

St. Luke's Monroe Campus Offers NCC Students Nursing and EMT Scholarships

By Sam Kennedy

BARTONSVILLE - St. Luke's Monroe Campus and area educators are working together to create a new scholarship program for high school students that promises a win-win. The brainchild of the Monroe County's Pathway Coalition, the scholarship program is an example of local employers and schools working together to meet the community's staffing and healthcare needs.

Through the program, St. Luke's will pay the tuition costs of students attending Northampton Community College – Monroe Campus (NCC) nursing and emergency medicine technician (EMT) programs. In return, scholarship recipients agree to work at the St. Luke's Monroe Campus for two years after graduation. It's a win for all involved, the students, their high schools, NCC and St. Luke's Monroe Campus.

St. Luke's Monroe Campus President Donald Seiple said the scholarship program is an outgrowth of his work with the Monroe County's Pathway Coalition, which incorporates representatives from each of the county's four school districts, two colleges and industry. Seiple serves on the Coalition's Executive Council with Precie Schroyer, PhD, Associate Dean, NCC-Monroe Campus. The Coalition formed out of concern for a decline in the county's 18-29 age group because of the county's youth leaving for jobs out of the area.

"We're very excited about the program and the opportunity to partner with St. Luke's Monroe Campus moving forward," Schroyer said.

The program will benefit continuously expanding St. Luke's Monroe Campus as it faces a national nursing and EMT shortage, exasperated by the COVID-19 pandemic, Seiple said.

"We think it's an outstanding offer for students," he said. "We know the cost of education is a barrier for many students. Scholarship recipients will have the opportunity for paid work at St. Luke's while attending NCC. When the students complete their education and start working, they will be eligible for sign-on bonuses. Then, as an employee, they will qualify for tuition reimbursement and can go on to get their bachelor's and even master's degrees." Similarly, Seiple started his career with a two-year degree from a trade school and subsequently obtained bachelor's degree while working.

Judith Rex, PhD, RN, BC, NCC Dean of Allied Health Sciences, said EMT students can complete the program in only one semester during the fall or spring, or can opt for an intensive six-week program in the summer. Prospective nursing students can enroll in the Health Sciences program and begin taking general education requirements this summer. Once they complete their prerequisite courses, they can apply for admission to NCC's two-year associate degree nursing program.

Seiple added that Northampton Community College and the local school districts have been great to work with.

The sentiment is mutual, said Cosmas Curry, Ed.D, Coalition leader and Superintendent of the Stroudsburg Area School District. "Don (Seiple) is well known for always being willing to become involved. He is committed to working with the students to help them advance."

Dr. Curry said the Coalition aims to ensure students of all ages have the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of employers within the county. "It's a wonderful group fully committed to working for all the members of our county," Dr. Curry said.

For more information on the St. Luke's Monroe Campus Scholarship Program, contact the NCC-Monroe's Enrollment Office at 570-369-1925, or the St. Luke's Monroe Campus at 272-212-0300.

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