

Job Shadow Program a Win/Win at Alton Memorial

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A total of 29 employees participated in a job shadow program at Alton Memorial Hospital on Aug. 28, with favorable reviews showing how much was learned about the importance of teamwork between departments.

The purpose of the program, arranged by the AMH People Team, is to give employees an opportunity to gain firsthand knowledge about the departments with which they interact. In many cases, employees who often work together by phone get a chance to meet each other face to face and strengthen a bond. For example, Cathy Burns of Registration hosted Julie Hise of Case Management.

“It was nice to be able to share information in person with Julie,” Burns said. “We talk on the phone a lot but I don’t think we had met in person before. And it was beneficial to both of us for me to share our processes with her.”

Although Alton Memorial has more than 900 employees, the tendency can be for individual employees to have at least a little tunnel vision within their own department. A job shadowing experience helps widen the view.

“This really reinforces the idea that we are a team,” said Chad Lankford of EMS, who along with Kelly McCreary hosted Nicole Teller from the ICU. “We are just one step in the process.”

Mikki Dearing of Housekeeping shadowed Ashley Walter of Respiratory Therapy with an eye toward a possible career option in the future. She came away encouraged.

“I picked up a lot of great information,” Dearing said. “This is definitely a career I would like to pursue. Ashley did an awesome job showing me everything, and she is so personable.”



Similarly, Laurie Hopper of the Medical Care Unit is interested in working in the ICU and shadowed Hailey Poole in that department.

“I am a lot more informed about the process for patient care in the ICU now,” Hopper said. “This will help in my department because we transfer patients from MCU to ICU often. I love seeing how all the ICU nurses are so caring toward their patients. This was such a great experience. I didn’t want to leave.”

“If anything, it encouraged me to complete my lab work for the ER a little faster when I can,” said Cassie Fisher of the Lab, who shadowed Angie Colley in ER Triage. “Any delays in the ER can cause a backup in the waiting room. But they do a great job there.”

The experience also revealed some things that can be improved upon for a better patient experience. Several of those items, discussed in a brief meeting after the shadowing time was completed, were noted by Amy Schuler -- a performance improvement consultant at AMH -- for consideration at what the hospital calls Rapid Improvement Events.

Kayla Barnett and Angie Liley, co-chairs of the AMH People Team, said the feedback from the participants was very positive and also very helpful.

“It’s important to get to know people in other departments,” Liley said. “And if we can also learn a better way to get certain things done, that’s another plus.”