

# 2011 Nurse of Excellence AWARD RECEPTION



May 18, 2011

Woodbury Country Club  
Woodbury, NY





May 18, 2011

## **A MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL**

The New York State Legislature in 1989 created a Nurse of Distinction Program. The program, coordinated at the time by Senator Tarky Lombardi Jr., recognized individual excellence in the nursing profession. Hundreds of nurses were nominated from across the state, eight regional designees were selected by peer review, and one nurse from that group was awarded. The program was highly regarded by those within the health care industry and continued until 1995.

Since then, it has been the honor of the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council to continue this tradition on a regional level through our annual “Nurse of Excellence” program. The Hospital Council opted to maintain this recognition program because the registered nurse is truly the core of any hospital. Each member hospital and nursing school selects a nominee based on specific selection criteria. The nomination in and of itself is an honor. Then a Council peer review committee selects “the best of the best.” More important than those individuals named and honored is the celebration of the entire nursing profession that pervades this program. We are proud of the nominees and congratulate this year’s top nurse. We are just as proud of all of the nurses who care for thousands of Long Islanders, seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

On behalf of our board of directors, the council staff and the leadership staff at all of our hospitals, we express our sincere appreciation to all nurses and salute their commitment to compassionate quality patient care.

Kevin W. Dahill  
President/CEO



# 2011 Nurse of Excellence Award

## ORDER OF PROGRAM

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS** .....**Wendy D. Darwell**  
*Vice President/Chief Operating Officer,  
Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council*

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HOSPITAL COUNCIL** .....**Douglas Melzer**  
*Chairman of the Board  
Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council &  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Long Beach Medical Center*

**INTRODUCTION OF NURSE OF EXCELLENCE  
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*Chairperson, Nurse Executive Committee &  
Chief Nursing Officer & Vice President of Patient Care Services,  
Southampton Hospital*

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ALL  
"NURSE OF EXCELLENCE NOMINEES"** .....**Gara Edelstein, RN, MSN**  
*Chairperson, Nurse of Excellence Sub-Committee &  
Vice President of Administration & Chief Nursing Officer,  
St. Catherine of Siena Medical Center*

**RECOGNITION OF THE 2011 NASSAU-SUFFOLK  
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*Associate Dean/Professor of Nursing,  
Suffolk County Community College*

**REMARKS BY THE HONOREE** ... **Lisa M. Quinones, RNC, MS, OGNP, ANP, ICCE**  
*Professor of Nursing,  
Suffolk County Community College*

**PRESENTATION OF THE TEAPOT** .....**Debra Giugliano, RN, MS, PNP**  
*Stony Brook University Medical Center  
2010 Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council Nurse of Excellence*

**CLOSING REMARKS** .....**Gara Edelstein, RN, MSN**  
*Chairperson, Nurse of Excellence Sub-Committee  
Vice President of Administration & Chief Nursing Officer,  
St. Catherine of Siena Medical Center*



# 2011 Nurse of Excellence Award

## NURSE EXECUTIVES COMMITTEE

*The Nurse Executives Committee is comprised of the chief nursing officers from all member hospitals and deans and directors of schools of nursing.*

**Kathleen Baker, RN**

*Principal - Health Careers  
Western Suffolk BOCES*

**Jennifer Bryer, PhD, RN, CNE**

*Chairperson, Dept. of Nursing  
Farmingdale State College*

**Ann Cella, MA, MEd, RN, NEA-BC**

*Sr. VP Patient Care Services & CNO  
St. Francis Hospital – The Heart Center*

**Rosie Chatman, RN, MA**

*Associate Director for Patient/Nursing Service  
Veterans Affairs Medical Center*

**Patrick R. Coonan, EdD, RN, NEA-BC, FACHE**

*Dean & Professor  
Adelphi University*

**Patricia Darcey, RN, MS, BC-NE**

*VP Patient Care Services & CNO  
Southampton Hospital*

**Susan Dewey-Hammer, MN, APRN**

*College-wide Nursing Coordinator  
Suffolk County Community College*

**Faye Duda, RN, MPS, CNA**

*Chief Nursing Officer  
Long Beach Medical Center*

**Gara Edelstein, RN, MSN**

*VP Administration & CNO  
St. Catherine of Siena Medical Center*

**Nicolette Fiore-Lopez, RN, MA, CNEP**

*Chief Nursing Officer  
St. Charles Hospital*

**Pat Hogan, RN, MA, NEA-BC**

*Sr. Vice President & CNO  
Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center*

