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# THE PULSE OF GREENLEAF ALUMNI NEWSLETTER MAY • 2026

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello Alumni and Friends,

It has been a very busy Spring semester at the college. Our Junior One students are enjoying a new clinical experience focusing on the care of older adults at EverTrue Lutheran Hillside Village in Peoria. The long-term care environment allows the first semester students to have more time to hone their skills in assessment, build their communication and teamwork skills, medication management, improved understanding of chronic conditions and polypharmacy. The teaching/learning experience has been very positive for students and faculty. This satisfies the need for more clinical sites and contributes to enhancing the quality of care of older adults in long-term care facilities in the Peoria area.



**CHARLENE AARON**

PHD, RN  
President  
OSF Colleges of Nursing

Our enrollment continues to rise in the undergraduate program, and the graduate program enrollment is bursting at the seams! We continue to plan for the sustainability of the college and the current and future workforce needs at Saint Francis Medical Center and the community. We are building the workforce pipeline by focusing on early high school enrollment. High School students involved in dual enrollment programs are eligible to apply for the SFMCCON early admission program.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Evening at the Vineyard**  
June 12, 2026  
Tres Rojas Winery

**Association Meeting**  
August 18, 2026, noon  
Queen of Squash

**Homecoming Celebration**  
October 3, 2026

# ALUMNI UPDATE

Greetings Alumni,

We have had a wonderful Fall season of activities and now are ready to launch into Spring. There are several events to look forward to. Don't forget to look ahead and mark your calendars for Homecoming 2026 (October 3rd from 11-2 -brunch and basket auction). All money goes to scholarships. It's always great to plan a "trip back home" and especially to those classes celebrating marker year anniversaries. Reach out to your classmates and if you need help with addresses, contact our Alumni representative, Carlene.J.Murali@osfhealthcare.org for assistance.

Our Homecoming 2025 events were well attended and a wonderful way to celebrate our 120th year anniversary. The weekend was filled with memorable moments as we gathered on Friday evening for a dinner and Alumni awards. This was followed on Saturday with our Alumni Brunch and basket auction. Each year attendance grows, money for scholarships exceed the previous years and alumni celebrate more opportunities to share memories and future plans.

Moving into Spring, we will meet during Nurse's Week to engage with students and provide homemade cookies. This is a fun time where those who can join, share stories from our time at the college and learn from the experiences of current students. We always find there are many changes and yet, some things never change like the excellent education students receive and the opportunities they are gaining for lifelong friendships!

This year we are moving our usual appearance at Senior Send Off to a different day where we will join students in the classroom over their lunch hour, provide pizza and discuss the benefits of joining the alumni association.



**MARY DONNELLY**

CLASS OF 1979  
Alumni Association President

The favorite evening of "A Night at the Winery" will again be held at Tres Rojas Winery. This event grows in number every year and this year, besides the great food, wine and fellowship, there will be music for dancing.

Alumni Association meetings continue throughout the year. After our June meeting, we will not meet until August. If you can attend in June we look forward to seeing you. If not, please plan to join us at our next meeting August 18th. All meetings are at noon at Queen of Squash in Peoria. We moved our meetings to noon to better meet the needs of those attending. However, we can be flexible with later times if we hear requests to evenings or even a 50/50 split. These meetings are a blend of good food, socialization and planning our events. Let us know the best time for you to attend. We would love to have more attendance.

We are open to ideas for events you would like to see, so reach out and share your ideas. Our times together are a reminder of times shared as well as an opportunity to keep current with a college that has had such an impact on our lives. The work we do through our alumni association provides opportunities to celebrate those times, give back to the college in ways we can and engage with students who are working to join us in this noblest of professions! Looking forward to seeing you at one of our events and especially at Homecoming on October 3rd!

## MEET THE PROVOST

### Professional Background:

I previously served in academic and clinical leadership roles at Loyola University Chicago and the University of Illinois Chicago, with experience spanning teaching, advanced practice, curriculum redesign, and academic administration. Before coming to Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing, I led major initiatives in competency-based education, faculty development, and clinical partnership alignment. My clinical background as a nurse practitioner continues to guide how I approach decision-making and how I think about student learning, professional identity formation, and the future of our profession.



