*People will forget what you said, People will forget what you did, but People will never forget how you made them feel. This quote by Maya Angelou is perfectly suited for Kathy Neumeister*. As someone who has been involved with SPIN since a teenager, where she was involved with the SPIN Camp, she truly believes and understands SPIN’s mission firsthand. Kathy is now employed as a Clinical Nursing Instructor who teaches and mentors nursing students through LaSalle and Drexel Universities. Fate brought Kathy back through our doors to mentor students when SPIN became a practicum site for community health nursing clinicals. The students are so fortunate to have Kathy! During their first day she eloquently and passionately orients her students on SPIN’S mission, values and services. One nursing student stated, “As I was driving to SPIN for the first time, I was not quite sure what to expect. I read about the mission statement of the organization, but still did not know what I would experience. When I met Professor Neumeister, everything began to be more apparent. Professor Neumeister has such an indescribable passion for the client population and is very influential”.

As part of their learning involvement, nursing students gain practical experience working with individuals across SPIN’s services. Kathy supports students to develop and facilitates health & wellness activities at SPIN Community & Fitness’ Community Participation Supports Program, they organize blood pressure screening for program participants and community members. Kathy arranged for students to host “Coffee Talk” hour with some of the Silver Sneaker senior members, to talk about their life and health as they are aging in the community. Kathy & students also visit SPIN’s residential sites and visit individuals in their homes to learn about medical needs and promote health & wellness within the home. Kathy has the ability to teach both our population and the students seamlessly; assuring that multiple messages and lessons are incorporated into each day. An individual who attends SPIN’s Community Participation Supports program says it best about Kathy, “She taught me how to make healthy pancakes and sing Happy Birthday twice when I am washing my hands. I like to go to Kathy’s classes which are dance fitness and cooking healthy.” Dan, who takes Kathy’s classes frequently said, “Kathy has inspired me to learn about healthy food!”

Additionally, Kathy ensures her students get involved with SPIN’s Health & Wellness initiative “DREAM”. The DREAM team supports staff and those we support by planning fun and interactive activities and events throughout the year. SPIN’s DREAM team encourages heathy lifestyle habits by promoting the importance of Drinking water, Relaxation, Eating healthy, Awareness of their health risks/history, and Moving your body.

Kathy knows the importance of having students work with people with intellectual, developmental, and autism spectrum disabilities in order to better understand and care for people when they begin their professions as nurses. Colleen Horcher, Director of Health Services, SPIN states, “Kathy is a superb nurse who leaves a lasting impression on everyone she comes in contact with. Kathy has a huge heart and she holds a very special place in many hearts. She greets everyone with a warm and cheerful attitude. She treats our individuals with patience and compassion, you can see the love she has for our population and the love our individuals have for her is apparent. She has the skill to make everyone feel comfortable and always has a cheerful smile on her face. She is extremely knowledgeable and takes time to answer questions and explain everything clearly and fully to her students. She truly gives her nursing students a clinical regarding community living that most nursing students never get to experience. Kathy also instills knowledge about the IDD community and how they deserve a life of possibilities which is something beyond valuable for those future nurses to take wherever their career may lead”.

Kathy applies a holistic approach to nursing and public health. She believes and advocates for well-being in every aspect of a person’s life. She teaches her students that it is not just the physical health of the people we support, but also their emotional and spiritual well-being. She goes above and beyond to ensure the health and wellness of the individuals we support as well as SPIN employees. For example, during the winter months last year the norovirus was affecting many people. Kathy took initiative to have her nursing students educate the individuals we support on healthy habits such as washing their hands, sneezing and coughing properly and keeping the spread of germs to a minimum.

Kathy seeks out other professionals from SPIN and encourages them to share their stories and experiences with her nursing students so that they are able to understand the professional field as a whole and gain knowledge about all the team members that are required to ensure a life of possibilities for the people we support. She ensures that the nurses get to know the individuals and the personal goals that they are trying to achieve in order to enhance their health and wellness. She does this all while being mindful and creative with the resources that are available to her.

Kathy is a positive and energetic influence on everyone she meets and is always looking for ways to better herself and those around her. Her kindness, compassion, and dedication are wonderful examples to all. Most importantly, Kathy has the belief in all that is possible and she creates opportunities for upcoming nursing professionals to find that same passion. Kathy is developing young nursing professionals to enter their careers with patience, compassion and understanding, having this experience is critical to the support that they will provide to individuals with intellectual disabilities in the future during their nursing careers in hospitals, nursing homes, and other clinical settings. A healthy lifestyle not only changes your body, it changes your mind, your attitude and your mood, Kathy Neumeister recognizes this and promotes the need for health & wellness for everyone. Kathy is the perfect candidate for the Brighter Futures’ “Physical” award.

**Nominated by Antoinette Hinkle, a colleague at SPIN.**