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NEWS RELEASE

Mercy Grows Workforce

Midwest – With an increasing national shortage of nurses and other healthcare workers, Mercy is teaming up with the School at Work (SAW) program to provide job advancement and career development for entry-level co-workers. Just in the past year, 78 co-workers across Mercy's four state service area – Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma – have graduated from the eight-month program.

The SAW “Building a Career Ladder in Healthcare” program uses the internet, computer labs, DVDs and staff coaching to deliver instruction. Co-workers review basic reading, writing and math skills; improve computer proficiency; and study medical terminology, medical ethics, anatomy and physiology. Students also develop an individual career and learning plan to follow in reaching their goals.

“School at Work gave me the confidence to enroll in a nursing program,” said Kathy Logue, a 2009 SAW graduate who started out at Mercy Health Center in Oklahoma City as a housekeeper 24 years ago and today attends nursing school. “I’ve always wanted to be a nurse but for one reason or another, I never got around to it. In the 1990s, I went back to school to get my basics but my mother was diagnosed with cancer and I quit to take care of her. School at Work gave me the incentive to go back to school so I can become a nurse.”

Developed by Louisville, Kentucky-based Catalyst Learning, SAW provides a career ladder emphasizing retention and advancement of entry-level positions into clinical, clerical and support roles. Since 2004, a year after the program got its start, Mercy's investment in SAW career development totals more than \$260,000 with 187 graduates.

“Mercy provides professional development because we want our co-workers to be successful,” said Barb Grayson, a Mercy vice president and SAW coordinator. “This partnership gives our co-workers the opportunity to gain new skills which in turn increases opportunities for better financial stability for them and their families and in the end makes for stronger communities. SAW improves morale, confidence, self esteem and overall job performance, and prepares our co-workers for continuing education in healthcare.”

Mercy -- Sisters of Mercy Health System -- is the eighth largest Catholic health care system in the U.S. and includes 30 hospitals and more than 1,300 integrated physicians in Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma.

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