



May 8, 2007

Sarah Furness
CCCU
Labatt Family Heart Centre
SickKids Hospital

Dear Sarah:

On behalf of the Sasha Bella Fund, we are very pleased to award you the 2007 Sasha Bella Award for Family Centred Care.

You were nominated by Susan Schoneman who described your outstanding contribution to family centred care nursing practice at SickKids Hospital, particularly your specialized learning of the Berlin heart, acting as a resource on the Berlin heart for other nurses and your noteworthy compassion and sense of humor when working with families and colleagues.

We have attached the nomination letter below.

Congratulations on this award and for making an invaluable contribution to Nursing Practice at SickKids Hospital.

Sincerely,

Pamela Stein and Jonathan Blumberg
Sasha's Mom and Dad

cc. The Sasha Bella Award committee:
Judith Wilson, Kathryn Timberlake, Cecilia St George – Hyslop, , Sherry Ree Stevens, Tessie Koonthanam, Samantha Rothwell, Paula Pereira-Solomos, Joann Herridge, Dr. Jennifer Russell



Sasha Bella Award for Excellence in Family-Centred Care Nomination

In working with Sarah, I have come to know a nurse whom has demonstrated above and beyond family centred care in her approach to her patients. Sarah has demonstrated clinical excellence beyond average knowledge by learning about the Berlin heart, a new advancement in cardiac options for children waiting for transplantation. This complex device takes much skill to know the workings of, and Sarah has dedicated herself to learn the cares involved. She is considered specialized and a resource to the unit regarding the Berlin heart. The Berlin heart has saved many lives in order to bridge critically ill children awaiting their new heart. She has attended conferences, gone to the operating room to assist, and read materials surrounding this new innovation to Sick Kids. She demonstrates her leadership skills by teaching others new to caring for the Berlin how to care for the patient and the device. She also is a resource to patients and families about what the device does and how it works.

Aside from Sarah's clinical excellence, she has gone above and beyond to demonstrate her commitment to her patients and families. This was recently evidenced by her care of G- a Berlin heart patient who recently received a transplant. In the early stages of his illness, G was very sick. He was confused and hallucinating. This situation was extremely stressful to his parents. Sarah sat and comforted G, and also comforted and explained to his parents why this was happening. She became their rock through his illness. When G went on to get his Berlin, Sarah went to the OR with him and assisted in programming the device. She cared for him post op. As G began to wake up, he had many questions. Sarah sat with him, explaining everything, and reassuring him. She settled his fears, and went over things as many times as he and / or his family needed her to. As G progressed and was transferred to 4D, Sarah took the time from her busy day to visit him each shift she was on. She again acted as a resource for the 4D nurses, educating them on dressing changes and use of the machine. She took him for walks around the unit attached to his machine. She reassured him and used her sense of humor to lighten and brighten the day. G looked forward to her visits, and so did his parents. They trusted her, and enjoyed her company.

Sarah is a pleasure to work with. She is always helpful to her peers, and shows kindness and compassion to her patients and their families. She helps them through their most difficult times, holds their hands when they need support, and offers a laugh often when it is needed most.

It is a privilege to work alongside Sarah, and I have heard many families express their gratitude towards Sarah.

Susan Schoneman
Surgical/HSC