SCCTC graduated 11 from its Practical Nursing program in a ceremony held Friday in the Elk Lake auditorium.

Nursing a future

BY STACI WILSON
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While in college pursuing a degree, Cheyenne Learn experienced a life-threatening and life-changing event. But it was a nurse who made the biggest impact on her future.

"I knew then I wanted a career in nursing," Learn, said Friday evening to her fellow Susquehanna County Career and Technology Center Practical Nursing classmates at a commencement program held at Elk Lake High School.

Learn, of Laceyville, was the salutatorian of the graduation class of 11 from the Practical Nursing program. Class President Eva Crane and Vice President Nathan Ritter thanked family, friends, teachers and SCCTC staff for the unwavering support shown throughout the past year as they pursued their degree.

Ritter, of Hop Bottom, received the Florence Nightingale award for clinical excellence and overall leadership. He was also the valedictorian.

Karen Killian, clinical supervisor, said the adult students had come to the program with "pens, notebooks, a backpack and a dream." She described how the nursing students progressed from the classroom, to the skills lab, to lectures and on to clinical rotations.

"Everyone thinks shaving is easy until the balloon pops," she quipped.

But, Killian said, they were leaving the program with "compassion, empathy, and the knowledge to be the best nurses they can be. Each takes something special to the nursing table."

Killian said the class logged over 300 hours in clinical rotations at Robert Packer Hospital in Sayre. The students also had clinical training at Meadowview Senior Living Center, Barnes-Kasson, and Endless Mountains Health Systems.

August 2015 Practical Nursing grad Brittany Sisson also addressed the graduates. Sisson said that in the seven months since her graduation, she had found a position in a primary care office acknowledging she sometimes seeks help from those with more experience. "I'm brand new and trying to build a foundation in this great career," she said. "In time, you will be the experienced nurse everyone looks to for the answer."

"The important thing is that you've already taken the step toward a more promising future for the betterment of yourself, your family and the community," Sisson said.

SCCTC Superintendent Ken Cuomo said, "A year ago, you were individuals, then a class, and now graduates nurses. There's a lot to be said about that."

Board president Arden Tewksbury said, "Doctors are credited with saving lives, but it is the nurses who keep us alive once they get us started."

He congratulated the graduates on their accomplishment and wished them well in the future. "You're a very important part of our society," he said.

Tewksbury, along with SCCTC Nursing Director Denise Gieski, presented diplomas to the graduates, as Clinical Supervisor Christopher Drake read their names as they crossed the stage.

In addition to the Florence Nightingale Award presented to Ritter, other special awards went to:
- Mary Breckinridge Award for critical thinking — Mary Catherine Walker;
- Virginia Henderson Award for professionalism — Stephanie Carney;
- Edith Cavell Patient Advocate Award — Debra Chamberlain;
- Clara Barton Award for excellence in nursing care — Rachel Manning;
- Anna Maxwell Award for overall amelioration — Brittany Parry.

SCCTC Practical Nursing Graduates — March '16

Stephanie Carney, Meshoppen; Debra Chamberlain, Susquehanna; Eva Crane, Dalton; Samantha Cruttenden, Tunkhannock; Georgina Gregory, Springville; Cheyenne Learn, Laceyville; Rachel Manning, Laceyville; Brittany Parry, Clarks Summit; Shantelle Prebola, Dalton; Nathan Ritter, Hop Bottom; Mary Catherine Walker, Susquehanna.