

Northeast Alabama Hospital Heroes Honored

Jan. 13 2010

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ANNISTON – Ten area hospital employees were honored for their dedication to the health care industry today at a luncheon in Anniston hosted by the Northeast Alabama Regional Hospital Council of the Alabama Hospital Association (AlaHA).

The luncheon is one of seven regional awards presentations being held in January as part of the association's seventh-annual statewide "Hospital Heroes" contest, an effort to recognize the great accomplishments and compassion of hospital employees and to highlight health careers. The contest will culminate with a banquet in February where up to 10 of the regional winners will be honored as statewide heroes.

"If you've ever been in a hospital, chances are you've had a special caregiver who went above and beyond the call of duty to make sure your stay was not only productive, but comfortable," said J. Michael Horsley, president of the Alabama Hospital Association. "It is these types of individuals we honor each year as Alabama's Hospital Heroes, people who consider their work more than a job, who consider it a calling."

Northeast Alabama honorees included: Wendy Burns, RN, charge nurse, Citizens Baptist Medical Center, Talladega; Glenn Pittard, director of plant operations, Clay County Hospital, Ashland; Cody Davis, RN, intensive care unit nurse and Ed Tinker, security assistant, Gadsden Regional Medical Center, Gadsden; Tom Muller, after-care and wellness program coordinator, Northeast Alabama Regional Medical Center, Anniston; Cassidy Ann Moore, RT(R), ARRT, radiologic technologist and Ken Weaver, R. Ph., director of pharmacy, Randolph Medical Center, Roanoke; Callie Taylor, human resources representative, Christy Hood, RRT, director of cardiopulmonary services and Marye Elliott, RN, MSN, chief nursing officer, Riverview Regional Medical Center, Gadsden.

Wendy Burns, RN, Charge Nurse, Citizens Baptist Medical Center, Talladega

Wendy Burns, RN, Nurse Manager, at Citizens Baptist Medical Center in Talladega, has an intense passion for nursing, particularly critical care nursing. In fact, she claims one of her greatest accomplishments as staying current with emergency department care throughout her 18-year career. To her co-workers, Ms. Burns is known as an intelligent and compassionate leader. “Her skills are only surpassed by her drive to succeed and get the job done,” said Andrea Watson, patient advocate at Citizens Baptist. Ms. Burns is an active participant in more than five committees at the hospital, including infection control, education, and core measures. She has numerous certifications in advance life support and critical care and is an instructor for many of these programs. A member of the Emergency Nurses Association, Ms. Burns is known as the “go-to” person by other staff members. “Fellow nurses and directors go to Wendy for advice and guidance,” explained Ms. Watson. “She is knowledgeable beyond her years.” With her level of intelligence and passion for nursing, Ms. Burns’ attitude is contagious to those around her at Citizens Baptist Medical Center.

Glenn Pittard, Director of Plant Operations, Clay County Hospital, Ashland

Glenn Pittard has been a dedicated employee at Clay County Hospital in Ashland for more than 48 years. A former U.S. Marine, Mr. Pittard obtained a medical technology degree from Auburn University and went to work in the Clay County Hospital laboratory, working 24/7 as the hospital’s only medical technologist. He later assumed responsibility for several additional departments ... all without an increase in salary, just a desire to help the hospital. In his current position as director of plant operations, colleagues say he has as much enthusiasm for the health care industry as he did when he started almost half a century ago, and he’s always there to protect the hospital, even to the point of disarming a knife-wielding visitor, thus diffusing what could have been a very volatile situation. “Glenn has had some challenges during his 48 years of employment – losing his wife to cancer and then battling his own cancer and having open heart surgery,” explained Linda Smith, director of human resources. “He is truly a survivor and one that personifies a hospital hero.”

Cody Davis, RN, Intensive Care Unit Nurse, Gadsden Regional Medical Center, Gadsden

Although Cody Davis, a nurse in the intensive care unit at Gadsden Regional Medical Center, has only worked at the hospital for three and one-half short years, she has earned a reputation of being extremely competent and compassionate. She has been recognized as the hospital's "Employee of the Month" and "Nurse of the Year," and it is said her interactions with patients and employees exude her teamwork mentality and caring nature. Co-workers say patients are constantly writing letters thanking Ms. Davis for her care. In fact, the daughter of one patient wrote an editorial in the newspaper about the level of care her dying mother received from Ms. Davis while she was in the ICU at the Medical Center. After Ms. Davis attended the funeral of this patient, the daughter also sent a letter to the hospital stating, "I would like to commend you for having someone like Cody on your staff. It's impossible to mention everyone that helped or cared for my mom, but Cody stands above all."

Ed Tinker, Security Assistant, Gadsden Regional Medical Center, Gadsden

Over the last 20 years, Ed Tinker has worked at Gadsden Regional Medical on three separate occasions. Currently, he's a security assistant, primarily located in the emergency department. While working in the emergency room, emotions can run high, but colleagues say Ed Tinker can always be counted on to defuse volatile situations, keep his composure and reassure others. "He remains, at all times, a gentleman and a professional by displaying excellent and consistent customer service skills," said Stephen Pennington, hospital CEO. "Ed has a calming personality that goes a long way with patients in crisis, reducing their stress." The emergency department staff members remark they always feels safe when he's on the job. Mr. Tinker is described as someone who pays attention to details, like picking up trash or repairing signage while he's making his rounds. He's also attentive to the needs of visitors, helping with lost cars, dead batteries, etc. Selected twice as "Employee of the Year," Mr. Tinker is respected for his attitude and his efforts to keep the hospital safe.

