

news

2016 Circle of Excellence Award Winners - *Faculty Winners Edition*

Please join me in congratulating the EA Class of 2016 Circle Of Excellence winners!

My 'A-ha!' moment today was reading these diverse and inspiring bios from people who truly enjoy what they do and are very good at it.

We all are changing people's lives every day!

- Duncan Anderson

Melanie Estes MA Centerville	James Huff Class A CDL Lester
Tara Staggers DA Columbia	Nichole Briggs SGT Nashville
Said Chaouki RT Columbus	Dr. Pamala Fair MLT Nashville
Kelleigh Bonaventura ST Columbus	Robert Taylor HVACR Norfolk
Tamara Daniels RT Cookeville	Toni Boucher MA/MABXO Orange Park
Dr. Octavio Mora, Jr. Allied Health Cutler Bay	Candi Kilgore DA Orange Park
Dawn Babbitt MBC Cuyahoga Falls	Rory Shields DA Pensacola
Steve Luzier CIS Erie	Debra Bradford MBC Port Saint Lucie
Terri Williams MA/MBC Essington	Meghan Cassidy Gen. Ed. (ENG) Queens
Suzanne Tuzinski MA Forty Fort	Dustin Mills Welding Ravenna
Carl Roy HVACR Houston North	Mary Sotelo DA Salt Lake City
Natasha Holden MA Houston South	Dr. Jane Muriithi DA Smyrna
Lesia Crane DHG Landover	Dr. Monika Chodosh Lab Tech Wayne
Asma Hijazi MLT Landover	Sheena Licata PHT Wayne
David Rockett Class A CDL Lester	Ann Marie Amari MBC Wayne



Tara Staggers

Tara Staggers is a Dental Assistant instructor at Fortis College in Columbia, South Carolina. Part of the Fortis family for just under two years, Tara has more than 22 years of professional experience, instructing, mentoring and managing facilities at all levels. Her practical experience provides both the knowledge and skills to provide classroom instruction augmented by day-to-day experiences.



A graduate of Central Texas College and AMEDD Center and Schools, Tara needs little motivation to come to work because she enjoys doing her job. Seeing students using their learned skills, hearing their success stories, and seeing smiles of achievement make her day.

When peers seek Tara's advice so they can emulate her success, she tells them, "Invest in your students. Let them know you care about their success and want to help them be successful."

Tara became an instructor because she's always derived pleasure teaching and sharing with others. She comes to work each day prepared and happy, and makes sure to remind her students of the benefits their education can provide for their future and that of their families. It's a contagious attitude that's reflected in her students.

Tara is married with three children – two college graduates and a 5th grader who, no doubt, is destined for success as well.

Said Chaouki

A member of the Radiography faculty at Fortis College in Columbus, Said Chaouki has worked as a radiology technologist at local hospitals for many years. His extensive work experience enables him to share valuable real world work knowledge with his students.



Said's motivation is rooted in helping students succeed, sparked by training newly hired technologists as part of his hospital job. "It inspired me to share my knowledge with others, which, in turn, led me to Fortis," he notes.

Why Fortis? "For-profit schools offer opportunities to all different levels of student, including slower learners," Said says. "We spend more time with students to help them succeed."

Said believes going to work each day with a positive attitude leads to success. And, by dedicating his time on campus to his students, Said feels he is better able to help them achieve their academic and lifetime goals.

In addition to his relative work experience, Said brings solid academics to the classroom as well. His Associate Degree in Radiology is backed by a bachelor's degree in Business Administration. Married, with four children, he finds family to be a strong influence in his life and career as well.

Mary Sotelo

Lead instructor for the Allied Health programs at Fortis College in Salt Lake City, Mary Sotelo served 18 years as a dental assistant before joining Fortis. Combined with her associates degree, those practical years in the field prepared Mary for her current position.



Inspired by both her students and the campus staff, Mary says Fortis students have an excellent chance to succeed and realize their dreams, adding her favorite Aha! moments are the shouts of "GREAT JOB!" as students walk across the stage during graduation. "It gives me goosebumps," She notes.

Mary's 'secret sauce' for success really isn't a secret – she just positively embraces it each and every day: "Stand tall. Believe you can, and you will." She obviously believes...and does.

A desire to share what she knows...and have others pass it along, led Mary to become a teacher. She inspires students by letting them know she'll always be there when they need her and letting every student know there is greatness inside each of them.

