Nurses are celebrated during Nurse’s Week which coincides with the birthday of Florence Nightingale. This year Mount Sinai has a full week of scheduled events to honor, recognize and enrich our nurses. Please find a way to attend some of these events. Please take time to honor your colleagues. And, most importantly, please recognize your own valuable and unique contributions.

Mount Sinai Awards for Excellence in Nursing Practice

Each year during Nurse’s week, Mount Sinai recognizes outstanding nurses throughout the institution. This year I am honored to be one of them.

How does it feel to be the recipient of a prestigious nursing award? I have got to admit that it feels wonderful to have your efforts applauded. The ego loves the attention and it gets the validation it seeks. But after the initial excitement, I wonder why? Why me? There are so very many other wonderful Mount Sinai nurses, why would I be singled out? There’s the longevity piece, the fact that I’ve stuck around for 32 years proves my loyalty to the institution. There’s the Benner theory of how, after years of training and practice, one becomes not just competent, but expert at nursing. There’s the fact that I love to read and so have continued learning throughout all these years. I’ve kept abreast of current trends and the forward progression of our profession. I’ve volunteered beyond my basic employment requirements to enrich our community. But so has many, many other Mount Sinai nurses. So why? Why me?

The only answer that makes sense to me is that there is something about my personal belief system that makes me stand out. I believe that there are many paths to fulfillment and so respect the many ways people seek their answers. I believe that since there is more than enough to go around and so I need to share. I believe that we have to think about what we do and say, so as to not harm, but to help. I believe that we are all interconnected, you are me and I am you. Many people say they share some of my beliefs, but still operate from places of fear. This hinders their ability to truly reach out and give fully. I believe that when we acknowledge our true intention; we can deliver.

I am accepting the Mount Sinai Award for Clinical Excellence with the deepest of gratitude for my leaders who guide me, my colleagues who teach me so much and my patients who give me wisdom and purpose. I am accepting this award on behalf of all nurses who are making a better world for us all.

Submitted by Sylvie Jacobs, RN, BSN, CPAN
Self-knowledge and awareness supports all other interactions. Understanding our own intention and focus, allows us to be fully present for others. In practical terms, this is done by an inner investigation of our mind. It’s useful to take a centering pause, perhaps a deep breath, before patient contact. Some have recommended using hand washing time to examine our inner state. How are you feeling at that moment? Your emotional state will affect your interaction with your patient and their family as well as your colleagues. If you are finding that you are more times than not in a negative mental state, then perhaps you need to seek help. Friends, family, employee assistance programs, psych, social services or clergy can all help in turbulent times. And as care givers, we need to care for ourselves first by developing healthy habits to manage stress. There are so many ways to search for spiritual peace: yoga, meditation, prayer, creative hobbies, sports, music and arts, tai chi to name just a few. A healthy balance of mind-body-spirit will allow for intentional caring, that is, caring with thought and purpose. As nurses, we should role model not only healthy balances of rest, nutrition and exercise, but also spiritual care as well.

Maintaining collegial relationships requires a team effort, but it has to start with the individual. Noticing our own patterns of interacting and how they are received gives us insight as to how we are perceived by others. Irritability and impatience are tempered when we take our breaks, stay hydrated and maintain a healthy diet throughout the day. Rushing usually adds stress, and while we need to hustle at times, there are other times when it just leads to feeling overwhelmed. Mistakes are more prone to occur when shortcuts are taken to save time. What would happen if we stopped telling ourselves that we don’t have enough time, express appreciation to patients or colleagues for their patience and to just slow down when needed.

Our relationships with our patients and families make the delivery of our care more or less effective. The feeling of authentic, empathetic communication builds bridges of trust at a vulnerable and often frightening time. An honest appraisal of our interpersonal skills and body language may surprise us. We may begin our interactions with positive intention, but when confronted with anger or arrogance change how we respond. Seeking the meaning behind the patient’s communication may open up a more honest and helpful exchange. The nurse’s knowledge, information and skill play a role, but in the end it’s the experience that creates the healing moment.

