

# Back to School!

## Memorial Medical Center takes radiology to the classroom



Memorial Medical Center

As a new school year approaches, radiology departments look to high schools and colleges for prospective employees. Memorial Medical Center, a licensed 562-bed hospital in Springfield, Ill., in particular, takes a proactive approach when recruiting young talent.

Memorial's Human Resources Generalist Jennifer Davis, PHR, attends all of the area's job fairs hoping to entice RTs and other departmental workers to the hospital, but says there are not as many students there as she would like.

"We try to schedule one-on-one visits by going through a [college] instructor before, during or after their class — that way we have a captive audience and can talk about all of the opportunities at Memorial," she says. "This helps us to make our job fair visits as productive as possible. That's a challenge sometimes because you have to work around students' busy schedules."

It's not only busy schedules that present a challenge. Recruiters from other hospitals are courting college students. That's why Davis' classroom visits will always include food of some sort to help her stand out from the pack. "Obviously, it's a big attractor," she says. "If there's food, they'll come — whether it's lunch, snacks, pizza, whatever. Then I talk about the image of the hospital: the hospital itself as far as being progressive, the number of employees and some of the new things that are happening with the organization as a whole."

Among the benefits Davis discusses with the students is the educational grant program, where Memorial assists students

in continuing education. "We look at the expenses in their program and how much money they are requesting. For every \$2,000 the hospital gives them, there's a one-year, full-time work commitment upon graduation. It's a win-win situation where we help them with finances and then they have a job when they graduate."

Accompanying Davis on her campus trips is Marjorie Calvetti, MSW, RT(R), the quality improvement and education coordinator and clinical instructor at Memorial. Calvetti works with students from two of the local community colleges when they do clinical rotations at the hospital, demonstrating proper procedures, positioning for X-rays and anatomy critiques.

When Davis is finished talking about the hospital and the benefits of joining the Memorial team, Calvetti describes the radiology department, including the types of equipment, the department's digital capabilities, cross-training programs, work schedules and the technical aspects of the job. She also lets the students know that the radiology department supports 165 full- and part-time employees, covers all modalities and has an annual exam volume of more than 191,000 patients with more than 500 exams per day.

When they're finished, the pair leaves all of the pertinent materials and contact information with the instructor for any student interested in following up at a later date.

"Even if the students do their rotations at our hospital, we encourage them to stop by and 'job shadow,'" Davis says. Job shadowing allows prospective RTs a chance to follow a tech around for a pre-determined period of time while they perform their duties.

This allows the student to see what the job is really like. "They can stay for a full day or half a day if they want to see a couple of hours of nuclear medicine or a couple of hours of diagnostics," Davis says. "We'll make that happen."

Davis says Memorial tries to make the experience as convenient as possible for the students by providing lunch and reimbursement for driving, so there are no expenses.

Students are impressed with this mentoring program because it provides a chance for them to see what radiology has to offer and a way to get them into the facility, she says.

Davis and Calvetti also speak to high school students about careers in radiology. Memorial offers the Explorer Post program to curious students wanting to know more about the healthcare industry.

"The program is open to students ages 11 through 20," says Calvetti. "They come to the hospital one night a month, and we highlight different areas of the hospital. We provide an interactive learning environment so they can see what portions of the hospital they like. It's a lot of hands-on [education]." If the student is interested in a certain area, then Memorial personnel can advise them on what classes they should be taking or schools they might want to look into.

Of all of the departments the students tour each month, Calvetti says radiology is usually their favorite. The hospital's radiology staff hopes this hands-on approach to education will help some students eventually land a job alongside them at Memorial.

— Tom Schaffner