Throughout a nurse’s education, they are given exposure to caring for patients in units like critical care and pediatrics, but most nurses never work inside of an operating room (OR) during their standard training. Nurses interested in working in the OR generally complete extensive training in perioperative work. However, because this training requires great time dedication, OR nurses start working in the OR generally complete extensive training in perioperative work. However, because this training requires great time dedication, OR nurses start working in units like critical care and pediatrics, are given exposure to caring for patients throughout a nurse’s education, and training to learn the fundamental principles of perioperative nursing.

“We’re thinking of succession and planning in the OR,” said Frances Strauss, DNP, MBA, MHA, RN, CNOR, NE-BC, clinical director of Perioperative Services. “We need to think ahead of staff retiring and begin thinking about how to acquire the talent.” Each cohort consists of three to four participants. Applications are open to any nurse in the area with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing or a valid Pennsylvania RN licensure who has a passion to be a nurse in the operating room. At the completion of the program, the nurses become a member of one of the operating room teams at either PAH, HUP, or PPMC.

“It’s a highly competitive program with so many qualified candidates applying,” said Margaret Vance, MSN, RN, CNOR, clinical nurse education specialist and facilitator of Gateway to the OR. “We want to make sure we’re putting a lot of time and energy into their training, and also discuss goals they have and what they hope to accomplish through the program.”

The accelerated six-month orientation begins with reviewing different educational modules that cover every aspect of the perioperative setting, such as the preoperative, intraoperative, and post-anesthesia phases. Participants are taught environmental cleaning, sterile techniques, and medication administration, and they are paired with a preceptor who monitors their training and is available for questions throughout the program. Along with receiving feedback from these instructors, participants can build skills in shadow experiences with other roles in the OR, allowing them to see the full scope of patient protection.

To conclude the program, the participants engage in an interactive simulation, exemplifying a real-life emergency situation.

“We announce that there is an emergency and that they’re needed immediately. They run to the hallway and the pressure is on,” Vance said. “I time them to see how fast they’re able to set up and if they’re prioritizing the right actions in an emergency situation. After two minutes, I bring back our simulated patient, whether they’re ready or not, which gives them a real sense of pressure and urgency.”

(continued on back)
This year, on September 30, the award honored Altrucia (Trucie) Jones, a food service worker, whose career began at the Spruce building 41 years ago. Held in a virtual setting due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a joyful gathering praised Jones for her dedication to her team and all those she has served both within and outside of PAH’s walls.

“It doesn’t matter the weather, or what’s on her mind, or any issues that have happened, Trucie is as cheery as a sunny day,” said Carolin Tobin, director of Food & Nutrition and Environmental Services. “On a normal day at the cafeteria, she processes transactions, makes coffee, helps patients to their seat, and sometimes manages to do all three at once without missing a beat, and does it with a million-dollar smile.”

While she excels in her work at the PAH cafeteria, she has also championed sock drives, clothing drives, toiletry drives, and food drives at the hospital to support the surrounding community. Outside of PAH, she additionally serves as a volunteer at her church. After working for more than four decades, Jones retired in October, but that hasn’t concluded her passion for service. In her retirement, Jones will be joining the Broad Street Ministry to continue serving the needs of the Philadelphia community.

“I am extremely honored to receive the Hubschman Award, and I am grateful for the recognition of the professional work and the care I have for my fellow employees, patients, and visitors,” said Jones. “This award could not have been possible without the inspiration from my coworkers and colleagues who I deeply respect.”

“I’m always happy to hear how well our participants are doing when we receive feedback about the program,” Strauss said.

Due to the high demand for the program, the program plans on transitioning the six-month orientation to quarterly cohorts, allowing more nurses to gain OR experience in a given year.

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