Tom Muller, After-Care and Wellness Program Coordinator, Northeast Alabama Regional Medical Center, Anniston

After working with aquatic teams at the Anniston YMCA for 12 years, Tom Muller took the after-care and wellness program coordinator position at Northeast Alabama Regional Medical

Center in Anniston. Since joining the staff, Mr. Muller has been described as a constant source of professionalism, efficiency and wit. He is known for his ability to ease tense situations and has a reputation for being a hard worker. Co-workers say even when he is off the clock, Mr. Muller is still working. For example, while dining out, he performed the Heimlich maneuver on an individual who was choking; he's assisted two people injured in separate automobile accidents and performed CPR on a heart attack victim. "Tom goes above and beyond what is expected of him," said a co-worker. When Mr. Muller's name is mentioned at the hospital, staff members know him by his tag line: "Everything is going to be alright!" He speaks regularly in the community on healthy lifestyles and has been on several mission trips to Honduras.

Kassidy Ann Moore, RT(R), ARRT, Radiologic Technologist, Randolph Medical Center, Roanoke

Kassidy Ann Moore, a radiologic technologist, brings color to the halls of Randolph Medical Center in Roanoke, literally. Known as the creative one in the radiology department, Ms. Moore can be found every holiday season decorating the halls with festive ornamentation and crafts. She is well-known for her resourcefulness and creativity. Ms. Moore recently hosted a used scrub sale at the hospital. She encouraged staff members to donate their used scrubs, and she gave all of the proceeds to the Randolph County Animal Shelter. She was very active in the hospital's breast cancer awareness campaign, and she is currently working to raise money for the local Red Cross to help families affected by the difficult economy. "Kassidy Moore is the life of the radiology department," said Anthony Foster, director of radiology. "She is very competent and dependable and goes above and beyond the call of duty. She is not only a valuable asset to Randolph Medical Center, but she is also a committed and caring person in our community."

Ken Weaver, R.Ph., Director of Pharmacy, Randolph Medical Center, Roanoke

Ken Weaver, director of pharmacy, joined the staff of Randolph Medical Center in Roanoke in December 2002 and has more than 35 years experience in the health care industry. He is said to be a diligent worker who strives to provide the best quality of care for every patient. In addition to his pharmacy duties, Mr. Weaver works to support all departments at Randolph Medical Center and ensures that their needs are being met. He has a passion for hospital operations and utilizes that drive as chairman of the hospital's Policy and Procedure Committee, tirelessly

working to ensure all policies and procedures are being followed and are kept up to date. Mr. Weaver recently implemented a new, hospital-wide pharmacy system. Not only has the system benefitted the pharmacy, it has also made it easier for nurses to dispense medicine to patients and reduced the likelihood of medication errors. “Because of Mr. Weaver’s dedication to Randolph Medical Center, there has been a clear improvement in health care and safety,” explained Anthony Foster, director of radiology.

Marye Elliott, RN, MSN, Chief Nursing Officer, Riverview Regional Medical Center, Gadsden

Marye Elliott, chief nursing officer, has served Riverview Regional Medical Center in Gadsden for 20 years. With 30-plus years in the health care industry, Ms. Elliott enjoys educating her co-workers, staying current on changes in the nursing field and promoting teamwork within the various departments. She is a member of several hospital committees and is constantly looking for ways to improve customer service and patient care. She is described as an advocate for patients, a mentor and source of support for staff. Ms. Elliott was instrumental in the implementation of a new system that helps eliminate medication errors, and she actively supports local scholarship funds for nursing students, funds that have helped supply the hospital with nursing graduates. A former Girl Scout, Ms. Elliott is involved in the local troops, encouraging the young girls in their development. “Mary is a tireless supporter of Riverview, and it shows by her actions that she is willing to do whatever it takes to make Riverview the best hospital possible,” explained Matt Hayes, hospital CEO.

Christy Hood, RRT, Director of Cardiopulmonary Services, Riverview Regional Medical Center, Gadsden

“She is a true leader and dedicated employee, and she practices what she preaches,” replied Matt Hayes, CEO, when asked to describe Christy Hood, director of cardiopulmonary services at Riverview Regional Medical Center in Gadsden and a 17-year veteran of the health care field. He notes her concern for patients and their well-being stating that she is often the first to respond to any patient’s request. Under her leadership, the hospital has made significant achievements in reducing the occurrence of hospital-acquired pneumonia for patients on ventilators and obtaining accreditation for the EEG department. Co-workers say Ms. Hood is constantly looking for ways

to improve care and always works with a friendly smile and a sincere disposition. She and her department have been active with the United Way, American Cancer Society and American Heart Association campaigns. She has also volunteered countless hours with community health fairs and other wellness events. “She is a great asset to our facility and to any patient that she cares for,” added Mr. Hayes.

Callie Taylor, Human Resources Representative, Riverview Regional Medical Center, Gadsden

In 2003, Callie Taylor moved to Alabama from Arizona with her family and took a position at Riverview Regional Medical Center as a unit clerk. A few years later, she transferred to the human resources department where she now serves as a human resources representative. When she arrived in the department, Ms. Taylor brought with her a level of dedication and optimism that is treasured by her co-workers. She is characterized as being “indispensable in many areas of [the] hospital” and a “whiz” at the computer, always willing to teach others. “Callie is a wonderful part of our Riverview family and a positive influence on all those that she touches,” said Dana Simpson, director of human resources. Ms. Taylor has been active with the hospital’s recognition team and other projects with the American Cancer Society and American Heart Association. In her church, she participates in the ladies’ auxiliary and the choir. “Whether it is something spiritual, financial or whatever, if there is a way for Callie to help, she will,” declared Ms. Simpson.

The Alabama Hospital Association, based in Montgomery, is a statewide trade organization that represents more than 100 hospitals and numerous other health care providers in their efforts to provide quality health care.