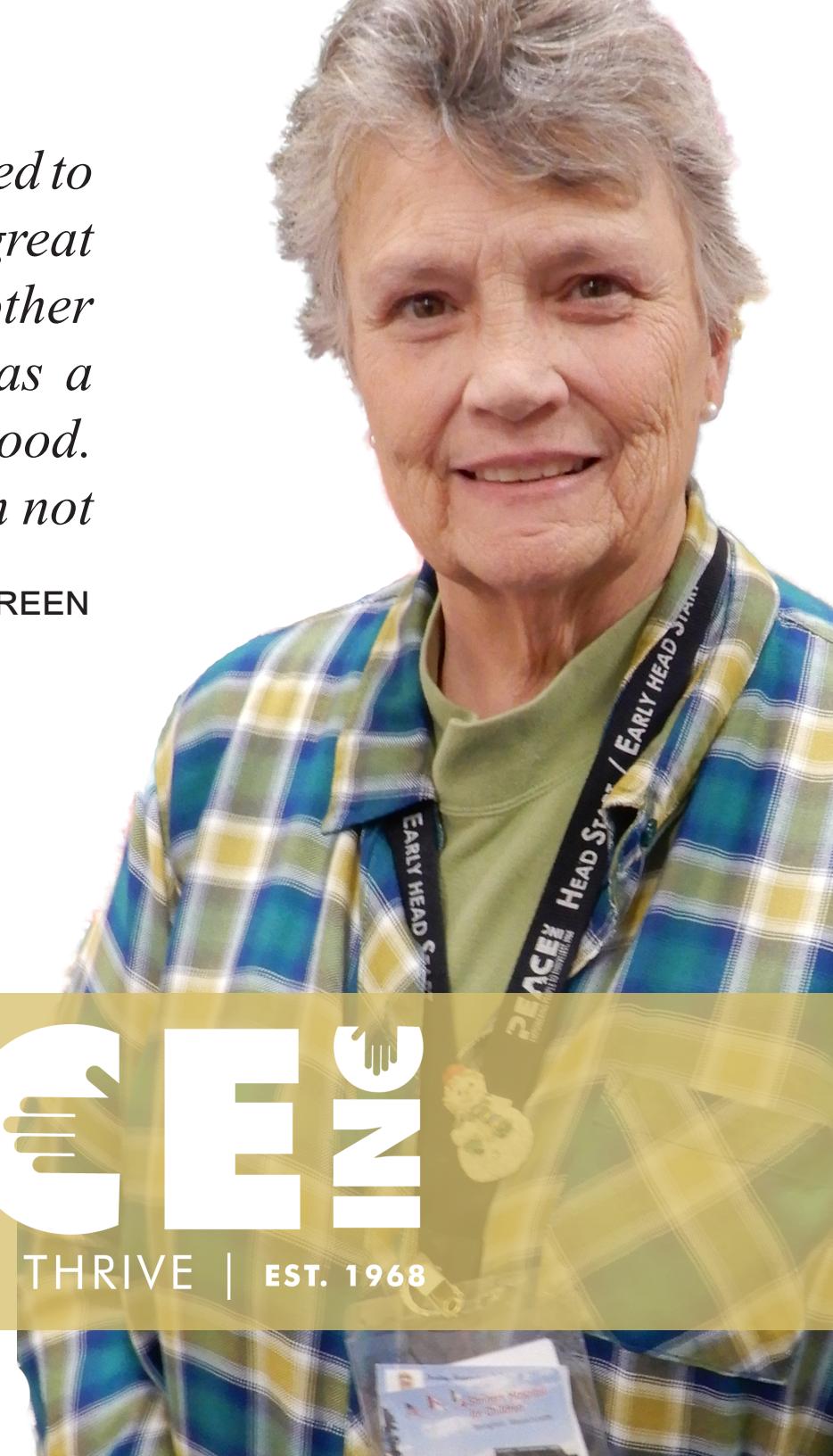


I've been a nurse for 52 years. I always wanted to be a nurse ever since I was a little girl - my great grandmother was a midwife and my grandmother was a nurse and my great grandfather was a doctor. So, medical has always been in my blood. My daughter asks me when I'm retiring. I'm not ready - not ready to go.

