

**2010 Nurses' Week Award Winners**  
(as submitted by nominator)

**Compassion – Gail (AMU)**



"Compassion is a human emotion prompted by the pain of others. More vigorous than empathy, the feeling commonly gives rise to an active desire to alleviate another's suffering."

This definition of compassion perfectly describes Gail. On the night of December 1st, we had a patient who passed away. This patient was diagnosed with throat cancer in May of 2009. It had metastasized quickly, and he was to be going home the next morning with Hospice. The patient passed away suddenly that evening, and this actually came as a huge shock and impact to his family. I have never seen a family react this way to a patient's death before. They wailed, and screamed, and grieved for their loved one. Some threw items in the room, others punched walls. Kraigen PCA, and Gail RN were the care providers for this particular patient, and now, they were also the care providers for this patient's family. Kraigen provided

excellent comfort for the family through her own personal tears.

It seems that whenever I work with Gail, she always has the more challenging group of patients. Whether the patients are extremely confused, angry, painful, or on comfort measures with a difficult family. But no matter how difficult, or heart-breaking the situation is, Gail always comes out strong. She provides excellent care, not only for the patients, but for the families as well. She is always gentle and kind. And with each situation, she is constantly looking for the lesson to be learned.

With this particular situation, we sat in the break room with Kraigen PCA and several other nurses and PCAs to discuss what had happened. A "therapeutic debriefing," if you will. You could just tell that Gail was both emotionally and physically drained from this night. She never complains, she never gets upset -- She just smiles her gentle smile, and continues on with her night.

We spoke about how at times we become de-sensitized, and often forget that this person who passed away was someone's husband, father, brother, etc. She stated, "I never want to lose that feeling of knowing that this patient was, 'somebody'." I couldn't agree with her more.

Currently, Gail is studying for her Geriatric Certification course, and has filled out an application to volunteer at Hospice of Southwest Michigan.

She is a perfect example of how someone transforms into the role of a compassionate, professional nurse, and I admire her for that more than words can express.

**Respect – Ruth (GMU)**



Two years ago my best friend was diagnosed with non-hodgkins lymphoma. She was 29 years old. Having worked on the General Medical Unit for the last 8 years, I knew that it would be a struggle for her. She was admitted many times from 2008-2009 for chemotherapy, neutropenia, and pneumonia. My friend got to know many of the nurses very well over that time. She was very fond of all Bronson nurses, but there was one person who always stood out to her as being the best. Through my friend I was able to see how lucky we are to have Ruth on the General Medical Unit

Right after her diagnosis my friend was admitted for her first round of chemotherapy. Ruth took the time to sit with her and answer all of her questions. Ruth was knowledgeable and caring. She never acted like she was too busy to explain things or answer questions. She was anxious about starting her

chemotherapy and Ruth did a great job of easing her worries.

Being the unit coordinator, I was always asking my friend how we were doing to see if there was anything we could do to improve. Her answer was always that everyone on GMU was great, but Ruth was special. Ruth always took extra time to explain things, and if she put the call light on she was right there. She made my friend feel comfortable and always remembered to ask about her family and other things that were going on in her life besides her illness. She included my friend's husband in the education process and always made sure that she had everything she needed. She also made sure that she had everything she needed set up at home prior her discharges.

As her illness progressed, Ruth continued to be there for her. They talked about life and how things were

going. Ruth even brought in a journal so my friend could write down things that she wanted to say to her daughter in case she did not make it. My friend had such a hard time coping with her disease. I think that this was the best thing anyone could have done for her. It is like Ruth can read exactly what a person needs and then does everything she can do to make it happen.

When I asked my friend what Ruth did that was so great she said, "Everything, Ruth does everything better." My friend passed away in April of 2009 on the General Medical Unit. She was 30 years old. I believe that Ruth made her life so much better while she was here and helped her to cope in the hardest time of her life. I have received many letters from other families and patients saying how Ruth has impacted their lives. They describe her excellence in family centered care. They speak about how she made them feel like people and not just another number or part of her job.

Ruth is also a great patient advocate. She will do anything in her power to make things better for patients. One patient made a comment in a letter that I really feel describes how awesome Ruth is. He was at another hospital while undergoing a stem cell transplant and commented that "the nurses are nice, but they aren't Ruth."

Ruth is such a wonderful asset to our hospital. I can't describe all of the wonderful things that she does. She goes above and beyond in all aspects of her job. Thank you Ruth!

### **Pride – Felicite (OB Mother/Baby)**



The nurse being nominated is an example of all that is good about the nursing profession. She questions the why of things, making others think about practice, and challenges her peers and the organization as a whole to think outside the box. This nurse is a role model and very strong advocate for bedside report and including the patient and family in the plan of care. It is not enough for her to practice this way, however. She encourages her peers to provide the same level of care by verbally supporting them in bedside report as well as finding research articles that support bedside report to share with the rest of the staff. She has written information sheets to share with her co-workers with helpful hints and the "why" behind the initiative. This nurse serves on 2 unit councils and divisional level council. She brings the information back to her co-workers in an energetic and positive manner. She shares the vision and mission of these councils with her peers and states she herself has gained much insight into the reasoning behind both unit and organizational decisions.