Always in class early to be better prepared, Mary often chats with students to gauge how well she's getting their attention, and who might need extra focus. She motivates students by reaching out and asking "how can I help?" "I offer tutoring whenever I see a student struggle," Mary says, adding, "they love the one-on-one time."

Mary jokes she has too many favorite quotes to list just one. Probably one for each of her four children and five grandchildren. And, don't forget Carter – a chocolate lab who's a longstanding member of the family, too.

Kelleigh Bonaventura

With a BA in Psychology and a surgical technology program on her resume, Kelleigh Bonaventura is an Adjunct Professor of Surgical Technology at Fortis College in Columbus. Kelleigh has worked as a surgical technologist for 16 years, and uses her operating room experience to teach others how to be successful in the profession.

Her motivation for showing up at work each day comes from within: "I love what I do. It's as simple as that," Kelleigh says. Some of her proudest moments come when her students gown and glove themselves for the first time, taking that initial step toward becoming surgical technologists. "I'm glad I can be part of that," she proudly states.

Her advice on being successful is somewhat repetitious: "Practice, practice, practice!" Kelleigh turned to teaching because she was looking for a challenge. She found it – but loves every minute. "I am happy to teach my profession to others," Kelleigh says, adding, "I really feel we are making a difference."

To motivate and engage student, Kelleigh shows them real work videos and tells them about the many experiences she's had in her career. She also gets to know them and helps them visualize themselves as surgical technologists. "Live the life you've imagined," she tells them. And, she uses lots of games in class. "My students love games," she notes.

Kelleigh is married and has a son, two cats, 15 goldfish...and a frog! We can't imagine where she finds the time!

Tamara Daniels

A Radiologic Technology instructor at Fortis Institute in Centerville, Tamara Daniels exemplifies the best of instructors. Registered in X-ray and CT, Tamara has been working in the profession at St. Thomas Stones River Hospital for nearly 13 years and provides this real-world knowledge to her students.



A career in Radiologic technology has been a blessing to Tamara, and says she enjoys being able to give others “that same opportunity that truly makes me happy.” She finds rewards in watching new, unsure students tremendously improve their skills by the end of the term.

Tamara got involved in teaching nine years ago when she began home-schooling her kids. She learned students succeed when they learn at their own pace, and can give their best in return. Tamara embraces the Fortis system because its smaller class sizes provide greater opportunity for students and instructors to connect, meaning students don’t “get lost in the shuffle.”

Do you know the game Kahoot? Tamara’s students do...and they love playing it. She uses the interactive game to help them review for tests. “I use a variety of interactive games and hands-on learning to help keep students engaged and on their toes,” she says. Their success is validation of this “out-of-the-box” approach.

Married for 22 years and with two teens...and a dog...Tamara loves traveling and just spending time with family and friends.

Steve Luzier

A Department Chair at Fortis Institute in Erie overseeing the Computer Information Systems program, Steve Luzier is happiest when he sees students graduate and move into a computer-focused career in the marketplace.



Prior to joining the Fortis family, he was a mortgage broker and senior loan officer.

Working toward a bachelor’s degree in Computer Science - Cyber Security, Steve says the management experience he gained in the mortgage arena is put to good use at Fortis.

Asked how and why he is successful, Steve replies with just four words: “Presence, and being responsible.” It works for him, and likely will for many others. He inspires his students showing them how to do the work and letting them know “it is doable.”

To help motivate them, he leads by example – in the way he speaks and how he dresses, then builds rapport by letting them know he is “their go-to person” on campus. It’s working.

Married, Steve has two daughters so family is important to him. But, in his own words: “The world revolves around the Dallas Cowboys!”

Meghan Cassidy

An English instructor at St. Paul’s School of Nursing in Queens, Meghan Cassidy’s previous experience teaching middle and high school English enables her to effectively work with diverse student groups and various levels of learners. With an MS in Education and a BA in English, she shares her love of reading with each of her students.

“Teaching English in a Nursing School is a hard-sell,” Meghan notes, knowing her students have taken similar classes before. “But I tell them they will learn new things and...most times...at semester’s end they tell me I was right!”

