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Glendale HS enters year two of certified nursing assistant program

GLORIA COLEMAN The News-Review
Mar 24, 2025

GLENDALE – Madeline Morningstar, a senior at Glendale High School, said she has plans to be a nurse and figured it would be best to start now. She brought it up with her advisor, Susie Snelling, and didn't stop there.

“I went and talked to my aunt, because I know she's a nurse, and I was like, ‘Can you teach this?’ Because she's an instructor, she's able to instruct this. And so we got it going,” Madeline said.

Madeline is choosing between Grand Canyon University and Oregon State University for her undergraduate studies. Grand Canyon has a good nursing program, but Oregon State offered her its presidential scholarship, so she's in the midst of making decisions and choosing priorities.

“(The CNA class) is good too, because a lot of nursing schools require that you are like CNA certified, and so it’s just a step into school,” Madeline said.

Glendale High School is in its second year offering a certified nursing assistant class. Madeline said they needed 10 students to begin, so they scraped together three seniors, three juniors, a local homeschooled student, a senior from Azalea Country School and two more from South Umpqua High School who all have aspirations for a career in the medical field.

“It’s given me some hands-on experience. I want to become a nurse in the future, so it’s good jump start on skills and experience,” South Umpqua senior Haley Twyman said. “We learned how to take vitals, which that’s really helpful, how to make an occupied and unoccupied bed.”

The students are enrolled in two block class periods twice a week, where they can complete their online course work and hands-on lab work with Misty Morningstar, the class instructor. They also obtain CPR certifications before clinicals begin in June, where students work in a care facility or hospital for 40 hours to gain real world experiences.

Following clinicals, the students take a formal assessment in their labs and final state testing to hopefully become certified as nursing assistants.

“I was looking to be a teacher, but I’ve also always been interested in the medical field, so I kind of just wanted to try it out and see which one I was leaning towards more. And I’ve decided I want to be a nurse,” Glendale junior Maya McMillan said.

She said she realized that she wants to help people, whether that is through teaching or nursing, but the class made her realize that the medical field is her preference.

“Somewhere in Grants Pass is actually looking to hire me, possibly as soon as I’m done with this course. And then, while doing my last year of high school I’m going to be doing college courses, as many as I can to get some things out of the way before I start college, possibly at RCC,” Maya said.

The class has grown a lot from when it first began in spring 2023, with seven people obtaining their certifications as certified nursing assistants. The students traveled back and forth each week to use the certified lab on Rogue Community College campus during the first year of the program.

This year the program has benefited from having their own lab on campus. The small room, about double the size of a cleaning closet, has two donated hospital beds, Barbara Plastic the manikin, a couple tables, chairs and other equipment crowded in. The lab is the product of grant work from Rogue Community College, Project Youth +, AllCare Health and Healthy Rural Oregon Grant, along with donations from the local community, according to Misty Morningstar.

Having the lab at the high school helps with the school’s goals to widen the program and allow students from other school districts or adults in the community join to become CNAs.

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