Besides supporting bedside report, this nurse embraced the changes brought about by the Intellidot system, self-scheduling, new phones, and changes in the documentation system. She always seems to find a positive for the patients in the many changes that occur and tries to communicate this to her less than thrilled peers. This nurse loves her profession and loves her patients. She takes the responsibilities of her role and her patients in a positive and caring way. If she can see a way to make things better, she will definitely try.

### **Expertise – Ruth Tatara (OB Labor/Delivery)**



Ruth actively looks for ways to mentor new staff. She is experienced with tub births, natural births and bereavement patients. Ruth will work with newer staff or those with less experience in these areas to assist them learning the skills in these areas. She recently worked side by side with a new staff member in 2 different tub birth opportunities to help her develop the skills to perform well. The new staff member is now enthusiastic about the opportunities to work with these patients and has already assisted with this type of patient on her own.

Ruth is an active member of our OB education council. On her own she developed a master list of available in-services (both unit based and hospital wide). She posted the dates, times, locations and CEU's offered and emails that list to fellow staff members and posts the lists in our various lounges. Again on her own she worked with fellow staff to develop a better follow-up system for our bereavement patients. Then discovering her peers needs for more education in this area, she developed a task force to look at the needs, policies, and practices. She set meeting times, conducted the meeting and then sent email summaries to all staff to help them know what was changing and where to find resources - many that she created or improved. She took a question that her peers had involving our bereavement patients to our social worker and then emailed the staff of the changes needed to improve patient awareness of a free program for bereavement patients.

In an effort to bring evidence-based practice to her night shift peers, Ruth attends journal club and then will

bring the information and articles to staff on the night shift. When she is able she will hold impromptu journal club reviews. She sends emails with updates about available med surg classes and how to sign up for them for our nurses interested in increasing their high-risk skills. She attends in-services and conferences and disperses the information to her peers. As a member of the education council she creates notebooks with scenarios to help with our skill and safety fairs. One of these involved information on how to care for patients of size. Ruth organizes speakers for in-services for our OB staff. She will gather questions or OB specific needs and send them to the speakers, an example of this is a recent Blood conservation in-service that addressed our OB questions.

Ruth is also passionate about breastfeeding and utilizing our milk bank option for those breast-feeding moms/babies who need additional options. Ruth sent a recent email to staff asking for feedback on how the use of donor breast milk is going, what is working well, what needs to be improved, what barriers exist, etc. Ruth used her evidence based internship class to work on a resource for bereavement patients on dealing with breast engorgement. She met with our lactation consultant director to gain her expertise in this area also.

Ruth has received NPAL status several times and had mentored fellow staff on the process. She and other education council members set aside time for interested staff to bring their questions and meet with NPAL recipients and review their notebooks.

Ruth not only goes so far above and beyond for her fellow staff members but she also looks for ways to make her patients experience the best it can be. Last year she worked on the 4th of July. Many of our APU patients have extended stays and miss those "normal" family events. She helped those who could move about, get over to a window where they could see the fireworks from the Kings game downtown. This chance to feel normal or participate with their family in a celebration of the holiday meant a lot to our patients.

I am constantly amazed at what I find out that Ruth has done for her peers or patients. She is energetic and enthusiastic about what she can offer our OB department. She looks for answers or asks the hard questions when needed.

### **Impact – Ann (Education Services)**



I highly recommend this individual for the Hazel Latondress Award under Nursing Impact. During the past year, this nurse has managed the IntelliDOT project with expertise and diplomacy, and has significantly impacted how medication administration delivery takes place at Bronson.

This nurse works in the Education Services Department as a clinical instructor for the General Medical Unit and willingly took on this massive undertaking, with minimal decrease in her existing workload. She understood the strategic importance of the success of this project to the organization, and ultimately, to patient care.

This nurse has worked tirelessly to assist with the implementation of this product, but more importantly, she has worked to identify issues, and then, embraced the task of resolving them. This has involved incredible relationship-building skills among departments, especially nursing and pharmacy. Her stellar communication

skills with the pharmacy department have paved a foundation for continued dialog regarding a shared goal: the safe and efficient administration of medications. This nurse has successfully facilitated the breaking down of walls and the building of bridges.

Though the challenges great, this individual persevered to get all the players on the same page. An example includes the rollout of IntelliDOT in NICU. There appeared to be significant implementation concerns, and this nurse, through her excellent problem-solving skills, forged ahead with the physicians and nurses until there was mutual resolve. In the light of frustration by many, she remains the constant force. Those that work with her know that her attention-to-detail is stellar and she genuinely wants the best for our patients and staff.

Peer feedback regarding this individual has been very positive. Examples include: “she is so calm and willing to help with issues, even after hearing multiple stories, multiple ways. She offers some history to help all involved make an informed decision.” Another individual stated, “I have never seen ANYONE with the dedication that I have seen in (this person). You have been a great mentor.”

