

# Rush-Copley nurse gets help going back to school

Oswego resident Ruth Grams is going for her Bachelor of Science degree in nursing while putting two kids through college herself.

This, at 50 years old.

This, after 30 years of nursing at Rush-Copley Medical Center and an affiliated home health agency.

This, 10 years after losing her husband to cancer.

**By Katie Foutz**  
FOR THE  
BEACON-NEWS

"This is a new opportunity, another chapter, I guess," she said.

Grams had graduated in the last class of Copley Hospital's nursing program. But if she ever moved from the area, she believed her experience there wouldn't be enough to get her a job.

She took some community college English classes "just to see how my brain works," she said. Then she looked into completing her degree.

The cost of tuition at Aurora University shocked her. She thought maybe she should wait another couple of years.

"So I kind of walked away from it," she said. "They said I should apply for the scholarship, so I did ... and here I am, thinking, 'What have I done?'"

A group of health care agencies is backing her up. She is one of 53 local nursing students to receive the inaugural round of Dunham Nursing Scholarships — Advancing Nursing in Aurora.

The partnership is repre-



Ruth Grams preps for a Dimensions in Professional Nursing class at Rush-Copley Hospital in Aurora. Grams is working on a Bachelor of Science degree after working as a clinical manager in home health care. MARY BETH NOLAN/FOR THE BEACON-NEWS

sented by Alden of Waterford, Aurora University, Dreyer Medical Clinic, Kane County Health Department, Provena

Mercy Medical Center, Rush-Copley Foundation, Rush-Copley Medical Center, VNA of Fox Valley and Waubon-

see Community College. In September, the collaboration won a \$750,000 grant from the Dunham Fund to imple-

ment the nursing scholarship program.

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## GRAMS

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This program will help the Dunham Fund respond to the increasing need for quality nursing education and invest in the future of quality health care in its service area by building a high-performing, diverse workforce of nurses.

Grams worked in the medical-surgical pool of nurses at Rush-Copley from 1980 to 1999. She started serving the home care population in 1989. Now she manages the agency, Community Alliance Home Health.

Her home care credentials include caring for her husband during his last year alive, while he battled a brain tumor.

He died in November 2000. Grams said he would be thrilled she's going to finish her degree. When it came to academics, he believed in



From left, Ruth Grams of Oswego, Amie Eads of Sandwich and Maria Moore of Oswego listen to a lecture in a Dimensions in Professional Nursing class at Rush-Copley Hospital in Aurora. Grams is working on her Bachelor of Science degree after working as a clinical manager in home health care. MARY BETH NOLAN / FOR THE BEACON NEWS

her more than she believed in herself.

"He always wanted me to go back," she said. "I never wanted to. I just wanted to stay home and take care of

the kids. I kept saying to myself, 'One day I'll have to go back and work full-time again,' and it worked out. I don't think I'd have it happen any other way."