



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, May 9, 2023

For more information contact:

Ben Roberts
Director, Public Relations & Communications
O: 229-312-5180
C: 229-343-7499
benroberts@phoebhealth.com

Looking for a New Career? Nursing Could Be Right for You

Albany, Ga. – Keeping up with Karen Frey isn't easy. As a registered nurse on Phoebe's inpatient surgical unit, she seems to be in constant motion.

"It's a very busy, busy floor, but I love my job," she said. "We're all a big family up here. Everybody watches out for each other."

Karen graduated from Albany Technical College's (ATC) Associate of Nursing Program one year ago and became a registered nurse – at the age of 50. "I still have a very high energy level, so keeping up with everything wasn't a problem at all," she said.

Karen initially went to ATC after she graduated from Albany High School in 1990. She earned a degree as a licensed practical nurse and worked as an LPN for seven years before moving on to other jobs.

"I was away from healthcare for 19 years and missed it the whole time," she said. "I decided it was definitely time to go back to my calling. It was a no-brainer. It's just what I was meant to do."

When she finally got up the nerve to return to what she loved, she knew ATC was where she needed to be. "My experience at Albany Tech was fabulous. The instructors are amazing. They absolutely make sure you have everything you need to be successful, and they treat you like family," she said.

Karen worked as an extern at Phoebe while she was in nursing school and graduated with the highest grade point average in her class. "To know that I was so nervous to start with about going back to school, I was super proud of myself," Karen said.

When she enrolled, Karen was excited to learn she was far from the only non-traditional student in the nursing program. In fact, adult learners are common in programs throughout ATC. "It's

never too late to go back to school. We welcome all students, but especially our adult learners,” said Lisa Stephens, Dean of Business/Healthcare Technology at Albany Technical College.

Last year, 72% of nursing students at ATC were over the age of 25. This academic year, the figure is 68%. Throughout all the institution’s programs, around half of ATC students are older than 25.

“Our adult learners come to us with various levels of work responsibilities and family obligations, and we have a number of support services that are available to help them balance their obligations and matriculate successfully through our programs,” Stephens said.

Those services include night and weekend classes, on-campus child care, multiple financial aid offerings, tutoring assistance, testing preparation, and help creating resumes and searching for jobs.

“While it can be intimidating to return to school, we do a great job of making sure that transition isn’t so overwhelming. What I’ve found is those students typically take on leadership roles in their programs. They find a level of belonging and often become mentors to younger students,” Stephens said.

That was certainly true in Karen’s case. She said she often took on a motherly role with the younger nursing students in her class. She also recently convinced a friend, who is her age, to go back to school to follow her dream of becoming a nurse. She says there are many benefits to being a nurse, especially for those looking for a new career. “There’s no fear of not being able to find a job. The need for nurses is not going to go away, ever,” Karen noted.

She may not be done with her education yet. She’s thinking of going back to school yet again to become a nurse practitioner. Karen knows whatever she does with her nurse training, it will be rewarding. “I never second-guessed switching careers. This is exactly where I’m supposed to be. I never should have left, and I’m just so happy to be back.”

The deadline to apply for fall nursing classes at ATC is June 1. You can learn more about opportunities and apply online at www.NextInNursing.com.

###



