



2016 Restoring Joy to Leadership's Joy Award Recipients

Enjoyment is the spark that ignites passion and enthusiasm. Joy is about recognizing that you are not how you feel. Joy is a state of the heart, an attitude of the mind and a condition of the will. Research recognizes the benefits of Joy in the workplace and its link to patient safety and satisfaction. More recently, the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) referred to Joy in work as the antidote for burnout. The 2016 Restoring Joy Award winners are intentional in their efforts to add JOY to the work environment. In spite of the whirlwind, these nurses manage to brighten their environment with the light of a joyful heart!

(Joy Award Recipients listed in alphabetic order by last name)



Maja Beric, UF Health Jacksonville

Nominated by Linda Rodriguez

“Maja is a very caring nurse. She is always looking for ways on how to make all of her patient's day a blessed one. She is always looking for ways to make sure her teammates day is a great one. Maja takes the time to speak to everyone one of her patients at a personal level, she finds out what their needs are and always makes sure that her care for her patients is excellent. We had a patient that no family would come and visit, Maja would sit with the patient and talk about whatever the patient wanted to talk about. She learned his likes and dislikes and even would get the patient treats that he liked and was allowed to eat with her own money. If the patient needed cloths or shoes, Maja made sure the patient had it before he left the hospital. Unfortunately the patient had a birthday in the unit, Maja gathered all of her peers and brought the patient a cake and gathered everyone to sing happy birthday, this really made, not only the patient's day, but her peers day as well. Her joy and enthusiasm for life has spread to everyone she works with. Another example, we had conflict in the department between the two shifts; Maja just stood up and told everyone that what are we here for, we have to work together to make sure the patients receive the best nursing care, she let everyone see that without each other these things are not possible. She reminded everyone of the teambuilding outing we had and we all made an agreement toward "One team, One Dream" and we are a family. Everyone talked about it, and the team is working like a well-oiled machine. Maja is an extraordinary person, she comes from Bosnia and lived there during the war and has a passion for those in need. On her free time she feeds the homeless and takes care of her family.”



Carol Fultz, UF Health Jacksonville

Nominated by Cynthia Gerdik

“Ms. Fultz as the Nursing Director of two ED's makes daily rounds on her staff (mostly at change of shift) to ensure they have what they need to provide quality safe care to their patients. She helps with promoting and "living" shared governance principles when rounding, by not always "solving challenges" voiced by staff members, but reminding staff to take the challenge to their shared governance unit council. When rounding she will often take "treats" she herself buys for them, to show her appreciation for team work or for a great job with service recovery. She has a contagious enthusiasm for sharing positivity with each team member. She constantly thinks about how she can help her teams be more successful. This past year the ED had an engagement score of Tier 1 (highest) versus tier 3 (three years in a row). This is a huge accomplishment that a caring, compassionate, nurse leader achieved through role modeling positivity, shared governance and being visible with a smile and encouragement to more than 250 employees on two campuses. I am in awe of her continued dedication and commitment to "her staff", which she fondly calls my Shand's family.”



Cynthia Harris, UF Health Gainesville

Nominated by Beth Talaga, Dale Franquemont, Katie Rutter, and Marissa Blankenship

“I cannot think of another nurse who spreads more joy and love throughout both units. Her inner radiance spills over into every aspect of her work, yet she is also sensitive and careful to maintain boundaries, and never has an offensive sense of humor. She is compassionate and caring, and creative in her approach. If I could vote 10 times, I would.” “Cynthia has a laugh that is contagious! You always know that she is at work because you hear her laugh before you even see her. She exudes happiness and makes everyone around her feel happy to be at work, no matter what is happening that day. She is caring and empathetic with babies and families and builds relationships with them. She is dedicated in her work and is an example for all of us about how to work with a joyous attitude.”



Kathy Newton, UF Health Jacksonville

Nominated by Linda Lawson

“Kathy has only been with the organization for 6 months but has brought a force of excitement and joy to her new unit. Kathy's unit is a large medical surgical unit so needless to say, her team works very hard and never really has an "easy" day at work. Kathy has brought a new sense of teamwork and pride to 6N. She assisted in the creation of a board on her unit that asked the staff to write a positive statement about the unit, themselves, or life. The board has been a huge success and make the entrance to the unit for both staff and patient along with their families a welcoming beacon to the unit. Kathy has brought celebration and recognition back to her staff meeting to include but not be limited to having hula hoops and music. Way to bring joy to the often information heavy meeting. Your staff is responding to your example of a "joy" filled life. Thank you for considering Kathy for this recognition.”



Regina Oneill, Ocala Regional Medical Center

Nominated by Myra Sherman

“Regina has been in management over 30 years and has proven to be a caring, devoted, fair, honest, loyal professional. Although in management position she would come in in scrubs to do patient care if no one was available to do a shift. She always call in between 3-4 am to ensure that all was well. Regina helped to facilitate my transition from bedside nurse to a primary care provider. She is now going back to the bedside after many years in management. A woman that deserves respect and honor as she has helped to bring Joy to so many!!”



Debra Page, St. Vincents' Riverside

Nominated by Joy Hill

“Debra is always caring and compassionate not only to her patients but to her coworkers also. She takes a bad situation and make it a positive. Always helping always positive and cheerful. Even in a code situation she is the encourager to all involved and is a tower of strength. I can't say enough of how much joy she brings in a stressful work environment.”