**Catherine Hottendorf, RN**

*Associate Executive Director, Patient Care Services  
Southside Hospital*

**Minna Kapp, EdD, MBA, RN**

*Associate Professor & Graduate Program Director  
C. W. Post Campus of Long Island University*

**Susan Kwiatek, RN, BSN, MBA, NE-BC**

*Associate Executive Director, Patient Care Services  
Glen Cove Hospital*

**Frances LaFauci, RN, EdD**

*Associate Dean & Professor of Nursing  
Suffolk County Community College*

**Kathy Mann-Finnerty, MA, MBA, RN**

*Chief Nursing Officer  
No. Shore University Hospital at Manhasset*

**Renee Mauriello, RN, MSN**

*VP for Patient Care Services & CNO  
Mercy Medical Center*

**Kim Mendez, EdD, ANP-C, RN**

*Vice President & CNO  
Brookhaven Memorial Hospital Medical Center*

**Margaret Minnick, RN, MSN**

*VP Patient Care Services & CNO  
St. Joseph Hospital*

**Jeannine D. Muldoon, PhD, RN**

*Dean & Professor, Division of Nursing  
Molloy College*

**Marie Mulligan, RN, MS**

*Vice President for Nursing  
J. T. Mather Memorial Hospital*

**Myrna Myers-Laque, MEd., RN, NEA-BC**

*VP Nursing & CNO  
Huntington Hospital*

**Susan Neville, PhD, RN**

*Chairperson & Associate Professor, Dept. of Nursing  
New York Institute of Technology*

**Sue Penque, PhD, RN**

*Sr. VP Patient Care Services & CNO  
So. Nassau Communities Hospital*

**Patricia Pispisa**

*VP Patient Care Services  
Eastern Long Island Hospital*

**Barbara Popkin, RN, MA**

*Associate Executive Director, Patient Care Services  
Franklin Hospital Medical Center*

**Carol Powell, RN**

*Program Administrator  
Eastern Suffolk BOCES*

**Thomas B. Rich, D.Min., RN, NP**

*Professor & Chairperson  
Nassau Community College*

**Barbara Sands, PhD, RN**

*Professor & Director, Dept of Nursing  
St. Joseph's College*

**Kathy Skarka, MSN, RN, CNA**

*Sr. VP & CNO  
Nassau University Medical Center*

**Arleen J. Steckel, PhD, RN, CPNP**

*Clinical Associate Professor, Clinical  
Professor Chair, Parent Child Health  
Stony Brook University School of Nursing*

**Mary Stedman, MS, RN, ANP, CNE**

*Professor /Associate Chairperson  
Farmingdale State University*

## NURSE EXECUTIVES COMMITTEE (CONTINUED)

**Valerie Terzano, RN, MS, CNAA**

*VP Nursing & CNO  
Winthrop University Hospital*

**Marianna Vazquez, RN, MS, NE-BC**

*Associate Executive Director, Patient Care Services  
Plainview & Syosset Hospitals*

**Maureen White, RN, MBA, NEA-BC**

*Sr. Vice President, Chief Nurse Executive  
No. Shore – LIJ Health System*

**Lee Anne Xippolitos, RN, PhD**

*Chief Nursing Officer, Stony Brook University Medical Center  
Dean, School of Nursing  
Stony Brook University School of Nursing*

**Gerald Zunno, RN, MSN**

*VP Patient Care Services  
Peconic Bay Medical Center*

## NURSE OF EXCELLENCE SUBCOMMITTEE

**Gara Edelstein, Chairperson**

*VP Administration & CNO, St. Catherine of Siena  
Medical Center*

**Jennifer Bryer**

*Chairperson, Dept. of Nursing, Farmingdale State College*

**Patricia Darcey**

*VP Patient Care Services & CNO, Southampton Hospital*

**Frances LaFauci**

*Associate Dean & Professor of Nursing, Suffolk County  
Community College*

**Renee Mauriello**

*VP for Patient Care Services & CNO, Mercy Medical Center*

**Amy Pakes**

*Nurse Manager, Nassau University Medical Center*

**Susan Penque**

*Sr. VP Patient Care Services & CNO, South Nassau  
Communities Hospital*

**Lee Anne Xippolitos**

*Chief Nursing Officer, Stony University Medical Center  
Dean, School of Nursing, Stony Brook University  
School of Nursing*

**Debra Giugliano**

*Stony Brook University Medical Center  
2010 Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council  
Nurse of Excellence*

**Valerie Terzano**

*Vice President, Nursing & CNO  
Winthrop University Hospital*

## NURSE OF EXCELLENCE SELECTION CRITERIA

Outstanding contributions to the nursing profession and to the field of health care must be demonstrated based on the following criteria:

- Significant achievement within a particular area of nursing, including clinical practice, education, research, or administration. The provision of direct nursing services to assist patients and their families to function at optimum levels of health is one example within clinical practice.
- Demonstrates leadership and quality performance that provides a role model to colleagues. Assists other nurses in their development.
- Participation in activities that foster a positive public image of nursing as a profession.

