

## 4 Mercer residents among MCCC nursing program graduates

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WEST WINDSOR—Four Mercer County residents, including the valedictorian, were among the 33 Mercer County Community College nursing program students who graduated last week and are now qualified to be licensed registered nurses.

"I worked full time and studied a lot. I missed a lot of family occasions," said Debra Goehrig of Princeton Township, who was valedictorian for last Wednesday's graduation ceremony at Kelsey Theatre. Goehrig, who spent 17 years as a licensed practical nurse (LPN), began the nursing program at the college in September 2005 while working at Delaware Valley Pediatrics. She said some jobs require a person to be a registered nurse rather than an LPN.

The majority of students enrolled in that program are people starting second careers and those who were displaced from previous jobs, said Linda Martin, MCCC's dean of science and health professions.

The nursing program is the largest single-enrollment program on campus, with 1,500 students taking prerequisites and 281 active students in the professional phase of the pro-

gram, which includes actual clinical experience, Martin said, adding that the college began an online option for students in the program last fall.

One of the graduates, Lauren Fechter of Hamilton Square, is a 2006 graduate of Steinert High School who has worked as a patient care technician at Robert Wood Johnson Hamilton for the past two years. She plans to pursue a master's degree, specializing in critical care nursing. "I've always wanted to be a nurse," she said in a prepared statement.

Isobe Gborkorkollie of Ewing, 50 also started the program on a part-time schedule in 2005 while he was working full-time for the state's Department of Human Services. "I just love the field of medicine. Caring for people is my thing," said Gborkorkollie, who plans to get a master's in nursing. He already has two master's degrees -- one in marketing and another in health care management.

The fourth Mercer County resident who graduated last week, Alicia Cromwell of Robbinsville, has worked as a medical assistant and schedules surgeries at a local area hospital.

"I was learning things constantly, it was exciting," said Cromwell, 27, who began taking part-time classes at the college in August 2004 and hopes to work in a maternity department. Cromwell also is planning to pursue bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing.

