Making a Difference

If you met her today, Stephanie Thornton would tell you right upfront about pressing through her own obstacles of a long history of violence and substance abuse to reach her goal of a career where she could touch others' lives.

The turning point in her life was when at 50 years old she stood before a judge facing an eight year prison sentence and he told her, "You can make a difference in somebody's life." He decided instead to send her to rehabilitation treatment at Chestnut Health Systems where she not only began her recovery from over 25 years of drug use, but also developed a passion for helping others like her through their own recovery.

Encouraged by her daughter, she enrolled as a student at Heartland Community College in 2009. "When I got an A in my first class, English 095 with Tom McCulley, I knew I could do it."

She had finished her treatment at Chestnut but stayed connected to the organization by volunteering and eventually serving as an intern. Stephanie says, "The internship was foot work! I had to take the steps." She met with Career Services staff to apply for the internship program, finalize her resume and prepare to take another step closer to reach her career goals.

She spent the first part of her internship learning the ropes and observing staff perform procedures. After a while she was able to perform the procedures herself with staff supervision. She also began teaching classes on the 12-step program and helping residents set and evaluate goals. Staff at Chestnut became familiar with Stephanie's passion, work ethic, and success in interacting with the clients and she was presented with a job offer at the end of her internship. Now happily employed at the same center where she received treatment, she says that without the internship she probably wouldn't have been hired.

Her volunteer work at Chestnut and the experience she gained through her internship gave Stephanie what she needed to be the right candidate for the job. She will continue making a difference in others' lives after her graduation from Heartland this spring, with plans to enroll in an online Social Work program at Western Illinois University. Her advice to students - "If you care about what you're striving for you'll take that extra step." We couldn't agree more.
HCC has several certificate and degree programs to prepare students for health careers including Nursing, Emergency Medical Services, Medical Transcription and Radiography.

If you like to help people, are comfortable with science and are interested in keeping up with developments and changes in your field, a health career could be a good fit for you. Stop by Career Services to learn more about career options and career paths in the healthcare sector and how you can prepare for them.

Fact: Last December the healthcare sector added 45,000 jobs according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Hospitals accounted for 12,000 of those jobs and growth is expected to continue. You may have heard that there is a shortage of nurses and that this occupation is in high demand, but there's a whole range of occupations in the healthcare setting that are looking for skilled workers, from Anesthesiologists to Veterinarians.

45,000 new jobs—could this be the field for you?

5 Reasons to Visit Career Services

5. You’re undecided about a career path—We can help you explore which careers might be a good fit for you or connect you to job shadows and internships to get real experience in work environments you’re considering.

4. Free cover letter and resume critiques—You want to land that job, and we want to help. Visit us to make sure your resume and cover letter reflect the best you have to offer.

3. Because you need a job—We’ll help connect you to local job opportunities and even help you prepare for your interview.

2. Check out career resources—Check out books from our career resource library or pick up information from the resource rack if you’re on the go.

1. Individualized support for adult students—While you’re balancing work and family needs, Adult Transition Services can help you reach your educational goals and get the extra support you need. Visit Jane Koscielak in CCB 1002 or call Career Services to schedule an appointment.

A Career with a Mission at Heart

"Serving all persons with the greatest care and love" is the mission OSF was founded on 130 years ago and this is the mission their employees, physicians and volunteers live each day. You could earn up to $32 an hour as a bedside Nurse or $42 as a Physical Therapist, two of OSF’s careers in highest demand locally, and OSF also supports employees’ growth by offering tuition assistance and opportunities to advance within the company.

Here’s what you need to know: OSF looks for and values employees with three main qualities: enthusiasm, initiative, and a good cultural fit. They want employees who are willing to go above and beyond their basic job requirements and who display specific competencies of flexibility, teamwork and leadership.

At OSF it’s more than just a job

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Stephanie Coram, recruiter for OSF says that, "Skills can be taught but behaviors are ingrained in people’s personalities. We want to see you can represent the OSF culture."

If you think you might be interested in a career with OSF, here are a couple of suggestions to get you started:

Tip 1- Do clinical rotations or a job shadow. You will get to know the staff, they will get to know you, and you will see if the environment is a good fit.

Tip 2- Learn the mission and ask yourself if it’s a good fit for you.

Contact Career Services at (309) 268-8034 for more information or to set up a job shadow at OSF.