

Sister Mary Mills

By Judy Wasserman



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When Sister Mary Mills was growing up, nursing was “the last thing” on her mind as a career. After she entered the Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston in 1945, she taught fourth through eighth grades for 35 years and loved it. But things change, and today, she looks back on an additional 30 years providing nursing care to the residents of Bethany Healthcare Center.

In a recent interview, sister explained that during her teaching ministry she spent her summers volunteering at Bethany, and ultimately, her experiences “turned into another vocation.” She even became a Certified Nursing Assistant. She works on the 32-bed fourth floor and is responsible for caring for the patients, which includes: making as many beds as possible so that the nurses can attend to other duties; helping with meal distribution; putting up seasonal decorations; and spending time with the residents. Sister Mary enjoys talking with and listening to the residents, and keeping them up to date on CSJ news.

Although it is difficult to see friends and sisters she entered with gravely ill and dying, she appreciates her work at Bethany. “It’s God’s work for me right now.” In fact, whenever Sister Mary arrives at Bethany she “feels energized,” and is often called the energizer bunny by staff and residents. Sister said there is good rapport with both the staff and the residents, and they are “one big family.”

On her days off, she makes her own bed and cleans her room. She also enjoys walking and reading, especially mysteries. Before she began her Bethany Healthcare Center ministry, Sister Mary had several teaching assignments, including St. Agatha, Milton, St. Benedict, Somerville, St. Charles, Waltham, St. Joseph, Medford, St. Joseph, Lynn, St. John, Winthrop, and St. Catherine, Norwood. After 35 years in teaching, she knew it was time for a change.

Being at Bethany, Sister Mary said, “got in my blood. Kindness, respect, and friendliness are hallmarks of Bethany.” It’s something she appreciates every day. †



Pictured L-R: Mary talking with a Bethany Health Care resident, who recently celebrated her 103rd birthday.