NOTE: All registered professional nurses employed at a Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council membership organization, or affiliated school of nursing, at any employment level or scope of responsibility, are eligible to be nominated for the award. Prior nominees are not eligible. Each hospital or nursing school member of the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council Nurse Executives Committee is eligible to nominate one individual for the award. Each nominating entity has an internal selection process to facilitate making an appropriate nomination.



# 2011 Nurse of Excellence Award

## PRIOR RECIPIENTS

### Nassau-Suffolk Nurse of Excellence Award *sponsored by the* Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council

- 2010 **Debra Giugliano**, *Stony Brook University Medical Center*  
2009 **Eileen M. Roberto**, *Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center*  
2008 **Amy B. Pakes**, *Nassau University Medical Center*  
2007 **Donna A. Tanzi**, *Huntington Hospital*  
2006 **May-Lynn Andresen**, *North Shore—Long Island Jewish Health System*  
2005 **Kathleen Perro**, *St. Francis Hospital*  
2004 **Madeline Cozzi-Gottlieb**, *South Nassau Communities Hospital*  
2003 **Virginia Reichert**, *North Shore University Hospital @ Manhasset*  
2002 **Donna M. Johnson**, *Nassau University Medical Center*  
2001 **Susan Hovani**, *J.T. Mather Memorial Hospital*  
2000 **Kathleen Southerton**, *University Hospital at Stony Brook*  
1999 **Kathleen Miller**, *Long Beach Medical Center*  
1998 **Elizabeth Devine**, *J.T. Mather Memorial Hospital*  
1997 **Alice Friedrich**, *North Shore University Hospital at Plainview*  
1996 **Phyllis Parker**, *J.T. Mather Memorial Hospital*

### Long Island Nominations to the New York State Nurse of Distinction Award Program *1989 - 1995*

**Eleanor O'Boyle**  
*J. T. Mather Memorial*

**Sr. Rita Vanson**  
*Mercy Medical Center*

**Rachel Lin (deceased)**  
*Komanoff Center for Geriatric & Rehab Medicine (NYS recipient)*

**Dorothy Pessoli**  
*Veterans Affairs Medical Center*

**Mildred O'Connor**  
*Lutheran Center for the Aging*

**Nancy Maehl**  
*Veterans Affairs Medical Center*

**Darlene Paduano**  
*University Hospital at Stony Brook*

**Carolyn Van Helden**  
*St. Charles Hospital and Rehabilitation Center*



# 2011 Nurse of Excellence Award

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## 2011 NURSE OF EXCELLENCE HONOREE

THE NASSAU-SUFFOLK HOSPITAL COUNCIL

*Award For*

# *Nursing Excellence*

*Is Presented To*

**Lisa M. Quinones, RNC, MS, OGNP, ANP, ICCE**

**2011**

*For achieving significant accomplishments in an area of practice, serving as a mentor and inspiration for staff, providing assistance to patients and families, and fostering a positive image of nursing.*

## 2011 NURSE OF EXCELLENCE HONOREE

### **Lisa M. Quinones, RNC, MS, OGNP, ANP, ICCE**

Professor of Nursing  
Suffolk County Community College

This year, Lisa celebrates her 25th year in nursing, in a career that has taken her from hospitals, to private practice, to community health centers to—for the last 12 years—educating tomorrow’s nurses as a professor at Suffolk County Community College.

However, Lisa’s passion for teaching could not be contained to SCCC students. She has used her skills as a nurse, a teacher, and a leader to help people in need locally and abroad. Among her many activities, she has been a consultant to and outreach educator for the March of Dimes and a volunteer for Stony Brook’s NICU Family Support Program.

Most impressive is her work as a “Leader of the Brigade/Director of Curriculum” for the non-profit international organization, Hope for a Healthier Humanity (HHH). She travels to Latin America, accompanied by nursing students or recent graduates, to provide health education to community leaders or “promotores” in extremely poor, rural communities. She provides basic health information, with

a special focus on maternal and infant morbidity and mortality, which the promotores can then take back to their villages. Through HHH, she has worked on research and education initiatives with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in the Dominican Republic, and has even presented to the United Nations’ World Youth Alliance on maternal and infant issues.

