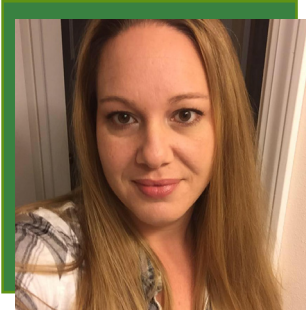




**Wisconsin League  
for Nursing**



HONORING NURSES INTERNATIONALLY  
IN MEMORY OF J. PATRICK BARNES



## ERIKA MITTELSTRASS

**RN, ADN**

**HEALTHCARE PRACTICE - INFORMAL EDUCATOR**

*Aurora Burlington Medical Center*

**Med/Surg RN**

Before becoming an RN I was a CNA on the same floor and Erika new I would becoming RN, so she would walk me through procedures when we were in the same room ie: giving insulin, how to give blood, medication administration, etc. After becoming an RN, Erika was my preceptor on the medical/surgical floor at Aurora Medical Center Burlington. She would always encourage me to double check labs and by doing so showed me that I could catch abnormalities that would sometimes be missed. She made sure I knew that no question was a stupid question and implored that I ask anything that was on my mind. She would explain everything happily. She encouraged me to be a patient advocate no matter how uncomfortable the setting was for myself because that was the reason I became a nurse. The patient always came first. When I first started, it took me some time to get my time management down, and Erika talked me through everything, keeping me calm, and never let me get to overwhelmed. She never sat down during her preceptorship, and was always making sure I felt comfortable with what I was doing. When I didn't feel like something was right, and I felt like I needed to advocate for a patient, Erika talked me through everything, but at the same time, let me learn how to advocate for a patient on my own to gain confidence. Erika made sure that when I was still getting my bearings, that I had her to fall back on, while still letting me walk on my own and making mistakes, but in her controlled environment, and would always stop me if there was a better way of doing something. After anything that went awry ie: a code, Erika made sure we debriefed after to make sure I learned something from the experience. This helped me extensively in future codes down my career path. To this day (almost 6 years later), I still believe Erika is still one of the smartest, patient advocating, empathic, respectable nurses I have ever met. She changed the way I treated people, and now how I view my job. She always added a little fun and positivity into the day when we both worked. If I did not have Erika as my preceptor, I would never have learned as much as I did, nor been the patient advocate I am today. I would not have gotten to the job that I love waking up to every day if it was not for Erika Mittelstrass. I truly thank her for that and I could not be more grateful.