### MARY MCNAMARA

DNP, APRN-FPA, CNP, FAANP  
Provost  
OSF Colleges of Nursing

**Personal Background:** I grew up on the north side of Chicago and began my educational journey in pre-school at Loyola University with the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Higher education and learning have always been important to me, but I didn't initially imagine a career in nursing. My first degree is in biology and chemistry, and I spent my early career working as a researcher in cellular physiology. Over time, I felt called toward nursing because I wanted work that combined service, science, and human connection.

**Current Nursing Work:** Until October of 2025, I worked three to four days per month at UW Health Swedish American as an APRN in the Emergency Department. Beginning in December 2025, I will be working once weekly at OSF Saint Anthony Medical Center as an APRN in inpatient Palliative Care. Although my primary work is academic, I stay closely connected to practice, clinical colleagues, and health-system priorities, which helps ensure that our programs remain relevant and aligned with community needs.

**“Nursing allows me to bring together scientific reasoning, critical thinking, innovation, compassion, and leadership in a way that feels both deeply meaningful and continually challenging in the best and most fulfilling way.” – MARY MCNAMARA**

## PRESIDENT FROM PAGE 1

The college recently hosted a Discovery Day and welcomed 50 students and 75 parents! The prospective students were able to learn from our current students and perform hands on nursing duties. Currently, we have formed partnerships with East Peoria, Dunlap, Pekin, Metamora, Canton, Washington, Limestone, and Morton High Schools.

This student pipeline is formed when high school graduates attain their Associate degree that includes their required prerequisite courses. We want these students to be aware of the Early High School Admission Program as soon as possible so that they can make plans for their future profession. OSF has an educational incentive program so their education will be funded nearly 100% and they can also count on 100% job placement at any of our OSF hospitals upon graduation.

I am proud of our 91% pass rate which exceeds the state and national levels. We continue to increase the number of male students and provide access to nursing education to students representing vulnerable populations. I am grateful to all the donors that appreciate the profession of nursing, who have been touched by the care of a nurse, and who recognize the importance of philanthropy that allows us to continue our educational mission.

Thank You!

# COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION

## TRANSFORMING LEARNING AT SFMC COLLEGE OF NURSING

by MARY MCNAMARA, DNP, APRN-FPA, CNP, FAANP

At Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing, we are proud to embrace an exciting evolution in nursing education, the transition to Competency-Based Education (CBE). This model shifts the focus from time-based learning to mastery-based learning, ensuring that graduates demonstrate essential knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors that define excellence in nursing practice.

### What is CBE?

CBE is an outcomes-focused approach that measures learning by demonstrated performance rather than seat time or credit hours. Students advance as they show mastery of defined competencies by integrating clinical judgment, communication, evidence-based care, and leadership. In nursing, CBE aligns directly with how nurses practice: continually applying knowledge in complex, real-world settings to achieve safe, effective, and compassionate care.

Our faculty teams are redesigning courses across undergraduate and graduate programs around measurable competencies, learning outcomes, and authentic assessments. Each course will identify what students must be able to do upon completion and provide multiple opportunities to demonstrate readiness. Simulation, reflective practice, portfolio assessment, and interprofessional learning experiences will all play a role in helping students progress at the pace of their learning.

### Student Benefits

CBE empowers students to take greater ownership of their education and build confidence in their professional identity. It allows learners to connect classroom and clinical experiences more intentionally, reinforcing the 'why' behind nursing practice. Graduates will be better prepared to transition into their roles as registered nurses and advanced practice providers ready to lead, adapt, and advocate in a rapidly changing health care landscape.

### Accreditation and Alignment

Education (CCNE) 2024 Standards call for programs to define, assess, and evaluate student achievement through clearly stated competencies. Likewise, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) 2021 Essentials outline ten domains of nursing practice that serve as a national framework for all nursing education. Our CBE redesign ensures full congruence with these expectations affirming our commitment to excellence and accountability in preparing future nurses.

