jaida, in 10th grade, Lexi seventh grade, Addilyn third grade, and Luke in first grade.

Dana works for Archkey Technologies as a Senior Project Manager.

They have an active family and Lindsay and Dana enjoy spending time with their children at the lake, in the summer, and attending school activities.

"The RN-to-BSN program at MaSU is entirely online and asynchronous so my work environment did not change in academia," said Bontjes. "Essentia Health allowed me to work remotely whenever possible.

The work allowed Lindsey to be home with her kids while they made the transition to distance learning. Dana was also able to work remotely. "We were fortunate to not have those obstacles that were faced by so many others," Bontjes stated.

With everyone home Bontjes admits that it took time to settle into a new routine, as they were not used to being home and together all of the time.

"Our kids keep us very busy and are involved in numerous sports and activities," said Bontjes. "I vividly remember looking forward to a quiet spring break from MaSU in 2020. It happened to be the same day that my husband relocated to home so it wasn't quite the spring break I had imagined!"

Even with all of the difficult things that occurred in 2020, there is always a silver lining to every situation.

"I would say that the 'good' that came out of Covid-19 for us was the opportunity for our kids to see and learn about things that are sometimes difficult to teach and we all have a greater appreciation for each other," said Bontjes.

"Our kids were able to learn more about resilience, flexibility, hope, and gratitude through the different acts of kindness and the way people came together. They also learned more about the healthcare field than having their mother as a nurse their entire lives could have taught them. We gained more appreciation for each other," continued Bontjes.

"During this pandemic we found the time to do things that we are unable to regularly do before, like doing more puzzles, more games, and many, the kids say too many, bike-rides.

Lindsey and Dana Bontjes gained a greater appreciation for their employers due to their flexibility of allowing the couple the time they needed to be home with their kids while maintaining their careers.

"Last but certainly not least, we gained an even greater respect for the teachers within the Barnesville School District who make our kids feel like they are still part of something throughout the in-person, hybrid, distance, and quarantine scenarios we have faced," concluded Lindsay Bontjes.



The Bontjes family spent a lot of time together with covid restrictions in place. They played a lot of games, put puzzles together and went on bike rides. They are, left to right, Lexi, Dana, Addilyn, Lindsey, Luke and Jaida.



Lindsey Bontjes takes care that the most defenseless among out population are protected from exposure to the covid virus. She is an assistant professor in the nursing program at Mayville State University and also a program manager for Essentia Health on their women's and children's unit.



Welcome To You!

From These Area Churches

Baker-Downer Presbyterian Church

Lorelee Benz,
Commissioned Lay Pastor
Church: 218 789-7368
11927 123rd Avenue South
Baker, Minnesota 56580
baker.downerchurch@gmail.com
bakerdownerchurch.com



HOPE Lutheran Brethren Church

Kevin Skaret, Pastor
Church Office: 354-7466 • hopelbc.org
807 Fifth Street Southeast, Barnesville
Email: hopelbc@outlook.com





Assumption Catholic Church

307 Front Street North,
Barnesville
Father Todd Arends, Pastor
Church Office: 354-7320
Email: assumption@bvillemn.net
Website: assumptioncatholicchurchbarnesville.weebly.com/



Hosanna Fellowship

223 Third Street NE, Barnesville

Marlin (Pete) Ackerson, Pastor
Church: 354-7774 • Pastor's Cell: 218 329-2823
nackerson@rrt.net



St. James United Church Of Christ

201 Third Street SE, Barnesville
Interim Pastor Jim Wilson
Church Office: 354-7198
E-mail: churchoffice.stjames@gmail.com
www.stjamesuccmn.org





St. John's Lutheran Church

Lutheran Church Missouri Synod
1103 4th Ave. NE, Barnesville
Gary Rehborg - Interim Pastor
Church Office: 218 354-7158
Secretary - secretary@stjohnsbarnesville.org



Comstock - Hoff Lutheran Parish

One Faith Community, Two Locations
Comstock Lutheran Church, Comstock, MN
Hoff Lutheran Church, Rustad, MN
P.O. Box 7, Comstock, MN 56525
Jill Steichen, Pastor
Church Office: 218 585-4345
chsecretary@live.com





North Immanuel Lutheran Church

Lutheran Congregations in Mission For Christ
12713 County Road 30,
Pelican Rapids, MN
Reverend
Y. Isaiah Bai
Office: 218 863-5447
nilchurch@yahoo.com



CHRIST IS RISEN





Trinity Lutheran Church

100 Second Avenue W.
P.O. Box 198, Sabin, MN 56580
Brett Hartwig, Pastor
Emmalee Kuphal, DCE
Church Office: 218 789-7259
Email: tlcsabin@gmail.com

