

St. Aloisius Medical Center is "Growing their Own" nurses

by Shiela Branson

The Dakota Nursing Program, representing five colleges in North Dakota (Williston, Bottineau, Lake Region [Devils Lake], Fort Berthold, and Bismarck State College), has been working with 'Distance Sites' - not located on campus - medical facilities that don't have a college in town, to train nurses.

Exciting things are on the horizon for St. Aloisius Medical Center in Harvey. They are beginning Practical Nursing training, in addition to current programs for Certified Nursing Assistants and Paramedics. At March 23 informational meetings, almost 40 interested people learned about the potential for "Growing Our Own" nurses.

Suzy McShane, Bismarck State College Nursing Coordinator and Instructor, is hoping to develop a strong class of dedicated nursing students from the Harvey area.

At "Satellite Sites" using an interactive television remote classroom and E-College online computer classes, students can take required general education classes in preparation for the core nursing classes.

McShane said that in the five years that it's been active, the Dakota Nursing Program has a "100 percent pass rate for all of our students." They look for, and find, the dedication and motivation for success, and nurture the qualities that draw people to the program.

In three semesters, through BSC, students complete their Practical Nurse Certification. After passing the State Board Exam, they are Licensed Practical Nurses. They may continue and receive Registered Nurse status, an Associates Degree.

The Harvey team of students may have completely different introductory class schedules, because each team member will have his/her own plan for getting the General Education required classes, but they will still be a team. Together they will be ready to tackle the core nursing classes, and together they will be there for their community, providing much-needed services.

Rocky Zastoupil of Harvey says, "Nursing is not a job, it's a calling." He adds, "This project is the culmination of the 'grow your own' strategic initia-

tive for our local facility and community. Technology has enabled small rural areas to allow employees to grow both personally and professionally through online coursework in cooperation with local health care facilities. It is the perfect match for employer and employee by allowing the student to continue working part time while going to school. St. Aloisius is also in the process of providing some financial assistance to qualifying students in return for working at the facility upon graduation. It represents a form of servitude and gratitude for advancing a career while creating a win/win situation."

Julie Buxa is the 'go to' person at St. Aloisius. She's the one to call if you're interested in Dakota Nursing Program's plans for the Harvey area. When she talks about the nobility of nursing, she isn't just mouthing clichés. When she speaks of the diversity involved, the changes that happen, the dynamic quality of the calling, she knows what she's talking about. To her, "Being able to make that difference in somebody else's life," is what it is about.



St. Aloisius Medical Center employee Teresa Snedaker, right, discusses options for nursing classes with a Bismarck State College Admissions representative.