

## **Road From Housekeeper To Nurse Manager Paved With Education And Motivation**

ROME (June 2004)— Tracy Lynn Archer, R.N., a housekeeper turned nurse, has climbed the career ladder to become a nurse manager in Rome Memorial Hospital's Residential Health Care Facility.

Leaving her position as a manager of a convenience store, Archer joined the hospital's staff as a housekeeper in 1995. As she visited with patients and watched the nurses care for them, she set her sights on becoming more involved in direct patient care.

"I became a nurses' aide, trained as a ward clerk and monitor tech and worked throughout the hospital's medical/surgical units and the emergency room," Archer said. "It was my instructor at Mohawk Valley Community College who urged me to pursue nursing school."

"In 1999, I made the commitment and the hospital helped me by providing financial support, encouragement and flexibility in my work schedule," Archer said. "One of the reasons I wanted to become a nurse is because of the excellent nurses who took care of me when I was in a car accident. In 1987, I spent 63 days in Pediatrics and Shirley Cummings was one of my nurses. I just received such excellent care and admired them for the work they did."

After she graduated from Mohawk Valley Community College in 2002, Archer was oriented as critical care nurse in the Intensive Care Unit. "That first year as a nurse, you're scared to death," she said, noting how important it is to have experienced nurses willing to help new graduates learn the ropes. "Lori Edel was my preceptor and she was wonderful. I still remember how she helped me improve my skills for starting IVs. Now, people turn to me when they have a patient with difficult veins."

Archer's advice for new nurses is don't be afraid to ask questions. "As veteran nurses, we need to be patient and open so new graduates are comfortable asking questions," said Archer, who one day hopes to earn her master's degree.

As a nurse manager in the Residential Health Care Facility, Archer will be responsible for the overall management of 3 East, one of two 40-bed skilled nursing units on the hospital's third floor.

"Tracy's level of self-motivation is to be admired," said Administrator Debra Wurz, vice president Senior Services. "Not only did she advance her education to become a nurse, she developed her management skills by working as the weekend supervisor at Bethany House."

"Tracy's wealth of experience from housekeeping to critical care nurse provides her with valuable insight that enhances her management skills," Wurz said. "She has a really good rapport with people at every level of the organization."

The new manager feels it's important to promote teamwork in order to create a healthy work environment where staff can deliver quality care. "We have a lot of responsibility and if we work together things run more smoothly," Archer said. "Every person, regardless of job title, plays a very important role in caring for our residents. To deliver the best care, we just have to put ourselves in their shoes. Everyone deserves to be treated with dignity, respect, and honesty."

Archer is appreciative of the opportunities that she has had at Rome Memorial Hospital to participate in various committees and improvement teams to further develop her knowledge and skills. "The hospital provides wonderful educational opportunities for advancement," Archer said. "You can become anything you want to be."

Archer said her husband, Ned, was very supportive when she told him she wanted to go to school to become a nurse. The couple even reversed roles with Ned staying home to take care of their children, Matthew, now 13, and Tiffany, now 10.

Archer wants to encourage others to consider a career in nursing. "In nursing, we can all make a difference in a person's life, the way Shirley Cummings made a difference in mine."