


NURSES: INSPIRE, INNOVATE, INFLUENCE

SHANDRA JONES, RN, BSN

Giving Back to The Glades

Double duty: A profile of a school nurse and ER nurse with the Health Care District of Palm Beach County



Shandra Jones is among more than 200 school nurses who staff health rooms in 166 public schools. For many students, the school nurse is the only health care provider they see all year.

When a 13-year-old student at Lakeshore Middle School in Belle Glade was recently diagnosed with diabetes, her school nurse made an overwhelming situation become manageable. Shandra Jones, RN, BSN taught the student the importance of following a healthy diet and showed her how to use a glucometer to monitor her blood sugar. She also guided the student's mother to obtain health coverage to lower the cost of her daughter's medication. Jones monitors the student's condition daily and they have developed a close bond.

"I like to establish a good relationship with students and teach them how to lead a healthy lifestyle," Jones said.

The rates of new diagnosed cases of diabetes are surging among children and teens in the U.S. and according to the National Institutes of Health, the fastest rise is among minority groups.

Jones helps students in her hometown of Belle Glade manage diabetes and other chronic conditions such as ADHD, asthma and seizure disorders. She educates students, parents and teachers about proper care, diet and early warning signs. She also follows physicians' orders to dispense students' medications in school. For many students, the school

nurse is the only health care provider they see all year.

Jones knew she wanted to be a nurse since she was in the sixth grade. Jones attended South University in Royal Palm Beach to earn her BSN in nursing while working as an admitting specialist at the former Glades General Hospital in Belle Glade. Jones transitioned to Lakeside Medical Center, the acute care teaching hospital owned and operated by the Health Care District of Palm Beach County, after it replaced Glades General in 2009. There she advanced to the position of ER nurse. After her third child came along, Jones began a new career as a school nurse with the Health Care

District's School Health program. She is among more than 200 school nurses who staff health rooms in 166 public schools.

Not only is Jones committed to the health of her students, she is also on call as needed as a PRN ER nurse at Lakeside Medical Center and Hendry Regional Medical Center.

"I love the fast pace and hands-on approach of the ER and I am always learning a lot."

Jones is proud of her roots in this rural, agricultural community. She and her husband are raising their children in Belle Glade. Every month you can find her teaching members of her local church about important health issues. She distributes educational flyers and demonstrates how to take one's blood pressure. In the future, she hopes to volunteer locally in the field of public health and eventually become a nurse practitioner.

"I just love to give back to the people in my community where I have lived my whole life. Our health is most important – without that nothing else really matters."

The Palm Beach Post has teamed with Palm Health Foundation, Tenet Health and VITAS Healthcare to salute nurses. Go to PalmHealthFoundation.org to read more.

