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Unity Announces DAISY Award Honorees for Exceptional, Compassionate Care

Unity announced the 2023 honorees of the nationally recognized Daisy Award for Extraordinary Nurses during a recent awards ceremony held at Unity Grief and Education Center.

For their commitment to delivering the highest quality of care, Unity Registered Nurses Kevin Nasal and Gina Vandehei were presented with a personalized "Extraordinary Nurse" certificate, a DAISY Award pin, and a hand-carved sculpture called "The Healer's Touch" which represents the bond between nurses and their patients. As Daisy Honorees, Nasal and Vandehei will also receive ongoing benefits, such as special rates for tuition and American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Certification.

Nurses are eligible for the Daisy Award through nominations by patients, family members, physicians, community partners, and colleagues. Both Nasal and Vandehei were nominated by colleagues.

Unity Nursing Educator Jody Rohde, who nominated Nasal, said "Unity nurses are great and provide quality patient care. Kevin, however, is extraordinary, and personifies the very essence of what it means to proudly carry the title 'Registered Nurse'. In addition to direct patient care, Kevin precepts new hires, including newly graduated RNs. He works just as hard to make them feel comfortable and welcomed and shares his knowledge and experience freely. Our organization, patients, and families are blessed by his talents."

Unity Social Worker Kang Vang, who nominated Gina, shared "Gina has been the primary nurse for our hospice team for the past 4 years. I have seen her, day in and day out, put the needs of patients and families on her top priority. She goes above and beyond to do what she needs in order to ensure patients' needs are met, questions are answered, and patients are comfortable. She takes the time to provide extensive education to patients and families regarding signs and symptoms of disease progression, prognosis, and what to expect. They appreciate her realistic approach and the compassion she gives while she provides this education. She advocates for patients' wishes and ensures that they have dignity and autonomy when it may feel to them that they have lost everything. "

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*A caring nonprofit partnership of Bellin Health,
HSHS St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center and HSHS St. Vincent Hospital*

Unity encourages everyone who has had an exceptional experience with a Unity nurse to express their gratitude by completing the DAISY Award Nomination form located at unityhospice.org/caregiver-resources.

About The Daisy Foundation

The DAISY Foundation is a not-for-profit organization that was established in memory of J. Patrick Barnes by members of his family. Patrick died in 1999 at the age of 33 from complications of Idiopathic Thrombocytopenic Purpura (ITP), a little known but not uncommon auto-immune disease. (DAISY is an acronym for Diseases Attacking the Immune System.) The care Patrick and his family received from nurses throughout his healthcare journey inspired the creation of this unique program to thank nurses for their immense clinical skills and enormous compassion when caring for patients and families.

About Unity

Unity is Northeast Wisconsin's pioneering not-for-profit healthcare provider that offers a full complement of care solutions including nonmedical home care, supportive palliative care, hospice care, and grief support. With a commitment to seamlessly adapt care to the everchanging needs of each patient and family, Unity works tirelessly to enhance quality of life through innovative services and unique programs ensuring the wishes and goals of patients and families are always met. As the only locally owned and operated advanced illness provider in the region, Unity partners with area skilled nursing facilities, assisted-living facilities, and pharmacies, ensuring seamless care in all settings. Unity is the sole organization offering inpatient hospice at seven area hospitals and is a collaboration between Bellin Health, HSHS St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center, and HSHS St. Vincent Hospital. Established as the third hospice program in the nation, Unity launched Wisconsin's first palliative care program in 2002, the area's first hospice residence in 2007, the region's only Grief and Education Center in 2021, and the area's first pediatric hospice program in 2024. Learn more at <https://unityhospice.org/>.

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