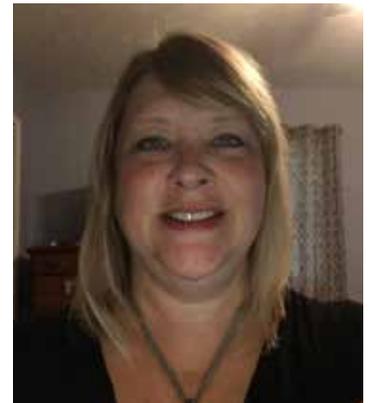
Meghan got into teaching because she wanted a career that would help make a difference in others’ lives. She enjoys being in a for-profit education system because, “Our teachers continuously are offered professional development and training.” It helps instructors be more professional, open-minded, and connect with their students.

Meghan constantly focuses on trying to support every student and push them toward their goal. A favorite class activity for engaging students involves one student writing down 10 nouns and 10 adjectives. A second student chooses one and writes a monologue based on the 20 words, then everyone tries to guess the author and what he or she is talking about.

Her favorite quote comes from a doctor – Dr. Seuss! “Sometimes the questions are complicated and the answers are simple.” We love it!

Dawn Babbitt

A certified professional coder with more than 27 years of experience in the field, Dawn Babbitt brings a wealth of on-the-job learning to her medical billing and coding classes at Fortis Cuyahoga Falls. An adjunct faculty member, Dawn’s expertise falls on the coding side of her profession; however, she also has 10 years of experience in medical billing and accounts receivable for both physician practices and hospital facilities.



“Working in the coding/billing part of the healthcare industry helps me teach others how the industry works and what to expect,” Dawn says. “It also keeps me current on coding and billing changes so my students also receive the latest updates.”

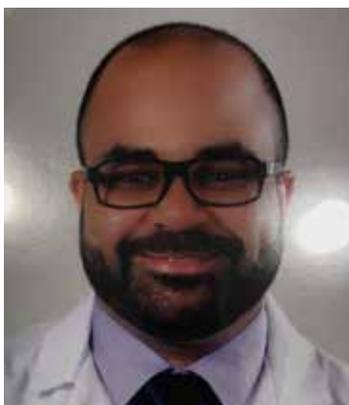
Students motivate Dawn to always be at her best. Not only does she love to see them succeed, she says she never knows whose life she might impact on any given day...or how. One of the first things Dawn learned after she began teaching is that not all students learn in the same way. “I learned to differentiate my lessons and how to personalize learning based on each student’s abilities and learning style,” she notes.

Having taught at larger universities, Dawn appreciates the fact that student-teacher ratios at Fortis are smaller, allowing for more on-one teaching. “You are a person at Fortis, not just a number,” she says.

Dawn always takes a positive approach to each days and says the secret to success is to always be yourself...and love what you do. Good advice...and a great outlook.

Dr. Octavio Mora, Jr.

Dean of Education at Fortis College in Cutler Bay, Octavio Mora, Jr. has been part of the EA family for nearly four-and-a-half years. Prior to EA, Mora served as a medical assistant and doctor with the Dominican military, where his work instilled discipline and a deep work ethic in addition to exposing him to people from all walks of life. This provides both an insight and empathy toward his students, faculty and administrators.



Mora became a teacher upon perceiving the need for knowledgeable, empathetic educators. Each day he looks forward to an opportunity to be the “ripple that instills change” by motivating a student or colleague. As for an experience that stands out, Mora says, “A former nursing student of mine was a hospital healthcare provider for my mother and, since, I’ve learned she’s a decorated, invaluable member of the unit. It makes me proud.”

Mora inspires students through his actions, and very animated classes. He enjoys showing them how each topic relates to everyday use in a medical setting, and keeps them progressing by “reminding them of their goals and what is waiting for them at the end of this journey.”

One of Mora’s cardinal rules is to never talk down to students, but always treat them with respect and address each one as Mister or Ms. You understand his patience when he tells you his favorite quote: “Rome wasn’t built in a day.”

When not on campus, Mora can typically be found attending to his salt and fresh water fish tanks or spending time with his cats – Sumo and Sushi.

Dustin Mills

Dustin Mills is Welding Department Chair at Fortis College in Ravenna, who studied Business Administration at Kent State University. He finds his work in Fitter Material Control and as a welder under strict code enables him to teach proper welding techniques to students.



Dustin’s workplace motivation was ingrained by his parents, who gave him a strong work ethic – something he instills in his “kids” today. He says the secret to success is really no secret at all – “Just be yourself.”

He sees Fortis schools as educational models where graduates can be working in good trade jobs in less than a year, in some cases. Dustin’s A-Ha! moments come when, in his words, “I see students going out and giving a good day’s work and receiving a decent wage as welders.” It’s successes such as those that make him proud to be where he is.