Competency-Based Education is more than curriculum change; it is cultural transformation. It honors the artistry and science of nursing by focusing on what nurses can do and how they think, not just what they know. Through CBE, Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing continues its long tradition of preparing nurses who serve with knowledge, integrity, and the greatest care and love. Our graduates, guided by faith, service, and respect for human dignity, will be fully prepared to meet the needs of patients, families, and communities.



# IN THE SPOTLIGHT



“I am passionate about igniting a love for learning and patient care. There is nothing more rewarding than seeing a student move beyond head knowledge and confidently translate it into hands-on skills that make a real difference in the lives of patients.”

**CAROLE EATOCK**  
DNP, APRN-FPA, FNP-C  
DEAN GRADUATE PROGRAM



“I have been at the College for 9 years and at OSF Saint Francis Medical Center for 23 years. I am passionate about providing safe, high-quality patient care, and love giving back to the nursing profession by educating future students. I love seeing the ‘lightbulb’ moments when students start to put the pieces together and enjoy watching them succeed here at the College and beyond.”

**CAROL SWANK**  
DNP, RN  
CLASS OF 2025  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR



“I love working with the students. I enjoy watching them grow as they progress through the program, and then eventually seeing them with those RN badges on the floor. I also really like the people with whom I work. They are inspiring, empathic, smart and fun. They really are a great group who embody the mission of OSF and the College.”

**C.J. WRIGHT - BOON**  
RN, MSN  
CLASS OF 2008  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR



# MISSION TRIP TO DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

by **SUE BROWN, RN, DNP, PHD** and **CAROLE EATOCK, DNP, APRN, FNP-C**

In November 2025 and March 2026, groups of graduate and undergraduate students, faculty, and administrators traveled to the Dominican Republic to learn from and serve another culture. Over the course of four days, the teams established and operated medical clinics in four different villages, providing primary care services to more than 750 patients.

Guided by our mission to serve with the greatest care and love, the team approached each patient encounter not only as a medical appointment but as an opportunity to truly see, hear, and honor each individual. Whether it was measuring blood pressure, prescribing medication, or simply holding a hand and offering reassurance, every act of care was infused with compassion and respect.

During these visits, we expanded the scope of our work by providing education to Dominican Republic nursing students in San Juan at both the high school and university levels, teaching content on vaginal births in the fall to address high cesarean section rates and offering Basic Life Support education in the spring.



**Spring 2026 Team**

In addition to the clinics, we conducted home visits, delivering essential medical care to Dominicans and their families in their own living spaces. These intimate visits provided students with an invaluable perspective on healthcare delivery in resource-limited settings and reinforced the need for cultural humility. They also reminded us that the heart of nursing extends far beyond walls and borders - it thrives wherever human need exists.

Stepping outside our tight-knit community into a global context deepened our appreciation for both the universality of human needs and the unique challenges faced by communities with limited access to healthcare. It was humbling to realize that while our resources and surroundings may differ, the language of care, love, and respect is understood everywhere.

The trip was more than a clinical experience - it was a deeply human connection. We returned home with a piece of our heart still in the Dominican Republic, inspired by the resilience, joy, and warmth of the people we met. The bonds formed - both within our team and with the communities we served - will continue to shape our perspectives as nurses and as human beings.

This experience reinforced the importance of empathy, cultural sensitivity, and service in nursing practice - values that will guide the participants for years to come. With the College expanding to include undergraduate students this November, we look forward to seeing even more members of our community embrace opportunities to serve with the greatest care and love, both at home and across the globe.

# 2025 & 2026 DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



Fall 2025 Team with Medical Interpreters



Fall 2025 Vaginal Birth Education for Dominican Students



Spring 2026 CPR Education for Dominican Students



Spring 2026 Medical Clinic Set Up



Spring 2026 Medical Clinic



Dominican Republic Patients

# 2025 ALUMNI AWARDS



**Distinguished Alumni 2025**  
**MELINDA COOLING**

DNP, MBA, APRN, FNP, NEA-BC, FAANP  
CLASS OF 1998  
Chief Nursing and APP Executive  
OSF HealthCare