- NURSE DOREEN

Doreen Henry

LPN - Head Start Nurse



I look forward to coming to work. Every child is empowered to become them self. We also grow with the children.

- NURSE DOREEN

Frosty Bear - an ice pack - waits patiently on her desk. On the floor, the rug has “a cow jumped over the moon.” Chairs for mature bodies share equal space with those for little ones. Pictures etched from the minds of future leaders decorate her office walls. On the door, among other crafts, is a special green lizard from a boy who pondered a bit before carefully placing the image. He told Nurse Doreen he put it there “because when you’re sitting at your desk, I want you to see it and think of me.” Nurse Doreen says, fondly, “I’ve never taken it down.” And, “I didn’t want my office to look like an ER. I wanted it to be kid friendly. I want them to feel comfortable here.”

Nurse Doreen’s office has a timeless, warm quality – a sentimentality unmistakable with each greeting from a child. They visit her with coughs, sniffles, and aches they can’t quite articulate. Still, words are unnecessary when they wrap tiny arms around Nurse Doreen’s welcoming hugs. For one little boy, a simple hug, his temperature taken through his ears, and a sticker stuck on his forehead seem to give a cure. “I have one little girl who comes in every morning to say hi - just to say hello,” Nurse Doreen adds. For another child saying goodbye and a sticker on her cheek are ideal for ending the day.

Days are full for Nurse Doreen. She is constantly in motion. As the licensed practical nurse at PEACE, Inc. Sumner Head Start, Nurse Doreen helps other dedicated staff care for 126 children. She said, “Safety’s first – safety is always first.” Then, there is the stuff she does just because like buying clothes when she can at the Thrifty Shopper, washing them, and bringing them to work for the children - just in case. She has breakfast or lunch with the children in their classes – just because, but also because she enjoys building connections with them. She also talks to parents and helps educate them. That’s all in addition to her duties, which include making rounds to each class every morning, ensuring immunizations are in order, following up on lead testing, conducting medicals on the children to record the status of their hearing, vision, height and weight measurements, etc. She performs SPOT vision screening, provides basic first aid training, and facilitates monthly programming. Her duties involve a lot of temperature taking, paperwork, and moving.

“I’m never sitting,” she said. She loves it. She even dreamed about it as a little girl.

“I’ve been a nurse for 52 years,” Nurse Doreen said. “I always wanted to be a nurse ever since I was a little girl - my great grandmother was a midwife and my grandmother was a nurse and my great grandfather was a doctor. So, medical has always been in my blood. My daughter asks me when I’m retiring. I’m not ready - not ready to go.” Her daughter, now a doctor, attended Head Start in Auburn.

Nurse Doreen came from Weedsport, where she grew up and where she learned fundamentals she uses to this day in her role as a nurse. “I grew up on a farm,” she said. “It was a dairy farm, and there were crops. My grandfather had 300 acres. We milked cows at 4am. Then, milked them again at 4pm. Cows were born on the farm. Sheep, too. We raised goats, pigs, sheep, chickens, peacocks, horses. Being a farmer - you can’t beat it. You really learn to appreciate the good earth. What the good lord provides. It’s hard work, but rewarding work. You learn to respect what you’re doing. You respect your cow. You respect your horse. You have to, because you don’t want them to turn on you. And, it’s a family affair. You learn to respect each other, to live with each other, compromise.”

After her husband passed away, Nurse Doreen wanted to go back to work. She did not want to go back to the hospital. Unsure of where she wanted to work, someone suggested she consider PEACE, Inc. Head Start. She remembers talking to Jamie Colucci. That was two years ago. “I’ve been here ever since,” she said. It’s the “innocence of the children” that has captured Nurse Doreen.

“It’s such a good feeling when someone comes in crying and you cure their tears and they’re all better,” Nurse Doreen said. You give them a sticker and off they go. I love every single one of them. I’d take them all home if I could. We have a great group of children and their parents. I look forward to coming to work. Every child is empowered to become them self. We also grow with the children.”