Dustin turned to education because he finds reward in others’ success. He believes the one-on-one instruction welding demands keeps students engaged. To inspire them to do their best, he says, “I don’t accept average work from better-than-average students.”

Those who take a Dustin course are likely to get a good dose of Bruce Lee! His favorite quote is: “Use only that which works, and take it from any place you can find it.”

Suzanne Tuzinski

Lead Allied Health Programs instructor and Externship coordinator at Fortis Institute in Forty Fort, Suzanne Tuzinski brings a wealth of relevant experience to her job. A registered nurse (RN), she has worked in both orthopedics and physicians’ offices, gaining experience in dialysis, Burn Unit intensive care, and long-term alcohol and drug treatment options.



Through the years, Suzanne learned the best ways to communicate with people from all walks of life, at various stages of their lives – skills she puts to use today at Fortis. Her favorite memories are when she meets former students in the professional world as they care for her family. “I get great satisfaction from that,” she says.

She enjoys playing a part in students’ transition from being unsure and lacking confidence to becoming proud of themselves, and being ready to take on the rest of their lives. Suzanne often tells student prospects her school is one of the best...and quickest... ways to develop a career and enter the workforce.

As for her recipe for success, Suzanne says, “Every day, remember that you make a difference, that people are watching you, and that you may be someone’s mentor. Keep these things always in mind, and you’ll succeed.”

She loves motivating students with Stump the Teacher Days – opportunities to challenge her with questions related to their classroom topic. “It makes all of us think hard about the subject... which is a good thing,” she proclaims.

When not at school, Suzanne enjoys traveling, cooking and spending time with her husband, 12-year-old son, and two married

Toni Boucher

Toni Boucher is Program Director for the Medical Assisting and Medical Assistant with Basic X-ray programs at Fortis College in Orange Park. Thirty-two years as a Registered Radiologic Technologist and 14 more as a Medical Assistant/clinical site instructor provide extensive experience and expertise in the fields. Having worked in stressful healthcare professionals, she’s conditioned to remain calm...even when situations become very hectic.

Her students and faculty are prime motivators on campus. “I need and want to be there for them,” Toni says. She truly enjoys watching “students turn into professionals,” and “helping struggling students succeed, which leads to tears and hugs with appreciation.”

Undergoing radiographer training in a teaching hospital, inspired Toni to help teach others. When offered an opportunity to be a clinical site instructor, she jumped at the chance. Based on her teaching experiences, she says instructors need to mentor their students. “This inspires them to do their best and provides a role model for the traits and styles they can use on the job.”

Toni believes motivating students is critical for guiding them to completion and graduation, which means tutoring, when needed, and making “dry material” interesting.

Her favorite quote? “Live well, laugh often, love much.” Good advice for us all.

Les Crane

Dental Hygiene Program Director at Fortis College in Landover, Les Crane draws upon solid academic credentials in her job. Lisa holds a Master of Art in Healthcare Administration, a BS in Health Sciences, and an AAS in Dental Hygiene. A member of the EA family for nearly six years, she joined the Landover campus from Germanna Community College, where she was assistant program coordinator for the Dental Hygiene Program.



Les arrives at work each day knowing she can make a difference for future dental hygienists. "I love my profession and want our students to love it as much as I do," she shares. "Seeing students grasp difficult concepts or procedures and knowing they then can move forward in the profession, is always a thrill for me."

She believes schools like Fortis-Landover are special because of their smaller class sizes and the personal attention students receive from faculty who are available whenever they're needed. Her advice to others wishing to achieve success is simple: "Be enthusiastic and love what you do. If you love what you do, you'll never 'work' a day in your life."

She motivates students through regular conversations in which she tells them to always focus on the prize...and keep moving toward their degree. "Keep your eye on the prize. Never let them see you sweat. And Just Do It," are quotes Les's students hear often.

Les loves to travel and music. If you hear singing in the classroom...it's probably Les!

Dr. Jane Muriithi

A member of the Medical Assisting faculty at Fortis College in Smyrna, Jane Muriithi has a medical degree and worked as a medical doctor in Kenya before coming to EA five years ago. The experience of training upcoming doctors in a teaching hospital there, prepared her well for becoming a Fortis instructor.