At SCCC, Lisa is a Science & Technology Entry Program (STEP) faculty member, a mentor and presenter for STEP, and a preceptor for graduate nursing education students. She has presented at numerous conferences and workshops, received many academic and professional honors, and published a variety of articles. She believes in lifelong learning and service, is a role model for students and faculty, and has brought the nursing program to a new level of international service and awareness. Lisa personifies the Nurse of Excellence and enthusiastically gives back to her profession and to her community.

## NOMINEES

### BROOKHAVEN MEMORIAL HOSPITAL MEDICAL CENTER

#### **Keisha Ann Wisdom, RN, BSN**

*Nursing Administrative Supervisor*

In her three years at Brookhaven, Keisha has been a true professional, always willing to take charge, educate staff, patients, and their families, and is extremely capable of handling difficult and chaotic situations. Her strong ethical principles are demonstrated in her understanding of patients' needs, beliefs, and cultural foundations. She has great vision when making critical decisions—ensuring that appropriate short term action is taken, while also considering the long-term impact on the patient. In addition, she continually gives her time and expertise to organizational committees and significantly contributes to Brookhaven's continuous goal of improving patient care. In her supervisory role, Keisha makes great efforts to be a role model and educator to all staff.

### EASTERN LONG ISLAND HOSPITAL

#### **Katherine M. Bach, RN**

Katherine's career has spanned 34 years, including the past three years at Eastern Long Island. She is presently the charge nurse in the Pain Management Center in the operating room. She is a mentor and coach for new staff members, and generously shares her knowledge and expertise. As the Pain Management Center expanded, the types of procedures became more technical. She demonstrated a high level of initiative and was instrumental in developing programs for specific, patient-focused care, as well as the development of policies, procedures, informational teaching packets, and discharge instructions. Katherine is hard working and dedicated to providing excellent patient care, and her knowledge and skill make her an extraordinary resource to the hospital. Her strong leadership qualities inspire confidence, respect and the cooperation of others.

### FARMINGDALE STATE COLLEGE

#### **Jennifer Bryer, Ph.D., RN, CNE**

*Chairperson, Department of Nursing*

Jennifer has been a nurse for 33 years and an outstanding nurse educator for 20 years in both clinical and classroom education. As a nursing educator, she promotes an atmosphere in which students are able to critically think, embrace the science of learning, and flourish. Her innovative teaching strategies incorporate the use of technology, case studies, concept maps, and collaborative techniques that encourage the students to solve the everyday problems that are evident in patient care. Jennifer instituted a mentoring program for returning nursing students where student-to-student involvement is available for tutoring, studying, and easing the returnee's transition back into the nursing program. She is a published researcher. She expends tremendous energy in serving as a guide, a motivator, a facilitator, and a role model for all members of the Nursing Department.

### FRANKLIN HOSPITAL

#### **Ceil Sorrentino, RN, BS**

*Stroke Coordinator*

Ceil has worked at Franklin Hospital for the past three years of her more than 30-year career. Her role as coordinator has many facets in the area of patient care as well as overall responsibilities for coordination within the hospital. Ceil is always abreast of current guidelines for stroke care. She established a process that involves monitoring bedside practice, documentation, and compliance for staff at all levels and across disciplines. Her responsibilities include integration of inpatient care coordination. Her collaboration with department heads is mandatory to ensure guidelines for care are followed, as per the American Stroke Association. She provides ongoing education for nursing and physician staff on the guidelines and updates regarding overall care for the stroke patients. Ceil is a great patient advocate and provides one-on-one education for patients at the

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## NOMINEES (CONTINUED)

bedside. She is a champion for stroke care within and outside the hospital, involved in both community education and outreach.

### GLEN COVE HOSPITAL

#### **Donna Donnelly, BSN, RNC**

Donna has been at Glen Cove for five years and works on a busy medical-surgical floor, where she has often stepped up in difficult staffing situations. Her gentle and quiet demeanor belies the exceptional nurse and powerful change agent that she is. Donna willingly shares her education and experience. She is a preceptor to new hires and students, and schools them in her compassionate, evidence-based practice of nursing. Through her efforts she has inspired others to go the extra mile in their own professional lives. Donna assumes charge when assigned to do so and is competent in that role. In the clinical setting, Donna earned Clinical Ladder III status, one of three nurses at Glen Cove to do so. She developed and implemented a music therapy program, where she coordinates volunteers from local music programs and schedules visits throughout her unit and the inpatient psychiatry unit, which has a positive effect on the patients and staff.