Relationship Based Care is one of the tenets of our model, which is Relationship Centered Care. As we embrace this Professional Practice Model, it is an especially suitable time to examine our practices. When we role model positive, therapeutic communication our colleagues learn from us as well as benefit from the kind intention created. And how priceless is it when a patient can really open up to you and use your wisdom and experience to help with fears and anxieties. As my Director of Nursing, Geralyn Mcdonough put it so aptly: “It’s just the right thing to do.”
MOUNT SINAI MAGNET NURSES AND FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

Mount Sinai Magnet Nurses stated values: Caring, Compassion, Respect, Integrity, Teamwork

Miss Nightingale is recognized as the first nursing theorist. Her “Notes On Nursing” and other books and her voluminous correspondence have had a deep influence on nursing, medicine, and public health from her own time to the present and into the global age.

Nightingale’s philosophy of nursing was to put the patient in the best condition for nature to act upon him. The environment was the center of her theory. She believed that environment, both internal and external, could be changed and this would allow nature to heal the patient. She detailed the concepts of diet, cleanliness, light, warmth, ventilation and noise, which we currently term environmental.

Her leadership was transformational—defined as self knowledge, authenticity, flexibility, shared leadership, charisma, expertise, vision and the ability to inspire others. She was a woman before her time—a driving and relentless advocate for her patients.

Her caring and compassion were evidenced by her rounds. She is remembered as the Lady with the Lamp. She brought caring and respect by her personal attention to the wounded and dying in the barracks of Scutari and Balaclava. She spoke with the men, touched them, and respected their persons. She wrote letters to the families of many of those who died and gave comfort, compassion and respect to them. Her caring for them carried far beyond the Crimean War and was evident in her work with the British War Commission in securing benefits and respect for the soldiers.

Her work in establishing schools of nursing; St. Thomas Hospital and Kings College Hospital in London, had the effect of demonstrating that good nursing could and should be achieved only with good education. She maintained strong ties with the students and nurses until she was well into her eighties. Respect, Teamwork, Integrity.

Miss Nightingale was a statistician and advocate for data and record keeping which made her a natural researcher. A keen and practiced observer, her data was sought by the government and utilized in the work of several commissions. She is deemed by many to be the originator of the medical record. Her work demonstrates caring and concern; an expression of her true will to use knowledge for healing.

Her messages to women, not only to nurses, and her deeply held belief in the inclusion and involvement of women in public life was a forerunner of modern day feminism. She worked with many women to advance this ideal including Elizabeth Blackwell, first American woman physician who lived for a time in England and France because she could not obtain a residency in America.

FN was a reformer. She became the focus and agent for promoting hospital administration reform while she was in the Crimea. Her interest in social reform continued with her work with the Sanitary Commission in Britain as well as her work on behalf of the Indian poor. Care, Compassion, Respect.

We are clasping hands with her across the years and still embrace the values which she embodied and promulgated so long ago.

Patricia Leo Holloman, RN
Class of 1953
May 2012

“I think one’s feelings waste themselves in words; they ought all to be distilled into action which bring results”
- Florence Nightingale

“Scutari Hospital” sash worn by the Nightingale nurses and the actual Turkish Lantern Nightingale used when making evening rounds at the Barrack Hospital at Scutari
A call for Nominations for the second annual National Magnet Nurse of the Year awards program

The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) has a National Magnet Nurse of the Year awards program. The awards recognize the outstanding contributions of clinical nurses in each of the five Magnet Model components:

- Transformational Leadership
- Structural Empowerment
- Exemplary Professional Practice
- New Knowledge, Innovations and Improvements
- Empirical Outcomes

The National Magnet Nurse of the Year awards will be presented during the ANCC National Magnet Conference in Los Angeles, CA (October 10-12, 2012). In addition to an all-expense-paid trip to the conference, award winners will be presented during the plenary session of the opening ceremonies and will be featured in the “Profiles of Excellence” section on the ANCC Web site. In addition, award announcements will be published through local and national press releases.

The ANCC’s Web site has full details on award criteria, eligibility and the onling submission process for CNOs and MPDs. Completed nominations must be received by 4pm on May 25, 2012 4pm.