

February 9, 2015- NAU nursing student gains hands on experience

by Amanda Skonhvd



Jeanette Samsor, nursing internship coordinator, with Jamie

Jamie Money, a nursing student at Northern Arizona University, has spent several dedicated weeks assisting older adults in Verde Valley Caregiver Coalition's Transitional Care Program. "There is no doubt Jamie has made a significant impact on her patients and coworkers," says Ann Eller, TC Program manager.

"Jamie has been a delight to work with. She is very bright (Cum Laude) and also has a warm and compassionate personality. She has the welfare of the patients foremost in her planning and caregiving," Ann adds.

Jamie's passion for helping people made her an ideal candidate for a VVCC internship. "My first degree was in math education," she says, "but I realized later on that teaching wasn't the kind of help I wanted to do with my life." Jamie went back to NAU to obtain a degree in nursing, and it was in her very first semester that she knew she had found her true calling. "I fell in love with nursing," she explains. "I particularly loved the 'nursing is caring' theory. Through nursing, I had finally found people I wanted to help."

VVCC's TC Program is a nurse-led care transition team that provides specialized services to newly discharged patients. Team members visit patients within the first 24 to 48 hours of being discharged. Over the next 30 days, team members assist patients with scheduling and transportation to check-up appointments, medication pickup and reconciliation, home safety checks, and general education to ensure swift recovery time.

"Patients are released in such a fragile state," Jamie says. "My job is to see what each patient's individual needs are, and explain all aspects of hospital discharge and medications. Then for the next 30 days, I make sure I am on top of all aspects of the patient's health."

Interning with VVCC is just one step Jamie will take toward obtaining her nursing degree. As a nursing student, she must complete several clinical rotations in different areas. "Working each clinical area brings in a wealth of knowledge," Jamie says. "Interning with VVCC has given me insight into family healthcare you don't usually get to see in a hospital environment. This experience has shown me how to better evaluate home settings and cultural preferences in patients."

After she completes her degree, Jamie plans to spend her first five years working in intensive care to build up her critical thinking skills. After that, she says she is willing to take on just about any challenge. "The great thing about nursing is that you can do anything anywhere. There is no bad area to work in," Jamie says. Eventually Jamie wants to work towards obtaining an advanced practice degree as a nurse practitioner or physician's assistant.

Jeanette Sasmor, VVCC's nursing internship coordinator, has nothing but praise for Jamie. "When I take on a new intern, I can only hope they are all like Jamie. She was self motivating, flexible and had the ability to follow through. She made experiences for herself, and was able to form a great relationship with her patients."

VVCC began its nursing internship program August 2014. Interns complete 90 hours in seven weeks. The purpose of the program is to give nursing students experience in real-life situations with critical patients and their families as a whole, dealing with acute and chronic medical conditions.

Working with VVCC has shown Jamie the importance of volunteerism. "VVCC is a great organization to volunteer for. If I wasn't an intern, I would definitely be a volunteer. Most of the volunteers in the Transitional Care Program are nurses themselves. It is a great cause and a great opportunity."

Jamie's time with VVCC was well spent caring for patients and learning from the experienced nurses of the Transitional Care team. "Everyone was so open and welcoming," Jamie says. "Everyone was willing to teach and it really was a very supportive environment. You couldn't ask for a better clinical site. I feel so lucky."