Why does she come to work every day? "To change lives," Jane says. "One changed life is a changed village/community. Each student is an instrumental gift and helping them realize their potential and purpose contributes to them and their families, but also to the community."

She is inspired by students who are able to be great when taking on bigger careers, along with those who become the first in their family to graduate college. She sees Fortis as the students' backbone, supporting and encouraging them to succeed. She believes the environment is such a good one "because we focus on you – the student – and care about your success."

To those seeking to emulate her, Jane says, "Know your students. Help them achieve their dreams." She achieves that by acknowledging and focusing on them, giving them her very best, and including hands-on teamwork in every class.

Failing is NOT an option in her class. "I believing in tutoring, teamwork, and spending one-on-one time with students," she notes. Basically, Jane is living her favorite quote: "Be the change you wish to see in the world."

Asma Hijazi

Asma Hijazi serves on the Medical Laboratory Technology adjunct faculty at Fortis College in Landover. A clinical laboratory scientist with a bachelor's degree in Medical Technology and a master's in Lab Management prior to coming to Fortis, Asma is able to teach her students the practical clinical lab skills they will need for their externships and on the job.



Knowing she helps students become successful in changing their lives is all Asma need to gear up for the job each day. As an example, she recalls one student who came to Fortis from poverty and a broken home. Eighteen months after graduation the student called Asma to say she had been made a supervisor, moved into her first apartment and bought her first car. "I was so proud," Asma says. "It taught me I truly do have the power to help my students become better."

She believes the smaller class sizes at Fortis is a big reason why students at the campus get the help they might not at traditional schools. Asma tells colleagues when you see students every day, you can tell when something is wrong. Those who support their students and motivate them are the ones who will be successful.

"There is nothing more rewarding than knowing, with each class, your students are closer to turning their lives around," Asma notes. "Even the hardest of students mellows when they know an instructor really cares."

Asma was looking for a family-friendly, part-time job in her field when she got into teaching. "Little did I know how rewarding teaching is," she exclaims, while promoting professionalism by "leading by example."

James Huff

A Driving Instructor at All-State Career in Lester, Jim Huff also is a CDL class A driver and shop manager. Experienced in both driving and the mechanical/regulatory aspects of the industry, Jim knows the road well. As a former student in the program he now teaches, he also knows what his students need...and expect.



Why attend All-State Career? "Driver demand is high, and I've seen the difference students can make in their lives in a short amount of time," Jim notes. His secret for success? According to Jim, "Don't lose sight of your students as people, or the families they provide for."

After spending 13 years on the road, Jim got into teaching because it was a chance to do something different. Now he says it's "what I have a passion for doing." He uses his drive to work to clear his mind of anything not class-related so he walks into the classroom focused on what he needs to do.

And Jim always sets a good example for his students, wearing a uniform each day, always acting professionally, and treating students as professionals as well.

Married, with two children, Jim enjoys playing golf and coaching his youth lacrosse team. To get his attention, do we yell "Fore?" Or "Quick Stick?"

Candi Kilgore



Candi Kilgore is the Dental Assisting Program Director for Fortis College in Orange Park. A seven-and-a-half-year veteran of the EA family, Candi has 31 years of experience in dental assisting, providing her students with a real-life education that can help prepare them for success in their field.

Helping to change the lives of her students, motivates Candi in her professional life. “I do everything I can to provide my students a specific skill set and mold them professionally so they can establish a rewarding career,” she explains. “What makes Fortis unique is the family environment and focus on students – we assist them in any way we can on the path to success.”

Structure, consistency and respect are Candi’s keys to success. She advises her colleagues to always listen, assist and guide students, while holding them accountable for doing their own part in achieving that goal. As for keeping students motivated, she relies on plenty of critical thinking, hands-on activities and group discussions.

She became a teacher for the personal challenge, but also to witness the sense of excitement and accomplishment students feel when completing their program. Her favorite quote comes from the Dalai Lama – “Our prime purpose in life is to help others. If you can’t help them at least don’t hurt them.”

“Seeing students walk across the stage at graduation is worth the investment of time and talent. There’s no greater reward,” Candi says.

Melanie Estes

Fortis College in Centerville Medical Assisting instructor Melanie Estes, draws upon her experience in a variety of settings, from a hospital cardiac care unit to family practice and pain management office to prepare her students for real-life healthcare delivery. With a B.A. in Psychology and LPN Melanie uses all the tools at her disposal to help her students understand the curriculum.

