

Keller at home at hospital

Rebecca Young/Post-Register
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Sara Keller enjoys gardening, canning and spending time with her family when she isn't working at Quincy Valley Medical Center.

The Quincy Valley Medical Center has always been a part of Sara Keller's life. She was the sixth baby born at that hospital. It is where her mother, Doris Evens, worked for 26 years as a nurse and where Keller has worked off and on for most of her career, starting at 17 as a CNA. She also had her own two children at the facility.

"There were a few years I didn't work there, but I've always gone back. It is home to me," said Keller.

She has seen a lot of changes over the years, in both the staff and the way things are done now in the medical field. Keller is the housekeeping manager, a central sterile or CS tech and a scrub tech in the surgical team.

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"Learning new procedures and technologies in the surgery is challenging, but a lot of fun," she said.

She said while she doesn't enjoy seeing people she knows hurt, she does enjoy the chance to help and spend time with them.

"The best part is the people: the patients, the other staff and the families of patients."

Keller was born in Quincy to Myron and Doris Evens. The family farmed corn, beans, alfalfa hay and wheat south of George. At 17, Keller started working as a CNA for the hospital. For several years, she played softball on the Farmer's Daughters team. She was a cheerleader during high school and graduated from QHS in the class of 1978. She went to college in Spokane and Wenatchee, continuing to work at QVMC.

She had always known her future husband, John, who lived just around the corner and had gone to high school with her. Their first date was to the Othello Fair to watch his nephew show a lamb. The couple was married in March of 1983. They just celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary last year by having a buffet and band in their garage for family and friends.

He works as a parts man at Liberty Farm & Lawn. The couple has two children, who both live in Quincy. Amber, 24, works for Double Diamond, and Chase, 22, works for Greg Lee Farms.

In her spare time, Keller enjoys working out in her yard and gardening. She had a flower business with her mother several years ago called the Garden Gate, where they sold dried flowers, wreaths, potpourri, and pomanders. She said she would like to get back into growing hard gourds again. She also enjoys vegetable gardening and then canning the harvest. Pickles and jalapeno jelly are canning favorites. One ambitious year, the family made 100 quarts and 10 pints of sauerkraut. They put the jars in tote containers in their basement to ferment.

"We packed them too tight and they started exploding one night at 2 a.m.," laughed Keller.

She went to survey the damage and discovered 19 broken jars.

"I threw a blanket over the mess and went back to bed," she said.

She also enjoys Keller family get-togethers and cooking Norwegian specialties during the holidays. They have a boat and enjoy playing in the water as a family.

A 9-year-old golden lab named Bo and a newly acquired cat named Tom are also part of the family.

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