Honoring Excellence During Nurses Week

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOT MEDICAL CENTER, MAY 6, 2014

Our nurses deliver award-winning care every day and, Nurses Week, May 6-12, gives hospitals like University of Minnesota Medical Center the opportunity to recognize and thank our colleagues. During this week, nurses also take time out to honor their colleagues with some special awards. This year's honorees are visionaries, collaborators, experts and friends. They exemplify excellence in nursing.

Deb Cathcart, our 2014 Visionary Nurse Leader award winner, is "committed to everyone having a voice," according to her nominators.

Deb Cathcart, RN

Visionary Nurse Leader Award

Deb Cathcart, associate chief nursing executive since 2013, is one of the champions who helped establish daily safety calls at University of Minnesota Children’s Hospital. During the calls, representatives from inpatient units and interdisciplinary departments report on patient safety or quality issues, address current issues and discuss possible future safety concerns. The calls have led to a stronger culture of safety, reduced the risk of harm and reduced preventable events. Deb’s leadership on the daily safety calls has helped improve collaboration among the interdisciplinary team. “One of Deb’s strengths is her view of the organization,” says nominator Paul Paulisich, RN, nurse manager, pediatric cardiovascular ICU and daily safety call project lead. “She’s committed to ensuring that all disciplines have a voice. Because of her approach, there is tremendous buy-in.” Her impact reaches beyond those on the daily calls. “She has championed an environment where staff feel empowered to discuss situations where mistakes were made and how to improve without punitive
consequences,” says nominator Maggie Thiessen, RN, pediatric cardiovascular ICU. The Visionary Nurse Leader award recognizes individuals who lead in using evidence and best practice to make a positive difference in achieving our goals and creating new knowledge.

Alyssa Sakhitab-Kerestes, RN, our Marie Manthey Relationship-Based Care Award winner, “sets the standard for providing primary nursing,” say her nominators.

Alyssa Sakhitab-Kerestes, RN

Marie Manthey Relationship-Based Care Award

When a long-term patient was making life difficult on the pediatric cardiovascular ICU, Alyssa Sakhitab-Kerestes didn’t try to avoid him. She signed up to be his primary nurse. “She was able to build a strong, therapeutic relationship with this patient and his family,” say nominators Maggie Thiessen, RN, and Jennifer Bucek, RN. By working with the patient to correct his behaviors, she also allowed him to build therapeutic relationships with others. “During difficult situations…she has the ability to objectively look at the behaviors and the likely causes without taking it personally.” Alyssa is well known for her hard work, professionalism and going the extra mile for her patients. The award was named for Marie Manthey, founder of the primary nursing care delivery model developed at the University of Minnesota, and recognizes an outstanding professional RN.
The making of the Brave video, spearheaded by Brittany Bloemke, RN, left, and Natalie Snyder, RN, brought Unit 5 closer. It then became a worldwide sensation.

Brittany Bloemke, RN, and Natalie Snyder, RN

Marilyn Bach Award for Outstanding Team Achievement

It started as a simple way to celebrate the bravery of the patients cared on Unit 5 of our children's hospital, while increasing patient/family satisfaction and employee engagement.

The "Brave" video soon grew into a viral video sensation, viewed more than 1.2 million times on YouTube.

Brittany Bloemke and Natalie Snyder wanted as many Unit 5 staff as possible in the video.

This often meant coming in early, staying late and coming in on their days off. Their work paid off in a closer-knit unit.

“The video brought the unit closer and helped create stronger working relationships,” says nominator Megan Ploog, Unit 5 nurse manager. “‘Us’ and ‘them’ are now viewed as ‘we.’”

The Marilyn Bach Award for Outstanding Team Achievement was established in honor of Marilyn Bach, RN, a passionate advocate for teamwork and collaboration, who worked at the medical center for 39 years.