ASC employees complete nursing program

August 2, 2018   Nicole Davis

Eighteen American Senior Communities employees were honored this week after completing nursing programs with all costs paid through a program operated by American Senior Communities.

The class of graduates was the largest since the inception of the program. The graduates work at nursing centers operated by American Senior Communities and were participants in the Opportunities to Nursing Excellence program, which paid for all costs of their studies at various accredited colleges to become licensed practical nurses or registered nurses.

Four of the graduates are Indianapolis residents. Those graduates and the senior health communities for which they work are: Gabriela Leiti, RN, Riverwalk Village; Jessica Jordan, RN, Harcourt Terrace; Melissa Bennett, RN, Forest Creek Village; and Crista Wilde, RN, Greenwood Meadows.

Since its inception, the Opportunities to Nursing Excellence (O2NE) program has helped more than 100 men and women become registered nurses and licensed practical nurses. Each year, most of the students graduate with honors and return to work for ASC communities and there is a very high rate of retention with these employees.

During the honors program this week, ASC CEO Donna Kelsey said the impact of the program has been significant statewide. “We are the only company who does this,” she said.

Health and Hospital Corporation (HHC), which owns/operates most of the communities managed by ASC, helped create the program and provides the financial support.
“This is not your traditional employer reimbursement program. This is truly one where we share your life and experiences with you as you go through it,” Shelia Guenin, HHC senior vice president of Long Term Care, said to the graduates.

“You are the true heroes. You make a difference in the lives of so many each and every day as you provide comfort and care with dignity,” Guenin said. “Your new nursing skills are also a great asset in your personal lives as you take your skills outside of work to help your family and friends as their medical encyclopedia and health advocate.”

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ASC locations across the state nominate staff members for the program. Many are nominated while they are working as Certified Nursing Assistants. Selected candidates are offered the opportunity to attend an accredited school of their choice, with all costs fully paid by ASC. They are also given a 30-hour work schedule while being paid for 40 hours, allowing additional time for classes and study without being penalized financially. This unique program also provides financial assistance for childcare, alleviating another common stress point for adults returning to school.

Many O2NE graduates have become leaders in the nursing industry statewide, said Trecia Johnson, who runs the program for ASC. “I think it’s important to emphasize that we are providing solid nursing leaders for the state, not just for ASC.”

Other graduates and the ASC centers that nominated them are: Brianna Grow, LPN, Arbor Grove Village, Greensburg; Stacy Brown, RN, Bethlehem Woods; Stacie Wallace, LPN and Lisa Scott, RN, Heritage Park and Heritage Park Commons in Fort Wayne; Catherine Whallon, RN, Clinton Gardens, Clinton; Larissa Everett, LPN, Edgewater Woods, Anderson; Michele Stensrud, RN and Rick Baker, RN, Hillcrest Village in Clarksville; and Samantha Stout, RN and Jessica Hartley, LPN, Swiss Villa, Vevey; Melanie Garza, LPN, Mt. Vernon Nursing and Rehabilitation, Mt. Vernon; Juan Vicente, LPN, Prairie Village, Washington; Katie Carlson, RN, West Bend Nursing and Rehabilitation, South Bend, and Katelynn Strunk, LPN, Westview Nursing and Rehabilitation, Bedford.

American Senior Communities operates about 90 senior health and living communities in Indiana and Louisville. Services include Moving Forward Rehabilitation, Auguste’s Cottage Memory Care, Skilled Nursing Care, Long Term Care, Respite and Hospice. For more information about American Senior Communities, please visit ASCCare.com.