All in all, this nurse exemplifies the personal strength and commitment that Bronson nurses are known for. She has demonstrated incredible personal growth and leadership during this past year, and is indeed worth of this significant recognition.

### **Leadership – Grace (MICU)**



I am nominating this nurse for the leadership award because she represents nursing professionalism at its best. She demonstrates accountability through her practice as a bedside nurse and as her role as chair of our shared governance. She attends 100% of the shared governance meetings, sits on numerous other committees and is dedicated to improving quality of care and professionalism in nursing practice.

Her coaching and mentoring skills as a non-formal leader are impressive. She has mentored other staff during times of change and she has mentored those that will take over for her in shared governance. I have never seen anyone more dedicated to taking the time to help others succeed. She recently began mentoring a staff member to take over as chair of shared governance for our unit in 2010. She met with this person on her own time, shared examples and discussed any and all questions and concerns this person had. Shared governance in our unit has grown tremendously in

the past year and with her guidance, 2010 will only bring great things. She also shines in the area of precepting. She is committed to the orientee having a great experience and doing what it takes to help them be successful. She mentors new employees and helps them work through concerns they may have regarding their role as a novice RN.

She also functions as a relief charge in our unit, which speaks to her ability to coordinate care, promote a healthy work environment and remain flexible. We are a very progressive unit that treats a number of life threatening illnesses. She is able to change with the flow of the unit and function seamlessly as a member of a multidisciplinary team. She is well respected by our physicians as well as staff members. As her unit coordinator, I can say that it is reassuring knowing that she is in charge or leading an initiative. She is calm under pressure and always has what is best for the patient at heart.

She is a true example of nursing professionalism. I have worked with her since she was an extern and she has grown tremendously over the years. I have always been impressed with her drive, loyalty and her determination to support evidenced based care and the growth of the nursing practice. She has led successful initiatives such as bedside reporting that have undoubtedly changed the way we think about patient safety in our unit. She was able to lead shared governance in a research initiative and then lead the staff in adapting to the change. She continually thinks outside of the box and challenges others to do the same. She is so successful in part because of her ability to lead a group and for her ability to allow a collaborative method of decision-making. She realizes that success can only be achieved through hard work, determination and respect.

I feel proud to have the opportunity to work with her and it has been a pleasure to watch her grow from the unsure nursing extern to the leader she is today. I see great things in her future and Bronson is lucky to have her representing them as a nursing professional.

### **Rising Star – Sarah (T&EC)**

I always look forward to working my required weekends, because I know that Sarah will be there. She works every Friday, Saturday and Sunday night so that she can spend the rest of her week as a single parent to an 11-year-old son and energetic 7-year-old twins.

As a PCA in the ED, the quality and flow of any shift is largely dependant on the RN-PCA relationship. We work together as a patient care team and spend the most time at a patient's bedside. During our overnight shifts, we need to rely on each other to provide the best possible care because we have less staff and less resources. Sarah is a great problem-solver and can respond quickly to any emergent scenario. She stays calm in a crisis and is able to immediately address an issue and calmly, respectfully delegate responsibilities to others. I remember several occasions in which Sarah responded quickly to an urgent patient in triage while she was working in nearby rooms. If one of her own patients begins taking a turn for the worst, Sarah responds to the problem immediately and can recognize when the patient's needs are beyond her ability to care for them (i.e. when a patient needs to be moved from a regular ER bed to a large trauma room). She provides excellent care while facilitating such a transfer, and if her workload allows, will stay in the trauma rooms to assist the new nursing team in caring for her patient. She is not afraid to ask questions and is eager to expand her clinical knowledge.

Sarah is also great at anticipating outcomes. She has a great clinical eye and critical thinking skills that aid her in preparing the patient for upcoming tests, labwork or examinations. She thinks several steps beyond an order; for example, if a patient with dyspnea has an IV ordered, Sarah is able to think ahead to a possible CT Angio for a PE work-up and place her IV specific to CT's requirements should this exam be necessary. While this seems simple, many new nurses don't possess that kind of foresight and instead focus completely on only the

task at hand.

In addition to her excellent clinical skills, Sarah's real gift is at the bedside. She is an excellent communicator and explains each step of a patient's visit clearly and in detail. She explains the exams ordered and the amount of time needed for results to come back, answers patient and family questions patiently, and still stays efficient in her practice. She has even become a founding member of the ED's new "Patient Satisfaction Committee" and is currently working on a presentation focused on strategies for aiding patients in anticipating delays. Ultimately, she is a joy to work with. She delegates appropriately and does not consider even small tasks (e.g. vitals, obtaining specimens) to be solely a PCA responsibility. And most importantly, she really loves her job. While we all may complain about a challenging work-day, Sarah never laments about her career choice itself. She is here for all the right reasons and takes great pride in what she contributes to the ED team. Sarah has only been a nurse for a year, and that means that Bronson has a great deal to look forward to.