Shining Stars May/June 2012

This program rewards individuals that go above and beyond their job responsibilities in exemplifying one of the five supporting commitments. These commitments are Safety, Clinical Excellence, Courtesy & Caring, Healing Environment and Efficiency.

CLINICAL & PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE

AWARDED TO: Arlene Schwartz
RECOGNIZED BY: Gerard Dirkx

SITUATION/TASK: On February 8, 2012, after an emergency trip to EMC, I was diagnosed with a "bleed" on the left side of the brain and admitted to ICU, and spent almost the entire month in the hospital moving up through the ranks, as it were, finally made my last stop in Acute Rehab for physical/occupational/speech therapies every day until I was discharged on February 27. It was suggested that I continue the speech therapy at the hospital. (In 2003, I had a stroke on the right side from which I fully recovered.)

ACTION: Although I could speak perfectly well, the prevailing opinion seemed to be that speech therapy would help the minor effect of aphasia, usually the result of the stroke on the left side of the brain. Ms. Arlene Schwartz took on the challenge of helping in my frustration of being unable to remember the right word, helping with my memory loss and any other problems associated with my stroke. And that she did! She was personable, friendly and very positive, while giving me "homework" and encouragement even when – through my lack of self-confidence – I thought I had failed. "No one fails," she would say with a humorous retort, even while calling me the perfect example of a "perfectionist!"

RESULT: I learned to be patient with myself, lengthen my attention span and take the time to work through any situation, any problem, and any challenge with deliberate steps to organize my thoughts and any task I had to perform. Ms. Schwartz advised computer websites for brain teasers, and other sources including language and mind games, crossword puzzles, and more. Eleven intense speech therapy sessions worked well for me, and with constant positive reinforcement from the professional, yet patient-friendly Ms. Schwartz, who's obviously a "people person" made all the difference in my complete recovery and from what could have been a disastrous, life-changing situation! I will miss her!

COURTESY/CARING

AWARDED TO: Marie McGovern
RECOGNIZED BY: Julie Ruble

SITUATION/TASK: My brother was in ICU and Grace showed amazing compassion for him and our entire family. Her knowledge and ability to answer our medical questions and patience with our questions was amazing.

ACTION: We were there for three weeks and had many amazing nurses but Grace went above and beyond. When they removed him from life support Grace battled very hard with the doctors to make sure he was comfortable.

RESULT: His first three hours were an excruciating struggle, with him in pain, and Grace made sure she found a way to make him comfortable. She will be forever in our hearts. Please recognize her for her amazing efforts.

HEALING ENVIRONMENT

AWARDED TO: Laura N. Latham
RECOGNIZED BY: Mary Ann McLaughlin for patient

SITUATION/TASK: A cancer patient was in the unit for 2 weeks and had been in and out of Eisenhower Medical Center 4 to 6 times since January of this year due to adverse reactions to the chemo treatments. Laura had been the nurse on several of the visits and this last time, the patient saw Laura's name come up on the board. When the patient saw Laura's name, they were instantly relieved and instantly felt safe; knowing they were going to receive such highly personalized care from Laura.

ACTION: As in the past, Laura expressed real concern for the patient and their personal fight against cancer. She took the time to explain procedures and why they were needed; taking the extra time to help and comfort the patient. The patient stated, "You can't know the value of a nurse taking a moment to hold a patient's hand while they shed a tear out of fear, fatigue or frustration…or all of the above. It's the easiest and sweetest kind of comfort to extend…Laura is simply an extraordinary nurse, employee and person and I hope this letter makes the appropriate people aware of this most special component of your medical staff. I am a person with advanced cancer fighting to beat this most insidious disease (for the second time in 15 years)."

RESULT: The patient states, "I feel safe, secure and most importantly, that I have made the right decision about where to be treated. These feelings are based solely on my experience with Dr. Driesbach and his staff and all the nurses at Eisenhower Medical Center as well as all the other staff members that I have encountered…most special praise and appreciation goes to Laura L. She not only has fueled these most positive feelings, but enhances them."

SAFETY

AWARDED TO: Anna See / Cheryl Evans
RECOGNIZED BY: Rhiannon Howell

SITUATION/TASK: We had an unusual situation at the store on Tuesday, May 1. While paying for her merchandise, one of our customers said that she had no idea where she was and how to get back to her motel. After visiting with the lady, Anna came to me and after speaking with her, we realized that she possibly had dementia or beginning stages of Alzheimer's disease. As the store was getting ready to close, she wanted to leave, saying she would just drive around until she found her motel. We convinced her to stay, kept her inside the store, made sure she was comfortable, and told her we would assist her in any way possible.

ACTION: As she was unable to give us any information that would help us find a family member, we contacted the Rancho Mirage Police. She insisted that she lived in Bakersfield, but was staying in a motel close by, that they had arrived Monday night, but she could not remember the name or what city the motel was in. We started calling local motels to see if they had anyone registered under her name. After quite some time the officer finally found a small piece of paper in her wallet with family member phone numbers and we were able to contact her son. Her son gave us her husband's phone number. The Sheriff sent another officer out to pick up her husband in Desert Hot Springs to bring him back to the store.

RESULT: The Sheriff told her he would be suspending her driver's license. She became quite upset. Anna was very kind and comforting to her so that her agitation was kept to a minimum. Anna and I, along with the Sheriff stayed with the woman until her husband arrived. Her husband told us that this was not the first time this had happened. As the store was already closed, Anna did not have to stay with me as I told her to go on home, but she insisted and her assistance and caring was much appreciated. The lady was visibly scared, confused and upset. She kept asking what she had done wrong. Anna was key in keeping the lady from extreme distress and agitation.

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