Sister shares Grey Nuns’ impact on Kodiak

By ALISTAIR GARDNER
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Kodiak residents were graced with a familiar face this week. Sister Diane, vice president of the Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart, came back to Kodiak for a week to visit St. Mary’s Catholic School, where she worked for 35 years, as well as a multitude of locales, whom she considers to be more than just friends or former students.

“Coming back here is definitely coming back to family,” she said.

On Thursday, Sister Diane (whose full name is Diane Bardlow) was at Providence Kodiak Island Medical Center, where she gave a presentation to a room full of staff on the history of the hospital.

As he introduced her, Chaplain Innocent Philo, who serves at PKMC, said “Providence has had an ongoing relationship with the Grey Nuns, from the beginning.”

Sister Diane introduced herself and recounted the history of the Grey Nuns. The religious group was born of the Sisters of Charity of the Hospital General, a congregation founded in 1837 in Montreal as a mission to serve the Catholic population of Montreal.

The Grey Nuns arrived in Kodiak in 1909 on the SS ‘Prudence.’ They were accompanied by their Superior General, Mother Gaudenzia. The religious group has a long history of serving communities in the United States, Canada, and around the world.

Sister Diane said that she was taught never to judge a person by their appearance, but to get to know them. She encouraged the audience to take the time to get to know their patients and to be present for them.

Sister Diane also spoke about her time working at Providence Kodiak Island Medical Center, where she worked for 19 years as a nurse and administrator.

She said that the Grey Nuns have always been dedicated to serving the community and to working towards social justice.

Sister Diane ended her presentation with a prayer, asking the audience to pray for the medical center and for the health of all those who work there.

Sister Diane’s visit was a wonderful opportunity for the staff at Providence Kodiak Island Medical Center to learn more about the history of the Grey Nuns and to hear from a woman who has dedicated her life to serving others.

The Grey Nuns are a religious congregation that was founded in 1837 in Montreal, Canada. They have a long history of serving communities in the United States, Canada, and around the world. The Grey Nuns arrived in Kodiak, Alaska in 1909 and have been a part of the medical community there ever since.

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