### GOOD SAMARITAN HOSPITAL MEDICAL CENTER

#### **Kathryn R. Brennan, RNC, MS, CNOR**

*Perioperative Supervisor*

Kathryn has oversight of the pre-surgical testing, pre-and post-procedure units, endoscopy, and pain management procedural areas. She is an 18-year veteran of Good Samaritan. She volunteers for hospital-based and system-wide community programs. She leads by example, working diligently behind the scenes, attending to every detail, assuring completion, and praising the team throughout the process. As a situation presents, she reacts by researching the evidence, following through on every aspect, analyzing to develop a conclusion, and working through to find a solution. Dedicated to quality care, evidence-based practice, and lifelong learning, she sets high standards for herself and others. She encourages staff to adopt lifelong learning, join professional

organizations, and pursue certification in their specialties. Kathryn's ability to maintain a professional, calm demeanor, enables her to be the perfect mentor to aspiring leaders.

### HUNTINGTON HOSPITAL

#### **Deborah L. Feehan, MS, RN, C, CHPN**

*Clinical Nursing Supervisor*

Deborah is a full-time clinical supervisor who has worked at Huntington for 10 years. In her supervisory role, she oversees the daily operations of a busy nursing department, in addition to serving as an adjunct clinical instructor at a local university. Deborah is strongly motivated to learn, change, and challenge herself. She helped plan and design a medical-surgical unit with a family-centered philosophy. Under her leadership, direct care nurses initiated many "transforming care at the bedside" concepts, such as family participation carts, quiet time, communication boards, rooming-in, and aromatherapy. Deborah has always had a passionate interest in improving care at the end of life. She was instrumental in the development of the hospital's interdisciplinary palliative care committee. Her dream was realized with the hiring of a palliative medicine physician, a nurse practitioner, and social worker to serve as the core of an interdisciplinary palliative care team. She has exercised great vision and initiative in making career choices that have expanded her personal capabilities and Huntington's mission.

### LONG BEACH MEDICAL CENTER

#### **Geraldine A. Moore, EdD, RN, BC, AE-C**

*Coordinator - Health Styles*

Geraldine has more than 30 years of nursing experience and has been a role model to nurses, students, and lay people. She works in the hospital's community health and wellness program. Geraldine has organized asthma education programs for children, families, teachers and health professionals, facilitated a Safe Sitter Program that teaches young people first aid and how to handle emergencies while baby-sitting, and partnered with the American Cancer Society to teach schoolchildren, adults and lifeguards

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## NOMINEES (CONTINUED)

about sun safety. Working with seniors, she brings health screening and education to several communities. Her charity work extends to meeting the needs of international communities, collecting supplies, money, and other donations. Geraldine inspires a new generation of nurses as an assistant professor of nursing, teaching community nursing, professionalism and nursing research. She is pro-active, innovative and demonstrates a strong, caring attitude toward others.

### JOHN T. MATHER MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

#### **Lillian A. Donnelly, RN, BSN, OCN**

A staff member on the medical-surgical oncology unit, Lillian has worked at John T. Mather for ten years. She uses knowledge derived from exposure to different modalities of care to improve and expand her abilities, and she works diligently to promote unity between departments and nursing floors. She is a member of the hospital's newly-formed palliative committee, providing invaluable knowledge obtained during a one-year home hospice experience. She possesses keen interpersonal skills and interacts well with co-workers, physicians, and administrative staff. Lillian is highly respected by her peers and is often sought out as a person of reference. She is dedicated to the performance of her profession and uses evidence-based practice and nursing research to provide the best quality of nursing care.

### MERCY MEDICAL CENTER

#### **Humilidat Umali, RN, BSN**

*Assistant Head Nurse*

Humilidat has worked at Mercy Medical Center for 24 years in a myriad of positions and, for the past three years, has been the assistant head nurse on its 37-bed acute rehabilitation unit. Quality patient care is a passion for Humilidat. She initiated a performance improvement project for patient and family education. There has been a steady increase in quality compliance on the rehab unit since the project began. Humilidat coordinates the nurses' assignments and participates in multidisciplinary team meetings to plan the rehabilitation patients' care and

discharge needs. Everyone admires her organizational skills and she keeps the rehab unit together under the most challenging of days. She always has time for patients and is compassionate and cheerful. She has achieved Clinical Nurse III status for the past two years. An active participant in the hospital's outreach programs, she brings services to the community and local churches.

