



BLESSING-RIEMAN



College of Nursing & Health Sciences

Alumni Newsletter

Edition 9
September 2026

Inside This Issue

- College Celebrates 135 Years
- May Commencement
- Tomboy Sawyer Contest
- Respiratory Program Recognized for Excellence
- BNAA Annual Banquet Nurse of the Year
- Commitment to Care
- And More!

Current Programs

- Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)
- RN - BSN Online
- Master of Science in Nursing Online
- Post-Master's Certificate
- Bachelor of Science in Respiratory Care
- RRT - BSRT Online
- Bachelor of Science in Radiologic Science
- Bachelor of Science in Diagnostic Medical Sonography
- Associate of Science in Medical Laboratory Technology

The mission of the Blessing-Rieman College of Nursing & Health Sciences is to provide excellence in professional nursing and healthcare career education.

You're Invited

Blessing-Rieman College of Nursing & Health Sciences is celebrating its 135th year of providing quality education and we invite you to celebrate this milestone with us! Join us for our first Annual Alumni & Friends Dinner on October 17, 2026.

[Register Online](#)



Cocktails will be begin at 6 PM at the Armory Event Center in Quincy followed by dinner at 6:30 and presentations at 7:30. The evening concludes with dancing and socializing from 8 PM to 10 PM. Tickets are \$25 per person.

Tomboy Sawyer Contest

Enjoyed by All

2026 Overall Tomboy Sawyer Winner
Kayler Hardwick
2026 Tomboy Sawyer Costume Winner
Laurel Koeber



Blessing-Rieman College Sponsors Return of Hannibal's Historic Tomboy Sawyer Contest

In July, BRCN brought back one of Hannibal's National Tom Sawyer Days favorite traditions, the Tomboy Sawyer Contest.

Open to girls ages 9 to 12, the event included classic fun-filled challenges inspired by the spirit of Mark Twain's famous character, Tom Sawyer. Girls competed in a variety of events including live minnow catching, watermelon seed spitting, bubble gum blowing, a gunny sack race, and slingshot target shooting.

Participants also showed off their creativity in a Tomboy Sawyer Costume Contest judged by the Mayor of Hannibal, Darrell McCoy, and two former Official Becky Thatchers, Paige Cummins and Lanie Privett. Those participating earned points for classic Tom Sawyer items such as plaid shirt, cut-off jeans, freckles and a corn cob pipe.



BNAA Annual Banquet

On April 25th, BRCN hosted the 2026 Blessing Nurses' Alumni Banquet at the Holiday Inn in Quincy honoring the Class of 1976 and the graduating Class of 2026.

Congratulations to Joni Winningham for receiving the Nurse of the Year Award and to Kathleen Jenkins, Class of 1957, who was recognized at the banquet as the oldest alum in attendance, celebrating 69 years since graduation.





May Commencement

Welcomed 43 Graduates

Blessing-Rieman College's Commencement was held on Friday, May 15 celebrating the accomplishments of 43 students.

Thomas C. Dickerson, EdD, Wealth Management Advisor with Impact Financial Group, and Senior Pastor at Faith Presbyterian Church served as commencement speaker.

Dickerson spent over 30 years in healthcare and is currently serving as a board member and trustee, for both Blessing Health System Corporate Services and Blessing-Rieman College of Nursing & Health Sciences

Graduate Awards

Faculty Outstanding Student Awards

Nursing: Amelia Ham

Radiology: Katelyn Stuart

Respiratory: Shelby LaCroix

Pi Pi Student Awards

Outstanding Student Performing in:

Clinical Nursing Practice: Natalie Glibert

Leadership: Hannah Howell

Student Council Senior Recognition Awards

Hannah Howell & Kyle Warning



Commitment to Care



Commitment to Care was held on August 26th featuring speaker Timmy the Dreamer, who spoke to students on "Dreamology 101: How to Chase Your Dreams & Change the World." He encouraged students to pursue their goals with purpose and passion while exploring how they can make a positive impact through their education and future healthcare careers.

The Commitment to Care Ceremony is an important tradition at Blessing-Rieman. As students begin a new academic year, it provides an opportunity to celebrate the calling to care for others and inspire students as they begin or continue their journey toward careers in healthcare

Faculty

UPDATES



Susan McReynolds

Retires After 25 Years of Service

Susan McReynolds, MS, RN, CNE, has retired from Blessing-Reiman College. Susan has been a staple of the Blessing Health System for the past 25 years. She worked as a staff medical/surgical nurse for five years until joining Blessing-Reiman College of Nursing & Health Sciences where she has taught a variety of courses, retiring as assistant professor.

Susan is a Certified Nurse Educator (CNE), earning her Master of Science in Nursing degree from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and her Bachelor of Science degree from Blessing-Reiman College of Nursing and Health Sciences and Culver-Stockton College.

She is an active member of the Pi Pi Chapter of the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing and of the Blessing Nurses Alumni Association.

Susan and husband, Randy, have three sons and when asked what was next, Susan replied she was looking forward to traveling with her husband. Congratulations, Susan!