**Service and Advocacy Award**  
**NANCY BAILEY**

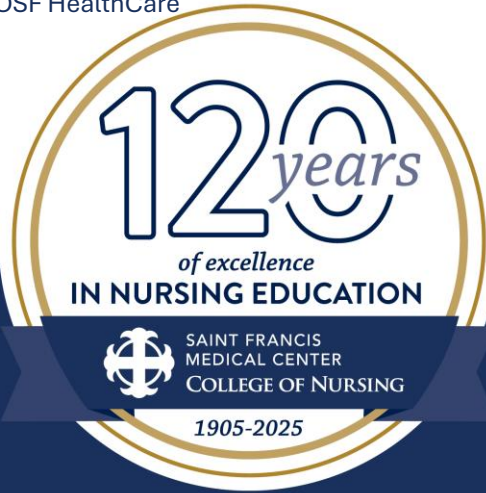
RN, DNP-L, CNE  
CLASS OF 2017  
Associate Professor  
Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing



**Excellence in Clinical Practice Award**

**CRISTIN RASSI**

APRN, CNS, FNP, CNRN  
CLASS OF 2004  
Advanced Practice Provider  
Illinois Neurological Institute



**Friend of Nursing Award**  
**STEPHANIE J. CAIN**

DNP, APRN-BC, NEA-BC  
CLASS OF 2007  
Vice President & Chief Nursing Officer  
OSF HealthCare Divine Mercy Continuing Care Hospital



**Research and Innovation Award**  
**SHERYL EMMERLING**

PHD, RN, NEA-BC  
CLASS OF 2007  
Director of Professional Practice and Nursing Research  
OSF Healthcare

# IN THE NEWS...

## ALUMNI ACCEPTS NEW POSITION

SFMC College of Nursing alumni, Erin Price, DNP, RN, has recently accepted the position of vice president of Nursing for OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois. She will report to Meg Zakrzewaki, president, OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois.

In her new position, Erin serves as the senior executive leader for Pediatric Nursing at OSF Children's Hospital. She is directly accountable for Inpatient Nursing, Pediatric Perioperative Services and Pediatric Emergency Department nursing operations. She will also play a key leadership role in shaping pediatric nursing practice across the OSF HealthCare regional hospitals, including providing support for newborn nurseries, neonatal intensive care units and pediatric emergency care.



**ERIN PRICE**

DNP, RN

CLASS OF 2025

Vice President of Nursing

OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois



Erin began serving the Ministry in 1997 as a pediatrics acute RN/charge nurse at OSF Children's Hospital. She later advanced to assistant patient care manager and then patient care manager for general pediatrics, followed by patient care manager for general pediatrics/general acute care. Most recently, Erin served as director of Children's Care Services at OSF Children's Hospital.

Erin earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing for Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing. She subsequently earned her Master of Science in Nursing. She later completed her Doctorate in Nursing Leadership from Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing.

Erin is married to Robert. They are parents to Ty, 23, Tanner 20, and Taylor, 18. In her spare time, Erin enjoys long walks with the family dog, Loki, exploring new areas through day trips and relaxing vacations to Florida. Her greatest joy is time with her family, and she can often be found cheering on her kids at their sporting events and activities.

# IN THE NEWS...

## HEATHER BOMSTAD NAMED PRESIDENT

Heather Bomstad, MSN, RN, has been named president, OSF HealthCare Saint Clare Medical Center and OSF HealthCare Saint Paul Medical Center.

In her new position, Bomstad will lead OSF Saint Clare in Princeton and OSF Saint Paul in Mendota in aligning with the overall strategy of OSF HealthCare. She will be responsible for directing all internal operations while continuing to ensure that high quality and cost-effective health care is delivered to our patients who we are blessed to serve. Bomstad will carry forward a culture of collaboration and integration that provides a safe Mission Partner and patient care environment.



