

# Taking care of each other

**M**ore than 170 employees at Kootenai Medical Center are heavyweights in the workforce ring—serving 20-plus years and building a culture of longevity.

“Our CEO, Joe Morris, has been here for 35 years, and the average length of a CEO’s term in this field is seven years,” says Robbie Burns, office coordinator of KMC’s personnel department. “If you have stability in your leadership, it creates stability in your workforce.”

As KMC has grown from a small community hospital into a regional medical center, the quality of its growing number of employees has remained steadfast. Burns says it’s because KMC treats its employees right and offers a lot of perks.

## ABOVE AND BEYOND

For example, KMC offers the Kudos program. People who do things above and beyond their job duties are rewarded with their choice of gift certificates from stores like Fred Meyer, Wal-Mart and Costco. They earn these kudos points in a variety of ways, such as volunteering at a KMC-sponsored event, being a project leader or committee chairperson, or working an unscheduled shift with less than one week’s notice.

It isn’t a secret—when you work at KMC, you’re part of a much larger family. “We take care of each other,” Burns says. “It’s just the culture.”

## GROWING TOGETHER

Gert Bush, R.N., has been part of the KMC family for 40 years. She was honored at the 2005 Employee Service Award Banquet in May with the “longest employee service” award.

“Gert often remembers new moms because she took care of their mothers when they were in labor,” says Lori Schneider, director of women’s and children’s services at KMC. “She’s always looking for ways to improve how we deliver care. She is the



PHOTOGRAPH BY KATRINA WALKER

Gert Bush, R.N., has worked in obstetrics for 40 years and was honored at the 2005 Employee Service Award Banquet for being KMC’s longest-serving employee.

first to embrace a new policy or idea, as long as it is for the good of our patients.”

Schneider says there are many advantages of having long-term employees. “These nurses have often grown up here, raised their families here and have worked at KMC for their entire careers,” she says. “Therefore, they are really dedicated to making this the best hospital possible, both for employees and for patients.”

In turn, employees invest time on committees, volunteer to mentor nursing students and new employees, participate in community activities and, overall, give a lot of themselves. ■



## Join Our Family ▼

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