### NASSAU UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

#### **Shyni Charley, RN, BSN**

*Assistant Nurse Manager for Critical Care*

Shyni has worked at Nassau University Medical Center for 20 years. As assistant nurse manager to the critical care units, burn center, and PACU, she is responsible for assuring the delivery of quality of care and coordinating the transfer of patients in and out of the critical care units. She assists supervision, responds to codes and traumas, and coordinates the overall care of the patients in SICU on the night shift. She is a proven leader and an invaluable resource. She is a mentor and role model to new graduate nurses in the ICU fellowship program, and is credited by students with contributing to their successful entry into practice. She is active in the community, volunteering in many capacities, organizing clothing and food drives, visiting homeless shelters, and planning health fairs. Through her church's ministry, she traveled to India and Africa, improving residents' quality of life by building homes and schools, and creating wells for clean drinking water.

### NORTH SHORE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

#### **Stacy E. Wahl, Ph.D., RN, CCRN**

*Nurse Educator*

Stacy is a 25-year veteran nurse educator at North Shore University Hospital. In her position on the night shift, she is also a facilitator, change agent, leader, consultant, and researcher. Although her area of expertise is critical care, she excels in all aspects of nursing practice. Her preceptor program was developed for North Shore, adopted by the North Shore-L.I.J. Health System, and implemented at all of the system's hospitals. The preceptor program focuses on learning preferences, learning styles,

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## NOMINEES (CONTINUED)

multiculturalism, and interactive learning. Stacy is chair of both the standards, policies, and procedures committee and the research committee. She is a mentor to countless nurses and managers on the night shift as they pursue advanced degrees. She is one of the most approachable members of the hospital and staff members are comfortable asking her for guidance with varied patient care problems, initiatives, and ideas. Her no-nonsense approach to the nursing profession allows staff — particularly new nurses on the night shift — an opportunity to learn from a highly educated and experienced nurse.

### PECONIC BAY MEDICAL CENTER

#### **Judie A. Lizewski, RN, BSN, CWCN**

*Wound Care/Nursing Education*

After 18 years in various roles—medical-surgical, telemetry, and staff nurse in the intensive care unit—Judie decided to pursue certification in wound care. She has succeeded in making the Wound Care Program a success. She worked with the nurse education department to instruct all nursing staff in wound care and the prevention and treatment of pressure ulcers. Because of her dedication to her patients and respect of her peers, Judie was the first RN to serve on the hospital's board of directors. She has led the way for others to follow in her footsteps and always presented a balanced view and perspective to the leadership. Judie volunteers her nursing skills to children in the community, as well as around the world. She served as a missionary in Uganda, providing care and education to the children of King's Kids Orphanage. She is a role model to new nurses, and an expert to her colleagues, able to stand by their side assisting, educating, and orienting to improve the practice of nursing. She is well-rounded, multi-faceted and has served her community, hospital and the world.

### PLAINVIEW HOSPITAL

#### **Diane M. Gafa, RN-PACU, BSN**

Currently a nurse in the PACU unit, Diane has worked at Plainview Hospital for 13 years. She is the chairperson for the PACU/ASU/ENDO Collaborative Care Council, where she makes process changes to

help Plainview provide safe patient care, increase efficiency and enhance patient care experience. Diane is certified as a preceptor and represents the department at the nurse practice meetings. She is both a board member of and the PACU Coordinator for Blanca's House, a medical mission that travels to South America to perform much-needed surgeries. She is responsible for supplies, equipment, and staff, and raises funds to provide necessities that are not donated. Diane is also in charge of PACU staff. She screens and interviews new candidates, and is responsible for the operation of the PACU. She educates the existing hospital staff on new procedures, equipment, and best practices.

### ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA MEDICAL CENTER

#### **Margaret Connick, RNC**

*Staff Nurse*

Margaret has worked at St. Catherine's for 44 years, holding positions in every department in the hospital. She is currently a staff nurse in oncology. She has become an advocate for oncology patients, and was instrumental in opening a dedicated oncology unit at the hospital. She also is an advocate for the use of health care proxies and makes sure that everyone of her cancer patients knows the importance of the proxy. Her quiet, soft-spoken tone gets things done, and she is always there for her patients, in addition to having the respect of everyone in the hospital. She treats all her patients with compassion, caring, dignity, and respect. Margaret is strongly committed to sharing her knowledge and mentoring younger staff about the challenges of oncology nursing. She is the nurse at the bedside that makes a difference for her patients, families, hospital, and community.