**HEATHER BOMSTAD**

MSN, RN  
CLASS OF 1997  
President

OSF Healthcare Saint Clare Medical Center and  
OSF Healthcare Saint Paul Medical Center

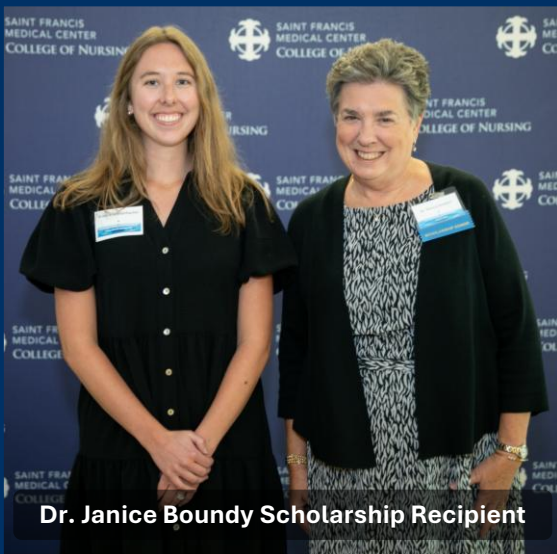
“We are excited that Heather has accepted this tremendous opportunity,” says Dawn Trompeter, associate region chief executive officer, OSF Western Region, and president of OSF HealthCare Saint Elizabeth Medical Center in Peru and Ottawa. “Heather’s leadership skills, knowledge, compassion and experience made her the right person to help lead our regional model of care.”

Bomstad most recently served as vice president and chief nursing officer for OSF Saint Elizabeth and OSF Saint Paul since 2018. In January of this year, she also began serving as interim vice president and chief nursing officer for OSF Saint Clare. She joined OSF in 1997 and has held clinical and leadership roles throughout her career.

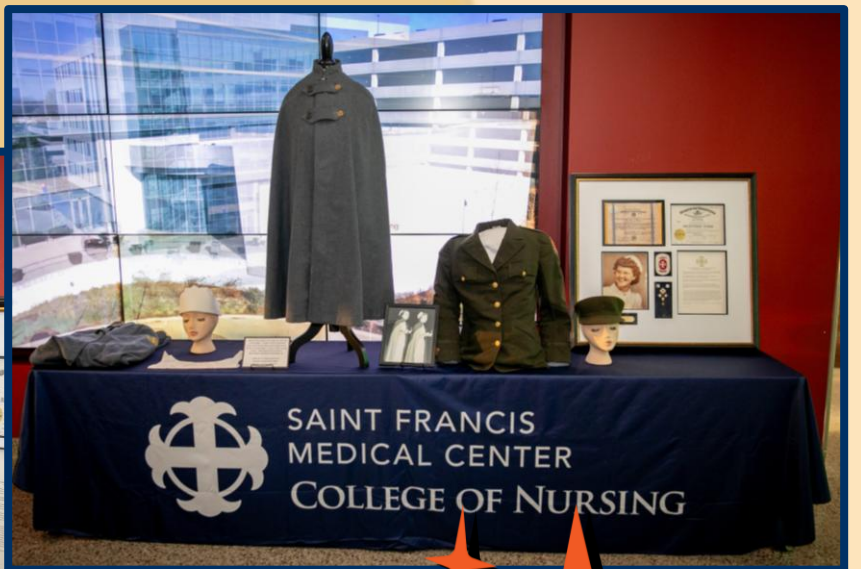
“I am beyond thrilled to accept the position of President for both Saint Paul and Saint Clare,” says Bomstad. “Over the years as chief nursing officer, I’ve grown as a leader and as a listener. I’ve learned to navigate complexity with compassion and clarity. Health care is rapidly changing, and with that change comes both challenge and opportunity. I am committed to supporting our teams through this transformation, ensuring we remain grounded in our Mission while embracing innovation and change.”

Bomstad earned a BSN from Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing. She went on to earn an MSN in Nursing from the University of Phoenix.

