The year was 1956, and Karen Hlike Drozkowski, age 2, was one of the first patients to undergo open-heart surgery at SSM Cardinal Glennon Children’s Hospital in St. Louis. When Drozkowski returned to Glennon this June to visit, she was reunited with Sr. Noreen McGowan, FSM, who attended her in the recovery room on the day of surgery 47 years ago.

Sr. Noreen, 89, still works at Glennon, as a patient representative coordinator. “I hope that through my presence I am sharing the mission of Christ and our people, the mission of the Franciscan Sisters of Mary and of SSM Health Care,” says Sr. Noreen. “I’ll be sad when I can no longer be here.”

Though the number of sisters working at SSMHC entities has dramatically decreased since the 1960s, we are fortunate to have 29 Franciscan Sisters of Mary at SSM Health Care.

FOOTPRINTSSM program at SSM Cardinal Glennon Children’s Hospital has received a Circle of Life Citation of Honor from the American Hospital Association. The Circle of Life awards honor innovative programs that improve the care people receive near the end of their lives.

FOOTPRINTSSM helps children with life-threatening illnesses - and their families - live well until their journey ends. The FOOTPRINTSSM model offers the American health care system a better way to care for children likely to die before adulthood, according to Mary Ann Collins, program director. Begun in 1994 and the recipient of a three-year grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, FOOTPRINTSSM combines clinical care, research, and education in its approach to caring for dying children and their families.
Tracking Successes of the Mentorees

Graduates of the SSMHC Diversity Mentoring Program continue on their path of professional development and success. Below are the achievements of some of these mentorees:

- Shirley “Marti” Edwards, assistant director of nurses at St. Marys Hospital Medical Center in Madison, WI, has been on military leave in Iraq since January.
- Mandy Hayes was promoted in June from network administrative fellow to physician contracting coordinator at St. Anthony Hospital in Oklahoma City.
- Marsha Black-Simpkins, RN, supervisor of the cardiac cath lab at St. Marys Hospital, has been on military leave in Iraq since January.
- Judi Middlebrooks, claims investigator at the Corporate Office, received her master’s degree in health management in May.
- Judith Middledore, claims investigator at the Corporate Office, received her master’s degree in health management in May.
- Ernise Williams, RN, supervisor of the cardiac cath lab at St. Marys Hospital Medical Center in Madison, WI, was selected as diversity team leader in April.

SSMHC Earns Cover Story in Modern Healthcare

You don’t want to miss the August 11 issue of Modern Healthcare magazine. It’s the one with the large color photo of SSMHC’s own Yvonne Tisdel, corporate vice president of human resources and system diversity, on the cover.

The cover story titled, “Minority Report: SSM Health Care Works to Diversify Its Ranks,” describes the system’s efforts -- and resulting achievements -- in increasing the number of minorities in professional and managerial positions.

FOOTPRINTS™ Honored

Continued from cover

Mckenna Carroll - ‘Breathing Easier in Heaven’

When she was 8 months old, Mckenna Carroll died in the arms of her parents at home. “We held her and told her we loved her, and she died,” says her mom, Tracy Carroll. Mckenna was born with Trisomy 18, a genetic disorder that often proves fatal even prior to birth.

“We wanted her to have the best life possible, however long she lived,” Tracy says. “My dream was to bring her home from the hospital. But we were afraid, and no one told us what to expect. We were referred by a pediatrician to FOOTPRINTS™, and they gave us the courage and support to care for her at home and to make her life as good as it could be.

“They helped us develop a care plan for Mckenna, and they were there for us 24/7. Having them available to talk to 24 hours a day was a Godsend.

“We saw many miracles in Mckenna’s short life. I think God chose us to be Mckenna’s family. It was a privilege for all of us. Mckenna is in heaven and she’s breathing easier now.”

Mikaela King - ‘Going Home to God’

Mikaela King died at the age of 8 months of spinal muscular atrophy, a disease that has no cure. Her mother, Sharon King, says the FOOTPRINTS™ staff “were the angels I needed to get through the journey with Mikaela.”

“I was on public aid,” she says. “And a lot of people think if you’re on welfare, your baby won’t get the best care. They treated me as if I was rich. Money doesn’t have anything to do with the people at FOOTPRINTS™. It was like they were angels God sent to help me deal with this pain.

“The FOOTPRINTS™ staff, they’re not doing it because it’s a job. It’s in their heart. It’s love. They are loving doctors and nurses. When Kaela died, it was time for her to go home to God.”