Jennifer Prieto, Baptist Health

Nominated by Hollie Gow

“Jennifer consistently delivers the highest quality of patient care and possesses superb critical thinking abilities. She is a very caring, gentle, compassionate, conscientious, and professional person. Jennifer is focused, eager to learn, displays great initiative, and is an excellent team player. Jennifer is on several Baptist Committees including the Magnet Mavens, Sepsis Committee, Activities Committee, and the Professional Nursing Advancement Committee. Jennifer also was the former chair of our unit's Shared Governance for 3 years and part of the Patient Satisfaction Committee. Jennifer creates a joyful environment because she always has a smile on her face. She has been a nurse on our Step-down Multispecialty unit for 13 years. She consistently precepts new nurses, participates in all events, and is always polite and professional. She organizes all of the staff's baby showers, bridal showers, and fundraising for charitable events for our hospital. I have personally never seen Jennifer without a smile and a can-do attitude. She is always so positive that it is infectious and really creates a great working environment.”



Wilma Simmons, UF Health Gainesville

Nominated by Kathy Henderson

“Wilma has a way of making a stressful situation turn into a lighthearted event. There are times when either patients families or doctors are having a rough time, she knows how to get in charge of a situation and make people feel important. One particular situation when a doctor was requiring a patient to come back to the hospital for a kidney biopsy, the patient was refusing to come. She jumped into action and had a way of speaking with the patient and their family to make them understand how important the biopsy would be. After about 45 minutes of talking to the patient and explaining, the patient conceded to come. The outcome was not only beneficial but a learning tool for the whole team. There is not a clinic day that goes by that a patient will ask for her by name. Wilma seems to touch everyone she knows with her happiness. Any Department that she calls they know her by her voice. Admissions, Radiology, Pharmacy, social work and even the pulmonary Department. It seems like every phone call she makes ends up in everyone smiling. I think it is awesome that everyone who she touches wants to meet her. You can tell by her attitude that she has joy in her life. Her mannerisms, her attentiveness to situations and her sincere love for the work that she does makes her an outstanding nurse. It is no wonder that students want to be like her! If I ever needed a nurse, I would be honored to have her at my side. It is Nurses like her that make people like me want to come to work.”



Wilma Sterbutzel, Munroe Regional Medical Center (formerly)

Nominated by Rosalie Coyner

“Wilma creates a more joyful environment at work in countless ways: 1. Wilma has an always-positive, can-do, upbeat approach in all situations, from leader rounding on units and interacting with patients and staff, with all departments, at all levels of staff and leaders, to facing difficult challenges where she brings the involved persons involved together and works with them to develop creative, workable resolutions to problems. 2. Wilma strongly and consistently encourages her staff to grow professionally. As soon as she started in her position, she began encouraging nurses to become certified and was met with some resistance. She continued pursuing and when the first RN became certified in Med-Surg, she came to Wilma's office and told her and Wilma' was overcome with pride for her and communicated to everyone about her accomplishment. Similarly, there were no managers in her departments when she started and she found that one of the charge nurses on the surgical unit had potential as a strong leader. She continuously recruited her with focus on opportunity for professional growth as well as ability to make positive changes for her units. The CN did apply for the position and remains very grateful that Wilma encouraged her and was a strong mentor in the CN developing her leadership skills. 3. Wilma has a strong interdisciplinary approach, bringing the team together and working effectively and recognizes and assists everyone she encounters, resulting in excellent relationships and positive outcomes. E.g. She has an excellent working relationship with EVS and as a result, her units are the highest level of cleanliness and order. Also, Wilma encouraged interdisciplinary staff's growth as well, e.g., she encouraged one of the housekeeping staff in going to school to become a CNA and mentored her during the process, and the housekeeper recently completed the program. 4. Wilma strongly advocates at all times for her patients, staff and organization. A clean, pleasant environment is very important to Wilma and she pressed for renovations for her units so that staff and patients would have a beautiful environment. Wilma has roundtables at each staff meeting to obtain input on improvements needed as well as an open door policy and from that input, many service-line and housewide improvements have been made. As one of the housekeeper's stated, "at 4'11", who would know that Wilma is such a fighter for her patients and staff, that she will do whatever it takes to get something done." 5. Wilma is loyal to her workplace and colleagues and often develops and maintains lifelong connections and friendships with colleagues, vendors and others she works with. 6. Wilma's nursing hero is Florence Nightingale. In many ways Florence Nightingale's intelligence, perseverance, focus on the environment for health and healing, and strong advocacy lives on in the form of this 4'11" open-hearted, positive power-house named Wilma Sterbutzel.”



Jaime R. Thomas, UF Health Gainesville

Nominated by Peggy Guin

“Jaime is one of the most positive people I know. Her smile lights up any room she enters. She has lots of creativity and enthusiasm and a unique way of sharing this with others so that they become inspired and motivated to try new things and participate in endeavors and projects they were previously resistant to. In her previous role as a clinical leader, Jaime was instrumental in getting staff involved in unit based PIT teams such that they had pride in their involvement, empowerment and ownership of their processes. As a new nurse specialist she has jumped in with both feet on the quality projects of reducing health care associated infections that are drudgery to most of us; yet Jaime has embarked on these with enthusiasm, determined to make meaningful work and improvement in our outcomes by finding something new in the literature that works. She recently found a study she is dying to implement and can barely contain herself! Her enthusiasm is contagious and after one day she already has several takers ready to sign on! Jaime also values teamwork and multi-disciplinary communication among her colleagues. She is involved in several projects to improve this across disciplines. Fostering personal and professional growth is important to her and she values balance in her work-life, family and spiritual life. As I am only 15 months away from retirement, it does my heart good to know that I will be leaving the work place with Jaime there to carry on. There is so much burn-out and apathy in nursing today, it is so refreshing to have Jaime as a colleague to restore joy and hope in the workplace. Rather than count the days till I am out the door, I enjoy coming to work now largely because Jaime is there to bring a smile to my face and remind me why I became a nurse in the first place; something that is very easy to forget sometimes for many of us. I believe that Jaime Thomas is a most deserving recipient of the National Nurses Week Restoring Joy Award.”