HOSPITAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HUP DATE
AUGUST 2020

SHINING A LIGHT ON
NURSING EXCELLENCE

Each year, Penn Medicine celebrates the UPHS Nursing Excellence Awards, shining a light on registered nurses throughout the Health System who every day give their most to improve the health and outcomes of patients. Although COVID prevented this year’s special recognition event from taking place, its absence by no means lessens the significance of these awards. As Colleen Mattioni, DNP, RN, HUP’s chief nursing executive, noted, recognizing the nominees’ dedication to their teams, patients and the nursing profession “has a profound and lasting impact on those who are nominated.”

Taking the time to recognize nursing excellence in the current COVID environment, she continued, “provides us all the opportunity to show gratitude for and reflect upon the impact nurses have on the overall health of the community.” Below, read the stories behind the awards for each of this year’s winners from HUP and CPUP.

DEMONSTRATING EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

Recipients of the Lillian Brunner Award must not only demonstrate the highest quality of patient care — seeing the “big picture” and collaborating with an interprofessional team — but also serve as a role model for others to help enhance their nursing practice.

Megan Holland, BSN, certainly sees the “big picture,” focusing her care on a patient’s mind, body and spirit. “I try to get to know patients I care for on an individual level and help them to bring small parts of their routine into their day: Listening to music, getting their hair washed [and braided — this is a nursing specialty skill!], looking at pictures of family members, pets, and mostly sharing stories about who they are as a person.”

Last year, when one of her home care patients expressed an interest in learning yoga and meditation to address looming anxiety over a diagnosis, Holland arranged a session of restorative yoga and meditation accompanied by use of aromatherapy to ease both the patient and caregivers. “We are surrounded by so much technology in the acute care setting and while this is vastly important and lifesaving, I believe it is the small and quiet moments between people that leave lasting impacts and help in the healing process.”

Dena Bakes, BSN, of Gynecologic Oncology, has built strong relationships with her patients and their families as well as with providers and staff. Baker connects with patients shortly after they are seen in the office. “I help them navigate through the experience, from diagnosis to treatment and survivorship, offering support, education, and reassurance, and providing a conduit to the care they need,” she said. These efforts not only help establish a trusting nurse-patient relationship but also, noted the nomination, lead to “increased pre-operative compliance and better surgical outcomes… as well as increased patient satisfaction.”

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

Those chosen for the Dianne Lanham Award create an environment for demonstrating exemplary practices. Each works to bring about change, through working on committees and being involved in projects and initiatives.

Natalie W. Pierson, MSN, checks off every box. As part of CPUP’s Heart and Vascular team, Pierson creates “an environment of learning and optimal practice,” her nomination states. For many years, she’s chaired “Go Red for Women,” an annual event to raise awareness of women’s heart disease, and has also received a Penn Medicine CAREs grant for “High Blood Pressure — Treat it like a Lady.” These community-education sessions help women improve their ability to manage hypertension and provide access to more education and resources.

Pierson has also brought Penn support to the community through her leadership, hosting community education sessions to improve knowledge of heart health, improve access to care issues, and aid with the cost of health care delivery in daily lives.

Marisa Codì, BSN, CNOR, served as the nurse leader on Penn Medicine’s first uterus transplant, which took place in 2018 and ultimately resulted in the birth of a healthy baby boy. Working with a multidisciplinary team, “Marisa truly analyzed all of the puzzle pieces before her and put those pieces together in a way that made this groundbreaking case the success it was and continues to be,” noted the nomination.

Calling the entire experience both “exciting and challenging,” Codì said she was especially grateful to be part of the uterine transplant team. “We developed such a strong bond. It was amazing for all of us,” she said. “I get emotional now just thinking about it.”

ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIPS

Winners of the Rosalyn J. Watts Award improve the lives of those in need through selfless, courageous, creative and compassionate acts.

Sharon Young, BSN, who works in the Abramson Cancer Center, enjoys getting to know the many patients who come for regular treatment infusions. But one patient was battling fire primary cancers — “NJ” — stood out. “She was a favorite. We all enjoyed talking with her and laughing with her.” So when Young learned that NJ’s “bucket list” was one museum away from completion, she and two other nurses decided to make that dream come true — with a visit to the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh.

Contributing their own money — and time — the three nurses took NJ on an all-expense paid trip they called “Living the Dream with NJ” in 2018. The four flew to Pittsburgh, stayed at a hotel, and enjoyed all their meals together. And when they visited the Warhol Museum, NJ “gave us great tutorials. She was an expert!” The patient passed away just four months after the trip but the memories remain. “It was such a great girlfriend trip,” Young said. “We all enjoyed the comrades. We got to know us on a more personal level… and she smiled a lot!”

Heddie Williams, BSN, loves giving back to the community. For example, she organized a clothing and toiletry drive for Cedar Park, a West Philadelphia residential facility for homeless women diagnosed with mental health and substance abuse disorders that is part of the nonprofit Resources for Human Development. She also coordinated several opportunities for Staffing for All Seasons (SFAS) nurses to feed the homeless alongside Choices 301 Ministries. And she has planned several opportunities for SFAS to host dinner at the Clyde F. Barker Penn Transplant house. “I have to go out there and fill people’s needs where they are, providing support and care,” as both a health advocate and educator, she said.

Williams offers giving back to patients as well, connecting with them “on a personal level, to see what they want. What can I do to uplift them?” she said. “It’s something innate in my soul.”