“I enjoy teaching students. We implement hands-on activities to engage them...and, I happen to work on a great team,” she adds.

Melanie is particularly thrilled when students return from externships where they were able to apply their in-school lessons to field activities. She believes the smaller classes at Fortis help make this possible because instructors are able to sit down, one-on-one with students to better explain how everything works together.

Melanie says her secret to success is quite simple: Work hard, show up and stay up-to-date on all the important information. Healthcare changes daily; to be successful you must acquire and maintain new knowledge.

“A healthcare team is only as strong as its weakest link. I want to train MAs to be the best in their field,” Melanie says, explaining why she got into teaching. “I’m always pushing them to do better by showing them where they could be in five years.”

Pregnant with her second child, she’ll have some teaching to do at home as well!

Dr. Pamala Fair



Medical Laboratory Technology Program Director for Fortis Institute in Nashville, Pamala Fair has 20+ years of experience as a laboratory scientist. Coupled with a Ph.D. and Master’s degree in Clinical Health Science and a BS in Clinical Laboratory Science, she has a plethora of knowledge to share with students.

Seeing the demographic of her students and how hard they work to grasp lab concepts so they can get ahead motivates Pamala to help them achieve success. Based upon her work and passion for the Blood Bank, she gets a special feeling when the light bulb goes off as students successfully deal with multiple antibodies.

Pamala loves her profession and got into teaching to educate future laboratory scientists because it’s so rewarding. She’s an advocate of the Fortis learning system because, “We offer a high quality MLT education and have a strong success rate for student certification exams when compared to other schools.”

Pamala faces each day with faith and determination that she will make a difference in her students’ lives, adding that her formula for success is to “Stay active in your professional society, and listen to your students.” Her students are successful because Pamala’s always calling, testing or emailing them to keep in touch, offers personal tutoring and always has an “open door.” Sounds exhausting but, as she says, “Learning never exhausts the mind.”

Dr. Monika Chodosh



Monika Chodosh is a 10-year EA veteran who currently is a Lab Technician instructor at Fortis Institute in Wayne. With both a Master’s and Ph.D. in molecular biology, years of laboratory experience, including teaching undergraduate lab classes, high school biology, and working in labs, she’s certainly qualified – academically and experientially – in her field.

Her laboratory skills and techniques were honed through these varied experiences, along with participating in collaborative efforts with diverse colleagues. Her teaching stints introduced her to students across a wide range of backgrounds and ages. “I love sharing my enthusiasm and experiences with students so they can become more confident and competent in the lab and excited about their career potential,” Monika says. “I’m also grateful for the opportunity to work with great colleagues.”

Monika is always amazed to witness the persistence and dedication of students to complete their education despite all the challenges they might face. She calls their successes “fantastic” and loves to hear from graduates about their new careers – especially when they tell current students about their experiences. She’s an advocate of the relevant course material and hands-on courses offered by Fortis, as well as the small classes, less debt and high graduation rates than found at many other options.

Three daughters and a cat, reading and gardening keep Monika busy, but she still always brings fresh enthusiasm, relevant current events, and a little something personally motivating into every class she leads.

Nichole Briggs

A native of Milford, Connecticut, Nichole Briggs is a Surgical Technology instructor at Fortis Institute-Nashville. During her 10 years as a surgical technologist, she was always a preceptor to new students and learned she loved working with new scrub techs. “Teaching just came naturally,” Nichole professes.

A Certified Surgical Technologist with a new Associate’s Degree in Business, Nichole gets motivation from her students. “Where would I be without them?” she asks. Believing that changing lives affects her as much as her students, Nichole has no specific A-Ha moment, but she always feels energized when the light bulb turns on in her students. “The look on their cases is priceless,” she notes.

Why attend Fortis Institute? Nichole says students not only can obtain their Surgical Technology certification, they also receive an Associate’s Degree – “PLUS the bonus of having the BEST Surgical Tech instructor around!” she adds with a laugh.

Nichole approaches each day feeling blessed that she’s been given another day to teach her students something new. “Keep a positive attitude. Always have a smile on your face. And, laugh at everything,” she advises those around her.

Nichole believes our brains believe what we tell them, so she always encourages her students to tell their brains positive things. She keeps her students engaged by utilizing a variety of techniques – game playing, hands-on activities, and candy. “Lots of candy!” Nichole exclaims.

With a daughter in middle school, two cats, a dog, mouse and two fish, Nichole has been known to joke that her husband “is my second child! LOL.” LOL indeed!

