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Kristina Miller and Cherish Thomson
Public Affairs Office
SHepublicaffairs@va.gov

Veteran, teammates nominate nursing staff for excellence

SHERIDAN, Wyoming (August 29, 2022)—“I love the Vets, I love my coworkers, and I love my job,” says Registered Nurse Annette Vaira, winner of Sheridan Veterans Affairs Health Care System’s “DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses” for this quarter. The DAISY Award is a nationwide program at VA and non-VA medical facilities which recognizes nurses and the unforgettable impact their care has on patients and families. Vaira currently works as part of the nursing float pool at the Sheridan VA.

“I may never do anything large in life, but I do try to make my corner of the world a better place, as do many of the people I work with every day,” said Vaira.

Vaira was recognized for emulating the golden rule in all aspects of caregiving as an individual, and as a team member, through her hard work, thoughtfulness, and intuition while serving Veterans. In her nomination from a Veteran, Vaira got an “A plus” for the kindness and compassion he experienced while she worked on his unit.

“Having a Vet nominate me for this award means a lot,” said Vaira. “I’m just honored. The Vets have put their lives on the line for our safety and our freedom and it can take a toll. A thank you from this Veteran would have been more than enough, but that he nominated me for an award... wow! I’m the one that should be thanking him.”

Nurses can be nominated for a DAISY Award by anyone—patients, family members, other nurses, clinicians, or other staff—who experiences or observes extraordinary, compassionate care being provided by a nurse. Vaira was also nominated by her co-worker, Registered Nurse Eric Wesolowski, a former DAISY award winner.

“She consistently exercises integrity while assessing various situations involving both Veterans and staff during the assessment process,” says Wesolowski. “In doing so, not only do the staff members grow in their respective skill sets, but above all, our Veterans grow closer to their health care goals.”

Also recognized by the Sheridan VA, and nominated three times by her peers, licensed practical nurse Kelly Thornton won the BEE (Being Exceptional Everyday) Award for constantly “going above and beyond” for both Veterans and fellow staff. BEE nominations were created as a compliment to the DAISY Award Program to honor LPNs, nursing assistants (NAs), or

social service assistants (SSAs), who provide outstanding care assistance to registered nursing staff. Because... "a DAISY can't survive without a BEE, and a BEE can't survive without a DAISY!"

Like the DAISY Award, anyone can nominate a BEE. Thornton's peers recognized her for being "a respectful and dedicated nurse you can count on to show up with a smile and a good attitude." She also often volunteers her downtime to take Veterans outside to get sunshine.

"Kelly will drop whatever she is doing to help anyone while she is at work," says Melissa Loughan, nursing assistant. "When she's at work the Veterans get exceptional care. She truly cares about the Veterans."

Mountain View Living Center co-worker and Nursing Assistant Danielle Turk said, "I have personally seen her be a super nurse and super aide, all day and every day she works on this unit."

Thornton expressed that hearing the nomination was very humbling.

"I am nothing without the aides and other nurses, not to mention housekeeping and our managers," says Thornton. "We all have to work together to be a team, and this was a reminder that I may not feel like I am making a difference, but to be noticed and recognized just makes your soul feel loved."

The Sheridan VA team is currently hiring RNs, LPNs and NAs in several areas for both full and part time positions. They are offering competitive salaries and benefits including up to 50 paid days off per year, shift differentials, federal employee retirement, student loan reimbursement, advance degree scholarships, health insurance starting the first pay period, and an income-based childcare subsidy program.

Contact the Sheridan VA Nursing Recruiter, if interested in a VA nursing career, at 307-675-3262, or email questions and resumes to SheridanNursingJobs@va.gov.

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The Sheridan VA Health Care System serves Veterans across three quarters of Wyoming and the Rocky Mountain Region. Besides a medical center in Sheridan, the system has eight Outpatient Clinics located in Casper, Riverton, Cody, Gillette, Rock Springs, Worland, Evanston, and Afton, Wyoming. Follow us at www.facebook.com/SheridanVAMC and www.twitter.com/SheridanVAMC and now on www.instagram.com/SheridanVAMC.