

FOUR-TIME HONOREE

Touro Infirmary

Although it historically has been one of the city's smaller hospitals, Touro Infirmary has always had a big name in New Orleans.

A family-style work environment and closeness between employees has created an atmosphere that entices some workers to stick around for decades.

Take accounts payable supervisor Sydney Gonsoulin, who has been with Touro for 38 years. Originally starting in the pharmacy department, she moved around the hospital until she eventually found a home in accounts payable.

Gonsoulin has been with Touro so long that she recalls the pre-computer days of keypunch systems.

"I've now been settled in accounts payable for close to 30 years, but it feels like I just got here yesterday," Gonsoulin said. "I've occasionally seen people leave Touro, but they all eventually come back."

In addition to the standard benefits for an employer its size, perks include up to \$4,000 a year in tuition assistance, an on-site gym and long- and short-term disability insurance.

The company also offers employee of the month programs and an employee recognition program, in which employees can recognize co-workers who exemplify Touro's values. As a reward, those employees receive Touro Bucks that can be used in the parking garage, café or gift shop.

The hospital also holds a celebration for the employee of the month, which includes prizes such as \$100, a pair of New Orleans Hornets tickets and a reserved parking space for that month.

"People often spend more time at work than they do with their own families," said Chad Courge, vice president of human resources. "It's important that they have a place and environment where they feel comfortable and happy."

Nature of business: hospital

Where based: New Orleans

Employees: 1,370

Average starting salary: \$39,823

Median salary: \$47,840

Average employment time: more than six years

Benefits: health care with 73 percent coverage, dental, vision and prescription plans, unmarried partner benefits, paid maternity leave, medical, dental, prescription, unmarried partner benefits, 403(b) with 1 percent match, continuing education program, relocation assistance, flexible hours, job sharing, employee recognition program, fitness program, subsidized meals

Wait time for benefits: up to 90 days

Paid days off: 26 to 39, depending on years of service

Web site: www.touro.com



Holding an old photo of the hospital, Touro Infirmary Archivist Catherine Kahn sits in the wheelchair Brad Pitt used in "The Curious Case of Benjamin Buttons." The chair is among the artifacts kept in the hospital's archives.

Registered nurse Eva Morris, the patient care manager of the emergency department, has been with Touro for three years. Morris was director of a hospital in Ruston for 15 years before moving to New Orleans where her daughter had worked for Touro and recommended she start her job search there.

Morris said her daughter was so impressed with Touro in the initial interview that she "never even bothered to look anywhere else."

Despite being in a new city where she barely knew anyone, she was warmly welcomed by the staff.

"I think they've really invested in instilling those values in us, and it pays off in creating this supportive team atmosphere," Morris said. "It has given us all a new way of looking at things."

Touro also has a strong history of community involvement and participates in more than 100 events per year, partnering with such organizations as the American Heart Association, the American Diabetes Association, the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure and the American Cancer Society. •

— Craig Guillot