Terri Williams

A Philly native, Terri Williams is the Allied Health Program Chair for All-State Career in Essington. A pediatric medical assistant for six years, along with two years in a multi-specialty clinic and her work as an instructor, helped prepare Terri for her current position at All-State Career. Her progression from medical assistant to MA instructor, “Provided me with the different aspects of what is required to ensure success in the field,” she notes.



Terri’s daily motivation comes from the opportunity to educate as well as learn. In fact, she borrows her favorite quote from Phil Collins: “In learning, you will teach; and, in teaching, you will learn.” Based upon her experiences at All-State Career and other schools, she has found that support for students – especially for those facing difficulties that may impact their studies – makes all the difference.

She says All-State fills in the gap for certain students who need educational structure but may feel out of place at a traditional college. Terri says she motivates students by being an unwavering source of support for them. When she finds students who are in danger of failing, Terri does her best to get to the root problem and offer solutions to get them back on track. It works more times than not.

A single Mom with a daughter, Chloe, Terri enjoys spending time with family, being politically active, and watching the Philadelphia Eagles!

Rory Shields

With a bachelor’s degree in Biological Sciences and 18 years of dental experience, Rory Shields, serves as Dental Assisting Program Director at Fortis Institute in Pensacola. The dental experience provides a broader sense of the profession in the education students receive preparing to embark on a career Rory deeply loves.



“Going above and beyond, by providing everyone more than they expect is what motivates me, and the change from apprehensive new student to delivering a valedictorian speech brings impeccable feelings of gratitude,” Rory says. Knowing the faculty and staff at Fortis has had such a huge impact on student successes also provides deep satisfaction.

Why become a teacher? “To inspire and mentor,” Rory notes. “Also to change lives and give students something they can carry with them every day in the future.” The key to engaging students is to let them recapture the desire and excitement they felt on the first day of class.

Married with one son, Rory often focuses on a favorite quote for inspiration: “Knowledge is the most powerful weapon.”

Rory’s students get to feel that power.

Debra Bradford

A Medical Billing and Coding instructor at Fortis Institute in Port St. Lucie, Florida, Debra Bradford is a 20-year veteran of the U.S. Air Force with 12 years of experience at Education Affiliates and five years within a hospital health system.



Debra’s diverse background taught her organizational skills, preparedness, research capabilities, and people/communication skills – all of which are applicable to being a strong educator. A Master’s in Human Resources and bachelor’s degree in Business Administration and Management add academic credentials.

She loves teaching because it keeps her young mentally. “I’m continually learning from my students, and I love it when I see how happy they are when they master skills required for their careers,” Debra shares. She takes pride in her students who become national certified and become elected officers in their respective coding chapters. “I love knowing I played a part in their success,” she says.

Debra became a teacher because she had “incomparable mentors” who helped her. She’s never forgotten their support and wants to do the same for others. “I realize I have knowledge that students are eager to learn. I’m happy to share with them,” Debra notes. By showing students how to do something, then letting them practice it themselves, she fosters engagement.

Off the job, Debra loves to read, take road trips, and spend time with her daughter, grandson and “one crazy calico cat!”

Ann Marie Amari



Ann Marie Amari is the Medical Billing and Coding Program Director for Fortis Institute in Wayne. A member of the EA family for eight years, she has more than 30 years of hospital billing experience, which enables her to provide students the most up-to-date knowledge in the profession.

“I also bring lots of ‘real world’ experience into the classroom setting,” she adds. “My experience is 100-percent on-the-job training.”

Ann Marie’s motivation comes from student excitement when they’re about to begin their externships. “Their confidence has gone from zero to 100 in a matter of months,” she notes. As for an A-Ha moment, she looks no further than a student juggling school and family who just couldn’t cope and was about to drop out. “We worked out a plan and, two years later, she’s managing a billing company,” Ann Marie says. “Sometimes they just want someone to listen.”

Ann Marie’s path to success is built on enjoyment – enjoying what she does with a ‘team’ that enjoys working together. Her favorite quote embodies that: “Every day may not be good, but there is GOOD in every day. I try to instill that in all my students.”

At the start of each course, Ann Marie asks students what type of learner they are...then uses the information to design her lessons to the students. What a great approach!

Married, with five children, a granddaughter and a cat, Ann Marie loves to read and admits to being a reality show “junkie.”

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