### ST. CHARLES HOSPITAL

#### **Cecilia A. Hill, BS, RN**

*Director of Infection Control*

Cecilia has worked at St. Charles for more than 36 years. With her current focus on infection control, she has effectively implemented systems to prevent and control hospital-associated infections by ensuring that the appropriate resources are in place to

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## NOMINEES (CONTINUED)

effectively protect the patients, visitors, and staff. This entails stringent surveillance of targeted infections, the establishment of infection control policies that conform to government guidelines and compliance with these policies, and the education and training of staff, patients, and families. Her colleagues, supervisors, staff and patients are the grateful beneficiaries of her positive attitude and generous nature. Cecilia inspires and mentors staff with the same steady resolve to always do the right thing and ensure that every patient receives the best care. She is active in her community, doing various screenings and flu vaccinations, as well as obtaining food and clothing for various charities. Cecilia is an outstanding role model who assists in nursing development and inspires other nurses to grow and develop.

### ST. FRANCIS HOSPITAL—THE HEART CENTER

#### **Maria Vitsentzos, MSN, RN, ANP-BC**

##### *Palliative Care Nurse Champion*

Maria has held a number of positions in her 25 years at St. Francis. In 2005, she was selected for the development of a palliative care service at the hospital. In her present position as program director, she analyzes palliative care trends, and tracks, analyzes and reports on the program's progress in the hospital's semi-annual and annual reports. She hosts weekly palliative care team meetings, encourages and accepts palliative care referrals from clinical nurses, includes the primary nurse in family meetings and in the establishment of patient goals of care, and provides regular palliative education to newly-hired nurses in orientation classes. Maria created a palliative care brochure and bereavement resource guide for patients and their families. She gives palliative educational presentations to staff and hospital committees, and represents the palliative care program at national and local conferences. St. Francis recognizes her many diverse accomplishments with pride. She is a visionary who takes strong action to bring the outstanding work done at St. Francis a national level of recognition, serving to advance the profession of nursing.

### ST. JOSEPH HOSPITAL

#### **Lucille Hughes, MSN, RN, CDE**

##### *Director of Diabetes Education*

Lucille has worked in nursing for more than 20 years, the last two at St. Joseph Hospital. As the diabetes educator, she established a diabetes program at the hospital that has quickly become a source of support for the community, hospitalized patients, and staff. She has had remarkable success in a short period of time. Lucille created and implemented a monthly community diabetes support group, and has assisted an insulin pump support group. She reached out to the medical staff and pharmacy to implement collaborative evidence-based practice. Now every unit has a diabetes nurse champion who was mentored and coached by Lucille, reflecting her endless energy and devotion. She also developed a diabetes education corner at the hospital that promotes and supports diabetes education for the nurses, and fosters dialogue with the staff. She is an adjunct faculty member at Molloy College and teaches a continuing education program for school nurses called, "The Care of the Diabetic Student in the School Setting."

### SOUTH NASSAU COMMUNITIES HOSPITAL

#### **Kathryn Garizio-McDonagh, RN**

##### *Nurse Coordinator for Radiation Oncology and Radiosurgery*

Kathryn has been a nurse for more than 11 years, providing compassionate, responsive patient care with specializations in radiation oncology, inpatient oncology, recovery, cardiac care, and hospice. Her diverse experience and utmost respect for the nursing profession, combined with her expertise and acumen in oncology patient care, has been critical to the level of excellence achieved by South Nassau's cancer program. In her role as radiosurgery coordinator, she is responsible for formulating policies and procedures, coordinating weekly radiosurgery conferences, initiating performance improvement projects, and coordinating with different specialties to ensure that the department runs smoothly. She has a strong clinical foundation. Kathryn consistently goes above and beyond her job responsibilities by assisting other

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## NOMINEES (CONTINUED)

members of the team, coordinating nursing coverage, assisting with the department's Gamma Knife program and helping with special procedure patients. She serves as an exceptional mentor and resource for other nurses, as well as a preceptor to new nurses, training them in radiation oncology.

