

After 20 years as a caregiver, raising four children of her own and caring for many others, Stacie McKay decided to turn an idea that had been floating in her mind for years into reality. She would become a nurse.

“I made the decision to enroll but still had reservations about how I was going to be able to be financially secure while being successful as a student,” said McKay, the inpatient unit secretary at Memorial Hospital in Carthage. “I addressed my concerns with colleagues and that is when I learned about the Grow Our Own fund.”

It’s also a way to address one of the biggest issues before hospital leaders: staffing shortages. McKay is one of several Memorial team members who’ve benefited from the program.

“I am blessed to have a supportive family but without financial help, I would not be able to pursue my dream career,” she said. “When I come to work, I feel like I have my very own cheering squad. I can’t wait to learn from my colleagues this summer as an intern and work beside them in the future as a nurse!”

To build up the program, in 2022 the Memorial Hospital Foundation launched a Grow Our Own Scholarship Campaign to provide the financial support that staff need to pursue their dreams.

Just like McKay, Chief Nursing Officer Raigan Brown had an itch to grow in her career: “After having a couple of great mentors within the organization, my love turned to leadership. My role soon evolved from staff nursing, to clinic nursing management, to the inpatient and emergency department director, and now to chief nursing officer.”

Because of Grow Our Own, Brown was able to get her Master of Health Administration and CEO Certification from the National Rural Health Association.

“These educational opportunities have provided me with the knowledge to help ensure that patients receive outstanding care within our organization,” she said. “I want to ensure that my passion for rural health and the education I have received will continue to help Memorial Hospital thrive as an organization.”

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