Hundreds of letters recognize outstanding nurses for Salute to Nurses 2016

Below is a collection of nomination letters submitted by readers who have given The Boston Globe permission to publish their letters online

McLean Hospital

Patricia Fredericksen, McLean Hospital, Massachusetts Hospital School/Randolph High School/Rosie's Place

Imagine a nurse who is so compassionate and able that families would send their sick high-school-age children to school rather than take them to a physician; one so valued at the McLean Hospital that they created a position for her after she suffered a heart attack and survived a triple bypass; one that poured her heart and soul into her work helping women get back on their feet at Rosie’s place; and one who followed the advice she gave over 50 years and resolved to not give in to a major stroke, one that doctors said would leave her in managed care for the rest of her life. That is our mom. And now she continues provide compassionate care to her three children and five grandchildren. Some people who have the gift of caring/healing stop to pursue other vocations. Some stop caring/healing when they have enough to retire. And some view caring/healing as a true gift and will stop when they can no longer do it. Our mother has not stopped yet.

—Nominated by Patrick Fredericksen

AnneMarie Lyons, Rebecca Sanford, Arpi Sarian, Kathy Smith, Sandra Thompson, McLean Hospital

For many years I’ve scanned your annual Salute to Nurses, and this year I’d like to point out your annual omission: psychiatric nurses. You omit them because, due to the pervasive stigma attached to mental illness, patients do not openly recognize and honor these nurses. By continuing to ignore the huge number of psychiatric units and their workers, you are continuing, even supporting the persistent stigma of seeking help for psychiatric illness. You will not see heartfelt gratitude to a nurse written by a grateful patient that would expose that person to the public as a “loony” and no one wants that. Yet almost every general hospital has a psych unit or sends its many psych patients on to a psych hospital, and those units are full to bursting.

Please help to at least acknowledge this incongruity. Highlighting the availability of mental health treatment might show your readers that help is accessible. This is no longer the era of “One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest,” Nurse Ratchett is long gone. In fact, many of our smartest new RN graduates are choosing psych, finding it to be a fascinating, challenging field that is utilizing new therapies based on a tremendous amount of research done in recent years. But I am now suggesting you honor five veteran nurses who have been working in the Admission area of McLean Hospital for many years. They have seen so much, dealt with so much, and never know who, or in what condition, will come through the door that day. And more than one reader of this paper will recognize them: Arpi Sarian, Kathy Smith, AnneMarie Lyons, Rebecca Sanford, Sandra Thompson. Thank you.

—Nominated by Jeanette Kingsley, RN