

## ALUMNI: Susan McKenna



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**Susan McKenna** started her career pathway at Schoolcraft College in the 80s eager to become a registered nurse, but she found something more than an education in nursing.

For her it was the beginning of a journey into real life and creativity that she feels is something only a community college like Schoolcraft is able to offer, where each student is not only a face in a crowd, but part of a close-knit family.

It was the teachers and the atmosphere and perhaps the struggle of not having an education dropped in her lap that made her degree from Schoolcraft so special. After graduation, Susan made it her mission to share with many young aspiring nurses that armed with only her associate degree from Schoolcraft College she was able to become a Director of Nursing, a nursing instructor, a clinical manager and a pediatric nurse at Children’s Hospital of Michigan. She achieved this success through determination and motivation. When others saw limits, Susan saw challenges and possibilities.

After an accident, Susan was forced to give up nursing, but true to form she saw this challenge as an opportunity and decided to pursue writing. She returned to the place she felt was home, Schoolcraft College, and she ventured into Dr. Steven Dolgin’s creative writing class. She loved being a part of the whole Schoolcraft experience again. Susan credits Dolgin’s class as the inspiration for her newest career. “He made me think outside the box. I thought I would be writing fiction and it turns out he had me enjoying everything!” Susan continued her studies, won a scholarship from Schoolcraft to attend a writer’s conference, and she was on her way.

Susan went on to become an award-winning poet and novelist. She has authored six children’s books and has just finished a self-help book for women. But, she hasn’t stopped there. In addition to being an author, Susan is now motivating others with what Schoolcraft College instilled in her. She is a Life Coach and motivational speaker helping others to create hope and motivation where it is lacking. She has been featured on the cover of Detroit’s *Twist* magazine and appeared on television and national radio talk shows. She was nominated as a semi-finalist for the American Broadcasting Corporation’s and *Prevention* magazine’s national contest for Women Who Inspire Other Women and she received the Women Who Make Magic award by Detroit’s WNIC’s Breakfast Club.

Continuing to credit Schoolcraft with her success, Susan feels the college has always remained focused on the right thing...planting the seeds for success in students. “For many,” she adds, “Schoolcraft provided the essential support they needed to enable them to make something of their lives and a difference in the world.” This fact motivated her to get involved with Schoolcraft’s new alumni program. “I think what drew me into the alumni program is that too many of us saw the people who walked in the front door, but we never saw who walked out the back.” Susan believes the alumni program will fill that gap. “Schoolcraft alumni prove that you can become whoever you want to be when you get the right start. Our alma mater gave us a real foundation. They planted and nurtured the seeds and the alumni program offers the opportunity for us all to share that harvest”. ●

**Want to share your story? We’re eager to hear from you!**  
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