

Jon Yeske Works As Emergency Room Nurse

By: Karen Carpenter

Jon Yeske lives in Barnesville with his wife and children. The family is very involved in serving the community.

Jon's wife, Susan, is a special education teacher in Barnesville, as well as an EMT for Barnesville Ambulance. Jon is also on the Barnesville Ambulance as a paramedic, and a firefighter with the Barnesville fire department.

The couple has two boys, Logan who is 16, and Gabriel who is 13 along with two dogs, Tango and Drago.

Jon's primary job is as a full time registered nurse at Essentia Health in Fargo, ND in the emergency department. He also works casual

in the emergency department at Tri County Healthcare in Wadena as an RN. Jon has been a nurse for six years.

Yeske was on the front lines during the worst of the Covid outbreak.

"Our job as nurses in the emergency department was to provide direct patient care to covid patients," said Yeske. "This included starting IVs, medicating, moving, transporting, ambulating, and assisting providers with intubations on really sick patients."

"To protect ourselves and our patients, each staff member is required to wear a surgical mask and goggles at all times during the shift." The nurses in Yeske's department

go into a patient room that they suspect may have been infected with Covid. They need to gown up and glove up as well.

"Often times the nurses would be in the room for extended periods of time with Covid patients to get their work-up done," explained Yeske. "Often times we would be calling on the radios we carry to staff outside the rooms to bring us any meds or supplies that we had not already grabbed to finish our work-up."

When nurses were caring for really sick covid patients requiring intubation, their protective equipment went to a whole new level. Intubation is when a tube is inserted into the patients airway to protect the airway and allow for better oxygenation.

"Each staff member wears an N95 mask, goggles, a surgical cap, gloves, surgical booties that covers our shoes and go knee high. They also wear a non-permeable gown, which means the gown does not breathe and are extremely hot, especial when we are working hard to help these really sick patients," continued Yeske.

"We would try and limit only three staff members in the room with the doctor," said Yeske. This was done in order to curb the amount of staff that would be exposed to the virus," commented Yeske.

"This usually consisted of two nurses, if there is second nurse available to help, a respiratory therapist, and a doctor," stated Yeske.

The Yeske family was affected by Covid-19 on a personal level. Jon was diagnosed early in December 2020. All members of the family came down with the virus.

"No matter how hard I tried to isolate myself, my wife and boys got the virus as well," commented Yeske. "Fortunately our boys did really well and bounced back quickly. My wife Susan suffered from fatigue and headaches and loss of taste and smell."

"My symptoms included loss of taste and smell, chills, body aches, headaches, dizziness and a whole body rash. I would say it took a month before I felt like I was taking a turn for the better."

"I can honestly say that I had never experienced the symptoms that I experienced with Covid at any other point in my life. Fortunately none of us required hospitalization," explained Yeske.

The past year has been difficult for the Yeske family. The kids did not get the opportunity to hang out with friends and family. Social interaction was reduced or nonexistent.

"Sure people can improvise and zoom or face time, but it's not the same in my opinion," commented Yeske. "They missed sporting activities last spring as well. We enjoy having people over to hang out and have bonfires and the pandemic really put a damper on that. Family events, holidays and some trips all had to be cancelled or rescheduled," continued Yeske.

Many families experienced these same situations and feelings of isolation during the past year.

"Being a nurse during Covid has taught me some valuable lessons," stated Jon Yeske. "Never give up and watch each other's back."

"When I was at work and we were getting slammed and overwhelmed we all had each other's back and gave even more of ourselves to get through our shifts. And it worked!"

"When my family and I were sick with Covid, I was overwhelmed with the amount of help people were offering us! We had people bring us meals and offer to snow blow our drive way."

"It's things like this that makes me proud to live where I do. The best way for us to finish this pandemic is to not give up and have each other's back!" continued Yeske.

No one would deny that the economic impact on people was dreadful. For many individuals another big impact was the loss or limited social interaction with friends and family.

"If there is something good that could come out of Covid, it is that people learned to be creative with how they carried out activities in their daily lives. People learned to improvise and adapt," said Yeske. "I know we weren't able to live our lives the way we used to this last year but I am hopeful that there is light at the end and we'll be able to once again live our lives to the fullest," concluded Yeske.

Lindsey Bontjes, Vicky Grove, Sarah Mulcahy and Jon Yeske would probably not classify themselves as



The Yeske family loves to hang out with friends and family. Those activities were curtailed during the Covid pandemic. They are, left to right, Gabriel, Susan, Logan and Jon Yeske.



Jon Yeske is a Barnesville resident who works on the front lines of covid care as an emergency room nurse at Essentia Health in Fargo.

heroes. But they stepped up and gave of themselves to help others. They risked covid exposure to themselves and to their families.

A hero is defined by Webster's Dictionary as a person who, in the face of danger, combats the adversity through feats of ingenuity, courage and strength. Hero comes from a Greek word, the root of which means protector.

That is what these nurses have done throughout the pandemic, protected those they have cared for, or taught to care for others.



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