



May 8, 2007

**Riley Farrell**  
Labatt Family Heart Centre  
SickKids Hospital

Dear Riley:

On behalf of the Sasha Bella Fund, we are very pleased to award you the 2007 Sasha Bella Award for Family Centred Care.

You were nominated by Lora Runham RN & Linda Fazari RN, ACNP who described your outstanding contribution to family centred care nursing practice at SickKids Hospital. We have attached the nomination letter below.

We experienced first hand your care for Sasha and your consideration for us. We greatly appreciated your visits to the house and for Sasha's funeral.

Congratulations on this award and for making an invaluable contribution to Nursing Practice at SickKids Hospital.

Sincerely,

Pamela Stein and Jonathan Blumberg  
Sasha's Mom and Dad

cc. The Sasha Bella Award committee:  
Judith Wilson, Kathryn Timberlake, Cecilia St George – Hyslop, , Sherry Ree Stevens, Tessie Koonthanam, Samantha Rothwell, Paula Pereira-Solomos, Joann Herridge, Dr. Jennifer Russell



### **Sasha Bella Award for Excellence in Family-Centred Care Nomination**

It is with great pleasure that we nominate Riley Farrell for the 2007 Sasha Bella Award for Excellence in Family-Centred Nursing Care. It is without hesitation that we nominate Riley as she consistently excels in her capacity to provide family-centred nursing care in both non-complex and complex patient situations. Her warm and compassionate approach to nursing has touched the lives of many children and families facing life threatening or chronic illnesses.

When establishing core nursing lists for long-term or palliative care children, we know that Riley will be the right nurse for the job. Her expertise is recognized by the Nursing Leadership Team as she is constantly considered to care for patients with multifaceted needs, and Riley always rises to the occasion. A prime example of this includes a patient who recently transferred to 4D with a Berlin Heart, an extracorporeal ventricular assist device that helps patients while they wait for a heart transplant. Riley went to the CCCU to care for this patient and facilitate their transition to 4D when the time arrived.

Riley has an exceptional ability to empathize with her families and help them cope with the uncertainty of their child's illness. She recognizes the uniqueness of each child and family and adapts her plan of care accordingly. Riley always encourages her patients' families to become involved with care as much as possible. She treats all her parents as the "experts" when it comes to their child and values their opinions and wishes. For example, while caring for a long-term palliative child, Riley supported parents' decision to transition to a palliative care route and take their child home to die peacefully. Parents had an extremely difficult time making this decision but Riley was always supportive and reassuring. She helped parents by facilitating communication with the multi-disciplinary team and supported them as they learned to meet their child's complex medical needs and prepare for discharge after a 6 month hospital stay. In addition, Riley was a strong advocate who worked hard to make arrangements for treatments to be planned in a timely manner so that this family was able to go for walks, or allow for the patient to have appropriate rest time. On several occasions Riley has taken on the job of transitioning palliative care families from hospital to home. She works with the home palliative care team to ensure that all of her patients have a smooth transition, and parents are comfortable with their child's plan of care.

Riley has made a tremendous contribution in caring for palliative care families on 4D. This is a difficult patient population that 4D nurses infrequently encounter. Many of our patients and families pursue aggressive medical treatment and therefore we do not often encounter palliative patients. Riley has demonstrated a natural ability to empathize with these patients and families and ensure that they have the support they need.

Riley has provided leadership by preceptoring students and new staff as well as acting as a role model for nurses providing palliative care.

Riley has met the following objectives through her work with palliative, long-term patients:

- Unsurpassed patient outcomes
- Exemplary patient and family satisfaction
- Consistent and quality patient care



Riley has met each of these objectives by ensuring patients and families are aware of their choices and treatment options; advocating for patients and families needs and wishes; and providing excellent nursing care that ensures patients maintain the highest quality of life possible.

Riley is able to establish a trusting relationship with even the most frightened patients as a result of her gentle and caring personality. For example, Riley has cared for several young children who were awaiting a heart transplant on 4D. These children face many ups and downs while awaiting a transplant- including admissions and discharges from CCCU and 4D's stepdown unit as well as numerous painful and stressful treatments. Riley always knows how to calm her patients at the most stressful of times. She advocates for her patient's to have a calm and non-threatening environment with few disruptions to their everyday routine. A dressing change, blood pressure, ng tube insertion or cap change is always easier with Riley. She tailors her approach with each child to meet their physical, emotional, and developmental needs. It's not uncommon for Riley to use what little spare time she has during her shift to make an opportunity for play or take a trip off the unit i.e. the Santa Clause parade. She is a constant source of support and reassurance for her patients and families even when they are not on 4D. She frequently takes the time to visit her patients in CCCU appropriately asking for updates on her patients' progress, and occasionally will make visits to patients home.

Riley exemplifies the practice of family-centred care and provides leadership for staff in this area. She takes the time to understand cohorts of patients and strives to create opportunities to improve care for families. She is acutely attentive to family needs and works hard to achieve them, or coordinate care to make it possible. These are but a few reasons of why Riley is so deserving of this wonderful award.

Sincerely,

Lora Runham RN & Linda Fazari RN, ACNP