STEM EDUCATION INITIATIVE
By Bette McKee
R.T.(R) (T)
Inspiration:

My father was a lineman for the Florida Power Corporation for 41 years. He encouraged me to learn about nature and the forces that it possesses. His appreciation of science helped me decide to go into the medical field.

My mother was a very kind and compassionate woman who gave me the heart to help others. She was strong in her convictions of right and wrong and was an avid reader.
Radiation Safety
Customer Service:

Upon completing my AA degree in Fine Arts, I worked in retail for a number of years before changing my pathway to the medical field. Customer service is a large part of the medical field because there is a fine balance of satisfaction between the doctors and patients.
Radiation Humor

Of course, a full-body scan can be done more cheaply if you go through airport security.
Education:

Upon shifting into the medical field, I realized I did not want to be a RN, but wanted to help others and have a more hands-on approach. I pursued a certificate program in Radiologic Science at Florida Hospital. This particular program was accredited through Valencia Community College. It was a great program with two thirds of time in clinic. After completing this program I went another year for a certificate in Radiation Therapy. That program was much more intense in physics. I was very glad I had the RT background.
Radiation Therapy Equipment
Radiation Therapy Equipment
Immobilization Device

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Experience:

My experience in the medical field has been both challenging and rewarding. I am expected to have a great deal of focus and empathy. I am a life coach to our patients and a safety officer for our doctors. I would encourage others to explore psychology courses while pursuing this field. Radiation Therapy is a field that can be very emotional and stressful, yet rewarding. My patients’ give me hope and praise for continuing my mission.
Current Local Programs:

The only local college that offers a program in Radiation Therapy is Hillsborough Community College in Tampa, Florida. It is fully accredited program and it is full time 2 years. The student receives an Associates of Science degree. Then after finishing they take a national board exam for licensure in Radiation Therapy. There is also a one year program for those who have a Radiologic Technologist license to continue to receive a Radiation Therapist license. These students are in our department for their clinical rotations.
Job Shadow Opportunities:

Encourage your students to job shadow a field in which they are interested. You can go to: Student.Coordinator@OrlandoHealth.com to ask about our programs at Orlando Health. We currently have Boone High School Medical Magnet students visit us a few hours a week to job shadow as they decide in which field of medicine they wish to pursue.
In Conclusion:

It is a privilege and an honor to help others in their darkest hours. It is first and foremost that the safety of the patient is the focus of all in the radiation field.

It is also necessary to display compassion and listen carefully to the concerns of all involved including family members.

The rewards of this job are many and I gain hope and strength through my relationship with my patients.

Thanks to Natasha for allowing me to share my experiences with you.