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Vicky Grove Gave Covid Tests During Break From Teaching

By: Karen Carpenter
Vicky (Dollison) Grove is a nursing instructor at the College of St. Benedict and St. John's University located in St. Joseph, MN.

She is a 1990 Barnesville High School graduate who lives in Osakis with her husband, Chris. They have three sons, Carter, a freshman at St. John's University, Logan, a senior and Mason a freshman, both at Osakis High School. Chris is a third grade teacher at the school.

When the pandemic hit in March 2020, the whole family quickly transitioned to either working or distant learning from home.

The sudden switch was a challenge for the whole family. The abrupt end to sports seasons and practices as well as other school events forced the active family to assume a slower pace of life.

When asked if anything positive came out of the pandemic personally, she responded, "I feel that the onset of Covid made our family slow down. "We were able to spend more time together. Since our kids are in high school and off to college, it was nice to have that time with them."

After Vicky's nursing classes were completed for the 2019-2020 school year she was called to work at St. Cloud Hospital in St. Cloud, MN. She had worked in the birthing and neonatal unit there until just a few months before the virus descended upon our country.

The hospital employed Grove to administer Covid tests during May and April of 2020. As such, she was on the front lines and suited up in an array of protective gear.

This was one way for Grove to help out during a difficult situation. She also worked one day a week at the clinic on St. John's campus.

As a nursing instructor, sudden switch to on-line learning was a challenge for Grove. Some of nursing courses that she teaches involve students having hands-on clinical experiences. These needed to be handled in an entirely new way.

"Covid has affected my teaching style greatly," stated Grove. "In the past, we have done a lot of hands on with a lot of moving around our simulation rooms.

"With social distancing, class size restrictions, and the cleaning protocols needed, we were unable to move around and switch the students around between simulation rooms.



Vicky Grove is a nursing instructor at the College of St. Ben's and St. John's University. When her classes were finished in the spring of 2020, she administered drive-up covid tests to people at the St. Cloud Hospital. She is in her protective garb as she takes a quick break from the steady line of cars bringing those who were desperate to ascertain whether or not they had the covid virus. Grove grew up in Barnesville and still has family living in the community.

"We had to find different ways to do this so the students were still able to have some hands on experiences. It was challenging but we found ways to make it work," continued Grove.

St. Ben's and St. John's moved to block scheduling for the year so the students would have fewer contacts. "It has made it difficult to schedule clinicals in a shorter period of time. It was pretty intense to have one class at a time condensed into four weeks. Some liked it and others did not," stated Grove.

There was naturally a great deal of fear among the medical community with the onset of Covid. No one knew how the virus would affect individuals, in the short term.

If one survived the virus what could the long term implications bring?

Not only were the medical personal concerned for their patients that they cared for, but for themselves and their loved ones.

A nursing career that held such promise a few months prior now became a quagmire of uncertainties.

The threat and restrictions of Covid affected the students all differently and in many different ways," said Grove. "I think some are nervous about the situation, some are frustrated because they just want to be in school and clinicals. Some struggled with isolation.

"As the 202-2021 college year began, I think the students were so excited to actually be back on

campus but also frustrated with the restrictions," said Grove.

As this new graduating class of nurses embark on their career, they are entering a different work environment than their predecessors. Hospitals, clinics and nursing facilities have all needed to institute new restrictions and protocols never used before with such regulations.

"I think at the beginning of this current school year the students were anxious about graduating with the situation," expressed Grove. "Now they are feeling ready to start their careers and get into the workforce. I think it has helped that most of them have friends who have graduated and

are working already. The students see their friends working through this pandemic and doing okay with the situation," concluded Grove.

The Grove family did not escape a personal brush with Covid. All five family members came down with the virus in November, 2020. Symptoms were light and, for the most part, came away without adverse affects.

Vicky Grove has been working in the nursing field for 26 years. She has been a nursing instructor for the past six years.

There is no doubt that the onset of COVID-19 brought about many unwanted changes. With all things in life, there were also some positive

camaraderie in the work environment that were experienced.

"It has been nice to see nurses come together and help each other out," expressed Grove about the positives that came from Covid. "Some nurses who have been in the teaching role went back into the hospitals and clinic to help where needed.

"When I was doing Covid testing, I met nurses who were working from all over the hospital, clinics, and surgical centers. It was nice to meet nurses from other areas and hear how it was effecting their work and home life," concluded Vicky Grove.



Vicky Grove strikes an unfamiliar pose without a mask or protective gear at home with her family. The Grove family lives in Osakis, MN. They are pictured, left to right, in front, Chris and Vicky; in back, Carter, Logan and Mason. The busy family had to scale back their various sports and musical interests during the covid shutdown.

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