# 2025 SCHOLARSHIP RECEPTION



# Blast... FROM THE PAST



# CLASS OF...

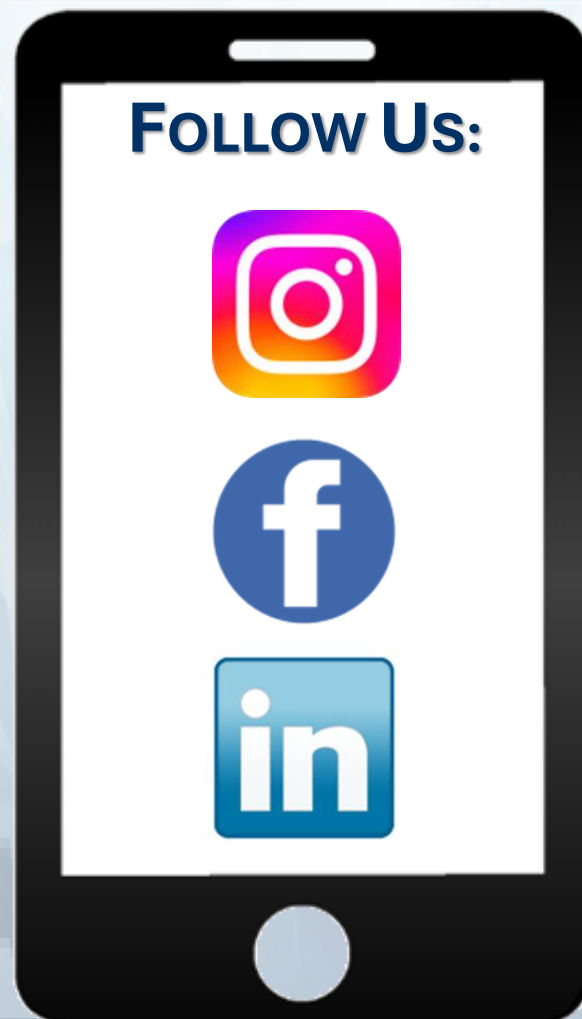


## GET CONNECTED!

Scan the QR code below to update the alumni database with your latest information and get the latest news on events and updates from SFMC College of Nursing. Please provide your current email, postal address, and phone number.

### We need to hear from you!

If you know of any fellow alumni who have not received the newsletter, please encourage them to send their updated contact information to [Carlene.J.Murali@osfhealthcare.org](mailto:Carlene.J.Murali@osfhealthcare.org).



## JOIN THE ASSOCIATION

Our Annual membership (Sept-July) is \$20, and our Lifetime membership is \$250. Please make checks payable to the SFMCCON Alumni Association. You can send via mail to Paulette Archer, Alumni Treasurer, 1217 W Oakglen Dr. Peoria, Illinois 61614. If you have any questions, email her at [archoop@aol.com](mailto:archoop@aol.com). Please include your name, maiden name (if applicable), class/graduation year, address, city, state, zip, phone, and email.

The SFMCCON Alumni Association is a 501c charitable organization. Scholarships are awarded to graduate and undergraduate students each year. Consider contributing by sending a check out to “SFMCCON Alumni Association” and mailing it to Paulette Archer, at the address above. A receipt will be sent to you for tax purposes.

# ALUMNI MERCH

Interested in purchasing some merch?  
Contact Paulette Archer, Treasurer, at [archoop@aol.com](mailto:archoop@aol.com)



**FRAMED BRIDGE \$10**  
(approx. 6" x 8")

**UNFRAMED BRIDGE \$5**  
(3.5" x 5.5")



**ALUMNI**

**WINDOW DECAL \$5**  
(6" x 6")



**PEWTER PENDANT \$5**  
(1" diameter)



**ORNAMENT \$15**  
(1.5" x 2")

Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing also hosts an online store offering branded clothing and merchandise.  
Shop online at [sfmccn.edu](http://sfmccn.edu)!

# DONATE TODAY AT [SFMCCON.EDU](http://SFMCCON.EDU)

For over 120 years, Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing has stood as a beacon of excellence in nursing education, upheld by the values of the Catholic health care tradition.

To continue providing state-of-the-art education and training facilities, we rely on the generosity of our supporters – the heart of our community. We need friends like YOU to walk alongside our future nurses as they work to care for the patients they will serve. It is your kindness and belief in our cause that enable us to foster the next generation of nursing leaders.

With a gift today, you can help enhance our programs, scholarships, and facilities, ensuring that the legacy of Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing not only endures but thrives.

*Thank you for your continued support!*



SAINT FRANCIS  
MEDICAL CENTER  
COLLEGE OF NURSING

511 NE GREENLEAF STREET  
PEORIA, ILLINOIS 61603