Welcome New Faculty

Nursing Program

Madi Doane
Maternal-Child Clinical

Katie Hildebrand
Junior Level Med-Surg Clinical

Radiology Program

Myah Gray

Respiratory Program

Megan Tanner

JWCC Surgical Tech Program

Cathy Wittler

Adjuncts

Shanna Winter
NSG 206 Fundamentals Clinical A

Saide Mortensen and Caleb Weitnauer
NSG 304 Psych Clinical D

Cindy Hoewing
NSG 320 Nursing Concepts I Clinical A

Krista Walker
NSG 321 Nursing Concepts II Clinical B

Maria Hillebrenner
NSG 322 Pediatric Clinical D

Jessica Todd
SIM Lab

Shayla Brassfield
DMS Clinical Practicum I Lab A and Lab B Thursdays

Respiratory Care Program Receives Highest Honor

Blessing-Rieman College of Nursing & Health Sciences has been recognized with the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC) President's Award for Excellence in Credentialing Success, one of the highest honors awarded to respiratory care educational programs in the United States.

BRCN is one of only 14 respiratory care programs nationwide to receive the prestigious award this year.

The President's Award for Excellence is presented to programs that demonstrate sustained success in preparing graduates for professional credentialing.

To qualify, programs must have at least three years of outcomes data, maintain full accreditation without a progress report, achieve a 100% Registered Respiratory Therapist credentialing success rate, and meet or exceed CoARC-established benchmarks for student retention and performance on the National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC) credentialing examinations.



“BRCN Accomplishments

- MSN program was reaccredited by the CCNE for 10 years.
- Bachelor of Science in Radiologic Technology program was reaccredited by the JRCERT for 8 years.
- 2025-2026 school year had an 11% increase in enrollment from the 2024-2025 school year with a total of 331 students.

Advance Your Nursing Career

WITH AN ONLINE

Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)

DESIGNED WITH THE WORKING NURSE IN MIND

Achieve your educational goals
while balancing your career,
family, and other life commitments.



100% ONLINE
COURSEWORK



COMPLETE YOUR **IN-PERSON**
PRACTICUM HOURS AT A
LOCATION CONVENIENT FOR YOU



CHOICE OF **ADMINISTRATION**
OR **NURSING EDUCATION**
CONCENTRATIONS

Your Next Step, **APPLY TODAY!**
A HEALTHIER
TOMORROW



1.800.877.9140



brcn.edu

CONGRATULATIONS Alumni

- Kathleen Bracy, RN '79, retired after 45 years of service with Blessing Health.
- Debra Derhake, BSN '18, RN, CDCES, and Erin Vonderhaar, MSN '17, MBA, RN, and their team at the Blessing Diabetes Center received continuing recognition from the American Diabetes Association (ADA) for the 25th year.
- Amanda Fessler, BSN '20, RN has earned national certification in electronic fetal monitoring (C-EFM).
- Hanna Folkenroth, BSN '23, RN, accepted the position of Associate Nurse Manager on Blessing Hospital's Progressive Care Unit (PCU).
- Lyndsey Friday, BSN '25, RN, with the Emergency Center at Blessing Hospital has earned national Certified Emergency Nurse (CEN) status from the Board of Certification for Emergency Nursing.
- Samantha Lambert, BSN '24, team member receiving the Evidence Based Practice and Innovation Award for project titled "Can you hear me now?".
- Lee Ann Leach, BSN '22, RN, nurse manager with 3 North Surgical at Blessing Hospital has earned board certification in Medical-Surgical Nursing through the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC).
- Ashley Leonard, AS (Med Lab) '22, earned her Bachelor of Science in Medical Laboratory Science from the University of Ohio.
- Alaura Moore, BSRT '26, Awarded 3rd place at the Illinois State Society of Radiologic Technologist (ISSRT) Annual Conference for her presentation "Imaging: An Invaluable Resource for Stroke Evaluation".
- Amy Oshner, MSN '20, BSN '07, assumed the position of Surgery and CVOR Nurse Manager at Blessing Health.
- Jessica Puma, BSN '20, enrolled in Rush University Doctor of Nursing Practice Program for Family Nurse Practitioner.
- Kelli Terwelp, BSN '21, RN, CEN, CPEN, earned Certified Pediatric Emergency Nurse (CPEN) credentials from the Board of Certification for Emergency Nursing.
- Shannon "Michael" Walker, BSN '99, RN, LPN, has accepted the position of Director, Outpatient Surgical Services Clinic for Blessing Health System.



BRCN Nursing Graduates Receive Perfect Pass Rate

May 2026 nursing graduates posted a 100% first-time passage rate on the National Council of Licensure Examination (NCLEX). The 2025 pass rate for all first-time, U.S. BSN educated students taking the NCLEX-RN exam was 87.6% with the state of Illinois average of 85%. BRCN's 16 graduates tested in a variety of different states including 11 in Illinois, 1 in Iowa, 1 in Minnesota, 2 in Missouri, and 1 in Ohio.

We want to hear from you!

Have you recently received a job promotion, accepted a new position, or advanced your career or education? The BRCN Alumni Association would like to share your news. You can also update your mailing address, e-mail, or phone number on our alumni registry by visiting the Alumni page on our website. Scan the QR Code or click link below.



Chandler Waelder, BSN '24, with Blessed Beginnings/Obstetrics, was awarded the Laretta M. Eno Distinguished Nurses' Award. His nomination read, "Chandler came to us as a secretary years ago and we have watched him go on to nursing school for his BSN, and he is currently completing his MSN in Nursing Education. Chandler was our first ever male L&D RN. He knew that he'd have some struggles as it is a predominantly female field. He has not only shattered that glass ceiling, but he has made a name for himself as one of the most lauded L&D nurses on our unit. The number of patients who ask me if I know Chandler or if I can tell him how much he meant to them is too many to mention. "



Melissa Cummins, Editor
Alumni Relations Coordinator
cumminsm@brcn.edu
217-228-5520 extension 6958