CONTINUED ON BACK
When COVID-19 struck, heroes stepped into action in all kinds of jobs— including Human Resources. “COVID broadened the scope of HR,” said Denise Mariotti, HUP’s chief HR officer. While normally only focused on employees in the work environment, when COVID-19 struck, “we had to flip our thinking to a more holistic approach,” one that considered employee needs at work, at home and that of their family. “We had to react and respond quickly to keep pace, going shoulder to shoulder to ensure that our employees were safe and had the resources they needed,” she said.

One major challenge during the pandemic was helping people stay gainfully employed even if their usual job functions were temporarily suspended. Mariotti said her staff “jumped through hoops” to find work for those employees who needed to supplement reduced work hours or pick up hours if they had a temporary lack of work. “We tried to explore every option to keep staff working,” said Leonard Umile, HR manager at HUP. For example, some staff worked in Materials Management to help organize and distribute the donations and increased supply of PPE that HUP received daily. “People were ready and willing to work and help out anywhere,” Umile said.

To protect clinical staff with underlying health problems that prevented them from working around COVID patients, “we deployed them to areas where they needed nursing expertise but no direct patient care, such as behind the scenes in occupational medicine or doing telemedicine consults,” Umile said.

“On a million different levels, HUP’s HR team made sure employees had what they needed to get through the past few months,” Mariotti said. Members of the HUP HR team were always available in the Ground Gates location to support employees and managers. “Members of the HR team have been here every day on site,” she said. “They were spotted throughout the hospital doing everything to support their clashes and help protect their employees.”

A very important part of the job of any HR team is to support those on the front lines of a crisis, Mariotti said, adding that even while dealing with their own COVID-related personal issues, HUP’s HR team “never let the ball drop. People were calling them 24/7.”

Mariotti thinks that, moving forward, many lessons learned during COVID will be part of HR. “We’re thinking about work and staff in a very different way than we used to,” she said. “We are examining all of the options for creative ways to support our employees in the ‘new normal.’”

“We’ve much more aware of how people’s lives are affected by factors outside of work and how it impacts their ability to be ‘present’ at work,” she continued, “However, as a team we are all in agreement that the employees of HUP are the true heroes. Hearing their stories, learning of their struggles while witnessing the incredible dedication to their work and to our patients has left an indelible mark on each of us.”

▶ HUP’s HR staff includes (from left): Jackie McGinly, Lidia Corso, Len Umile, and Shannon Camps. Missing from photo are Matt Kelly and Andrea Mathis.

The DAISY Award celebrates the incredible work nurses do every day. At HUP, patients and their family members, or other clinicians can nominate nurses for their compassionate and selfless acts. Congratulations to this year’s winners from April 2019 to March 2020.

Helen McClelland Award Winners

The Helen McClelland Award for Research and Innovation recognizes nurses who integrate evaluation, research and/or the evidence-based practice process in delivering patient care, using innovative strategies. Jennifer Marvelous, MSN, of Penn Family Care, combined these qualities in the diabetes education class she created. While she normally works as a triage nurse with the practice, two years ago she was asked to start the class and jumped at the opportunity to work with patients. After personally reaching out to individual patients in the practice with diabetes, she began holding weekly sessions. Topics in each of the eight sessions ranged from “what is diabetes” to “how to eat healthy and stay active.” She also provided local resources to help patients reach their goals, such as the “We Walk PHL” walking program by the Fairmount Park Conservancy.

Since starting the course in 2018, 8 of 12 graduates had lowered their glucose levels, helping to keep their kidneys healthy and avoid more serious conditions, such as cardiovascular disease. Although COVID has temporarily put the classes on hold, some participants still get in touch with her “just to tell me their levels. The patients were motivated,” she said. “And I miss it.”

Felicia Morrison, MSN, MBA, is part of HUP’s Staffing for All Seasons. Because SFAS is a resource pool and not an actual unit, there’s been no easy way for its staff to share knowledge and best practices. Morrison closed this knowledge gap by creating the Journal for All Seasons, a virtual journaling club. “She now oversees a committee that produces a quarterly scholarly article for SFAS that can be accessed and evaluated in a myriad of ways such as web-based learning, or hard copies located in the Nursing Network Center,” noted the nomination.

In addition to selecting and thoroughly reviewing an article, Morrison also creates a quiz and evaluation form as a learning assessment, which generates one continuing education credit for each participant. “Participation doubled in the first year since inception.”

Victoria L. Rich Award Winners

The Victoria L. Rich Award honors an exceptional nurse leader at Penn Medicine who inspires, motivates and influences others who inspire, motivate and influence others. The nomination for Sebastian Ramagñana, BSN, RN, manager of Rhoads 5 ICU, described his “transformational” leadership in caring for what was “one of the most critically ill patients ever admitted to the ICU.”

The condition of the young woman, who was suffering from both severe sepsis and ARDS (acute respiratory distress syndrome) “was so tenuous she wanted a candidate for any of the traditional treatments.”

Within a day, Ramagñana had rented a specialty bed that flipped the patient so her stomach was facing the floor, to help improve oxygenation. He then stayed late and came in on the weekend to educate and support the staff with the equipment. But, when the patient’s condition continued to deteriorate, he provided staff with another type of support: closure during this emotionally trying time.

“Sebastian’s actions throughout this family’s acts exemplifies his kindness, and his ability to be an inspiration and a ray of hope in the seemingly darkest of situations.”

The nomination for Felicia Morrison, MSN, MBA, is part of HUP’s Staffing for All Seasons. Because SFAS is a resource pool and not an actual unit, there’s been no easy way for its staff to...