

April 7, 2008

Selection committee
Sasha Bella Award

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you in to nominate Beata Pajak for the Sasha Bella Award for Excellence in Family Centred Care. I have worked with Beata for the past nine years in the Critical Care Unit at the Hospital for Sick Children, both in my capacity as staff nurse and as Child Health Services Manager. Beata has dedicated her career to paediatric nursing here at Sickkids since 1997; prior to working in Cardiac Critical Care she worked on 8A Haematology and Oncology.

Beata is a worthy recipient of this award as she consistently demonstrates excellence in her nursing practice and the practices within the framework of the Mutual Participation Model. Beata truly embodies the philosophy that parents are partners with the health care professionals that committed to a common goal. She strives to support the families and build on their unique strengths to facilitate family professional collaboration. This can be particularly challenging in the highly technological environment of Cardiac Critical Care. Family Centred Care (FCC) is the philosophy of the hospital with empirical guidelines however” how to “operationalize this philosophy in practice is often individualized. I have seen Beata demonstrate how she integrates the principles of FCC into her practice. An example of this is best illustrated by sharing an experience of one particular family that Beata was the core nurse.

The patient was a complex cardiac baby that had been in and out of the hospital and required a high level of care at home. The baby had been admitted to the Cardiac CCU and was unable to wean from the ventilator and had numerous failed extubations. Beata had cared for the baby and family for most of his stay. The mother expressed that she felt that she was not being treated as an equal partner in the decision making for her baby’s plan of care. The health care team was insisting that the baby would need a tracheotomy in order to be removed from the ventilator. The mother was insisting that the baby be given one more chance to successfully extubate. Beata was able to work with the family to create enabling strategies to help them re-establish a therapeutic relationship with the health care team. A plan of care was then created as partners with a common goal. The baby was successfully extubated and sent home with the family. The mother came back to CCCU during a clinic visit and sought me out. She wanted me (as the manager) to know the impact of Beata’s nursing care had on her and her family. She believes that her baby would have had a tracheotomy if Beata had not helped her reconnect with the team. The mother then gave me a note that she wanted me to give to Beata. She hugged me and thanked me for having such great nurses like Beata to care for the babies. This nomination is to acknowledge Beata for her exceptional compassionate spirit that she tirelessly shares with our families.

Beata is an established expert in her clinical practice. She has been nationally certified as a critical care nurse (CNCCP). She has shown consistency in her abilities and roles models

excellence in critical thinking and problem solving. I am continuously impressed by her ability to direct her efforts towards education and teaching. She has been a consistent preceptor to many new graduate nurses and has had outstanding reviews from her preceptees. She has strong communication skills which enable her to responsively meet the needs of her preceptees. Beata identifies learning needs and creates opportunities for positive educational experiences while at the same time providing for the highest level of care for our patients. Beata has shown maturity and leadership in all aspects of her practice. She has shown great commitment to cardiac patient populations and has led the way in nursing activities to advance their nursing care.

I feel honoured that Beata is as a member of the Cardiac Critical Care team. As a team we need to attract and retain the best healthcare professionals to continue to improve patient outcomes and family experiences.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Trisha Sutton
CHS Manager
Labatt Family Heart Centre
Cardiac Critical Care