EXCELLENCE Personified:

MOFFITT EARNNS NURSING MAGNET DESIGNATION

By Michelle Bearden

Photography: Ray Reyes

Joel Stettler, R.N. (left), and Jane Fusilero, R.N., M.S.N., MBA, NEA-BC

MAGNET RECOGNIZED

AMERICAN NURSES CREDENTIALING CENTER
“This is our five-star rating. It makes me so proud to be part of an institution that strives to be the best.”
JOEL STETTLER WAS JUST 9 YEARS OLD WHEN THE DOCTOR BROKE THE NEWS TO HIS PARENTS THAT THEIR SON HAD LEUKEMIA.

For two years, he battled the cancer, going in and out of the hospital for treatments. School and his childhood were constantly disrupted.

Besides the support of his family, he never forgot the nurses at his bedside who eased his fears. To take his mind off his grave situation, they played video games and read to him. They comforted him with cuddles when he was scared and humored him in his lowest moments.

Getting cancer at such an impressionable age and the attention he received proved to be a life-changing experience.

“They made such a difference,” he says of the nurses. “So much that I wanted to go into nursing when I grew up, so I could help others with hands-on care the way they helped me. I knew I could bring a personal perspective to it.”

Stettler, a graduate of Ohio University, is now living that promise he made to himself nearly two decades ago.

When he left the Midwest and moved to Florida four years ago, he landed his dream job: working with leukemia and lymphoma patients on the hematology floor at Moffitt. He readily shares his own story with his charges, giving them hope that one day they, too, can be cancer-free like he is now. He treats his patients like family members, just like he was treated years ago in the pediatric oncology ward.

His caring demeanor and attentive bedside manner haven’t gone unnoticed by management. Jane Fusilero, R.N., chief nursing officer and vice president of Patient Care Services, says Stettler, 29, is the “epitome of what a good nurse is all about.”

“He’s a born leader and a change agent here at Moffitt,” she says. “The kind of care he provides is what makes this institution not just good, but excellent.”

Having a team of nurses like Stettler has vaulted Moffitt into an elite group of hospitals nationwide.

In March 2015, the cancer center earned the prestigious Magnet designation in recognition of its nursing excellence. Awarded by the American Nurses Credentialing Center, the credentialing body of the American Nurses Association (ANA), the designation recognizes nursing professionalism, teamwork, quality patient care and innovations in nursing practices.

Of the nation’s 5,500 health-care institutions, only 7 percent achieve the Magnet designation. And it’s not a given they will keep it, either. After four years, they have to re-apply for it, meeting the more than 70 standards set forth in the 4,000-page application document and showing improvements that have been made.

“That’s how Magnet works. The process never ends,” Fusilero says. “It’s a journey you’re always on to maintain that excellence.”

Moffitt had tried on two occasions to get this recognition. The third time was the charm.

Much of the credit goes to Fusilero’s astute leadership. The seasoned nurse executive was hired by Moffitt in February 2011, primarily to renew the nursing department and make it Magnet-worthy. Not only was she ready to embrace the challenge, she also was ready to leave the Midwest and move to Florida’s warmer climate.

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Her credentials were impressive: Multiple degrees from Ohio State University, Kent State University and Baldwin-Wallace College; two stints with The MetroHealth System in Cleveland, one serving as vice president, chief nursing officer, and another as director of trauma/critical care and medicine; and experience in home health care and hospice work. She had a successful track record in start-up operations and improving overall efficiencies in multiple areas.

Fusilero also brought experience in Magnet project management. Her previous hospital achieved the designation in 2005 and again in 2010.

“You don’t just come into a place and start changing everything,” she says. “It’s a collaborative process that requires teamwork. You’ve got to have everyone on board with it, dedicated to working together and working hard to achieve such a high level of recognition.”
“Making our hospital a place of excellence means taking care of the people who work here as well.”

So why is Magnet recognition so vital to the well-being of a hospital and, ultimately, the local community? According to the ANA, the multitude of benefits include higher patient satisfaction with nurse communication, availability of help and receipt of discharge information. There’s a lower risk of 30-day mortality and lower failure to rescue. Among nursing staff, there’s a higher job satisfaction.

“You are setting standards that are above the benchmark,” Fusilero says. “You are showing that you’re innovative and continuously improving the model of care. Patient outcomes are going to be better for it in the long run.”

Patients rely on Magnet designation as the ultimate credential for high-quality nursing.

Stettler understood all of this. Before moving to Florida, he worked at The Christ Hospital in Cincinnati, a Magnet-designated facility. He knew what it took to get to that level of excellence and the role employees were expected to play to maintain it. So he was all in.

His supervisors recognized that drive and tapped him to be one of the Magnet team ambassadors — a role given to staffers willing to step up and be leaders in the initiative.

Several of the projects inspired by the Magnet initiative — a process that took 2½ years to complete — are now in place at Moffitt. They include giant erasable white boards in the patients’ rooms that detail daily goals for the patient; plan of care; lab values; the names of their doctors, nurses, case manager and tech assistant; as well as a projected discharge date. Even motivational messages show up on the boards.

Another procedure developed by one of the floor teams — now implemented throughout the hospital — is the Chemotherapy Double Check system. This bedside checklist is completed by two nurses prior to the state of the chemotherapy administration to ensure the drugs are infused safely without errors.

Fusilero is proud of the Moffitt nursing staff for taking on the Magnet challenge and bringing it to fruition. The commission noted several “exemplars” (initiatives that earned special recognition) now underway at Moffitt, such as identifying and addressing the disparities in the management of the healthcare needs of diverse patient populations, and demonstrating the structures and processes that Moffitt uses to recognize and make visible the contribution of nurses.

“Making our hospital a place of excellence means taking care of people who work here as well,” she says.

She points to yet another Magnet-inspired program now in place: The Honored Nurse Program, an Olympic-style ranking system that awards nurses points over a year for achievements in several areas of service and education. Those who accrue the most points are eligible for a Nurse of the Year recognition in four categories.

Stettler says Fusilero’s leadership and expertise have made an impact on Moffitt that will have lasting positive consequences.

“Jane is the force that came through and put us in the right direction,” he says. “And once you get to this place, you don’t want to lose any ground. This is our five-star rating. It makes me so proud to be part of an institution that strives to be the best.”

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