



AMAZING PEOPLE DOING AMAZING THINGS

Environmental Services – On The Front Lines

Exeter Hospital's Environmental Services (EVS) team has received many compliments over the years regarding the cleanliness of our facilities. They have always been a respected and important part of our front line staff. But with the current pandemic, the work they do has taken on extra meaning. "Cleanliness, sanitation, and infection prevention has always been our priority," says **Rick Belschner**, Department Supervisor. "Because of the risk of infection from the virus, we have had to elevate our standards to an even higher level." He says his team has had to redefine, rethink, and adjust to different ways of doing things, including implementing around-the-clock disinfection of high touch surfaces, increased safety protocols, and paying extra attention to detail in patient rooms.



This would be impossible, however, without additional staff. So in early March, Rick and Department Director **Marian Ganley**, requested help from the Labor Pool that had been established by Human Resources. The Labor Pool was designed to redeploy employees who either had no work or reduced schedules due to service lines being suspended. Soon Rick and Marian were training staff from Core Physicians practices, including Gastroenterology and Pediatric Dentistry, as well as from Hospital departments including Central Sterile Supply, Echocardiogram, Health Information Management, Patient Access, and Patient Accounts.

"I want to thank Kevin Callahan for allowing this opportunity for displaced workers," says **Joan Croston**, a Dental Assistant with Core's Pediatric Dental Practice who was redeployed to EVS. "It has been an eye opening experience in many ways that I will never forget. My trainers, Jenn (Hale), along with Rick and Marian, have been extremely pleasant, instructional, and complimentary."

All employees who were redeployed to EVS went through a two day training class that included an orientation to the Hospital and the Saltonstall building, and covered cleaning protocols, safety, and elevated awareness about personal protective equipment. "It was one of the best things I have ever done," says **Tammy Gaylord**, a Supervisor in Exeter Hospital's Patient Accounts Department. "I always knew how hard the Environmental Services team worked, but I now have a different level of respect for what they do." Similar to what Joan expressed, Tammy says the members of the Patient Accounts team also feel fortunate to be working during a time of crisis and job instability. "We truly feel the organization and management are looking out for us, and appreciate the opportunity to continue working."

Tammy and Joan also say everyone who was redeployed to EVS has felt supported. Rick and Marian hold daily huddles to address concerns and answer questions, and also make themselves available at night and on weekends to help with any issues that arise. They know how important that is, due to the stress of the additional workload and the uncertainty of the situation everyone has been working in for the past six weeks. "The staff of Environmental Services are among those unsung heroes who are out on the front lines working hard to keep patients and employees safe," Rick says. "The work they are doing is extremely important and we are grateful for their contributions. That's why we want to make sure we are available if they need help, as well as to provide reassurance and acknowledge their efforts." Rick and Marian also want to thank the staff from the various departments and physician practices who have stepped up to assist. "There is no way we could have done this without them, so we are very appreciative."

Rick says he realizes many of the employees who were redeployed from other areas were anxious and unsure at first, but once they received training and felt more comfortable, they were ready and willing to help. "We are so fortunate to have these employees join us. There are many, such as **Nellie Butler** from Patient Access, who have a positive attitude and are willing to perform any task at any time," he says. Tammy says the Patient Accounts team feels proud and privileged to have been asked to help out in Environmental Services. "Everyone, including our Department Director, **Tracie Kirby**, stepped up and pulled together to help out EVS and each other as well. It really is proof of what we can accomplish working *together as one*."