### SOUTHAMPTON HOSPITAL

#### **Patricia M. Mitchell, RN, BSN, CNOR**

For 15 of her 38 years in nursing, Patricia has worked full-time, 12-hour shifts in the operating room, in addition to working as a charge nurse after 3 p.m. She also works part time in an urgent care center. She is very versatile and willing to work in both the ED and PACU, whenever she is needed. Patricia is compassionate and will go above and beyond to serve her patients. As a union delegate, she guides nurses when there is a labor issue. She meets with management and sees both sides of an issue. Patricia is very diplomatic. She is strong, confident, a good teacher and a great mentor to younger nurses. She initiates change to help nurses to increase staff morale. Patricia volunteers her time with International Surgical Missions Support, which provides free medical care and trains local professionals. She has been on medical missions to Haiti, Nepal, and Africa. She is passionate about all tasks that she takes on, and heals not only from the heart, but with body, mind and soul.

### SOUTHSIDE HOSPITAL

#### **Lynne V. Grant, RN, BSN**

An emergency department nurse in practice for more than thirteen years, Lynne came to the profession of nursing by an unconventional route. Her prior career was in mortuary science. While managing a funeral parlor, she realized that she gained the most satisfaction from comforting and supporting family members during their saddest hours. This compassion and skill naturally led her to nursing. She joined the staff of Southside Hospital as a nurse's aide in the emergency department, returned to school, and earned her nursing degree. A hands-on

nurse who always finds the time to hold a hand or offer a hug, Lynne has also become an instrumental member of the ED team. She helped to develop and revise the ED's trauma policy, and is the co-chair of the department's collaborative care council. The council has improved the security of the ED by working to increase the security department's presence, secured additional interpreter phones to help the Limited English Proficiency Team, and developed a cost-effective method of securing EKG cables and leads to the monitors that has saved the hospital thousands of dollars. Lynne shares her knowledge with new nurses, serving as a preceptor, and demonstrates true leadership within the department. She is as active and giving in her personal life, volunteering for community health fairs, captaining the blood drive and raising funds for the American Heart Association.

### STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

#### **Diane M. Carlson, RN, MS, CNAA-BC**

*Director of Nursing Support Services*

Diane has had a 25-year career at Stony Brook, but her current focus is the oversight of and responsibility for the hospital's assistant directors of nursing, the nursing office, hospital bed coordinators, who assist in assigning beds to patients awaiting admission, the nurse scheduling and information system, and the RN Float and per diem pools. She is always available to the nursing office and division, in addition to coordinating hospital activities as emergencies arise. As incident commander, she is responsible for activating nursing emergency teams for disasters and/or weather-related emergencies. Diane makes sure collaboration is maintained between all health care professionals and inspires leadership communication and patient safety. She has coordinated fundraising events to raise awareness for the Burn Center Foundation. She is not afraid to try new things or explore ways to further high quality care for patients, families and staff. Diane continuously taps into her skills as a teacher. She challenges, supports, encourages and instills confidence and pride in the staff; she is always a mentor and leader.

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## NOMINEES (CONTINUED)

### SYOSSET HOSPITAL

#### **Alice B. Aiello, RN, CEN, MS**

Alice is a registered nurse with 20 years of experience in the Emergency Department at Syosset Hospital. She is a highly skilled nurse with excellent diagnostic and triage skills. With her great people skills, she can make the grumpiest person smile. Alice motivates the evening team to work together in harmony, expecting quality care from the other members of the ED staff. She mentors new ED nurses and helps them to be successful members of the department. She has been instrumental in the high Press Ganey patient satisfaction scores achieved by the ED. Alice has the unique ability to remain calm during the most chaotic ED shifts, thereby keeping her staff calm. She participates in a number of community events for breast cancer and Parkinson's organizations and other charities, in addition to doing speaking engagements for NY Organ Donor network.

### VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER

#### **Theodora C. Raft, BSN, RN-BC**

Theodora has been at the VA for six years and is a board-certified cardiac vascular nurse. She has clearly mastered the skill set necessary to manage the complex needs of the adult and geriatric patients entrusted to her. She is particularly proficient in identifying and responding to arrhythmias and serves as a mentor for staff members who are less experienced than she is in cardiac monitoring. Theodora excels in the technical aspects of clinical nursing, she is compassionate and able to connect with patients in order to motivate them to make changes necessary to promote and maintain their health. She has a unique ability to remain cool under pressure, a vital trait in the chaotic environment of a busy acute-care unit. In her community roles, she is an active participant in her local Parent Teacher Association, serves on a board at her church that provides health education on a variety of topics, and also extends her work with an organization called "Protect Allergic Kids," a support group for parents of children with food allergies.

### WINTHROP UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

#### **Sandra Zaera, MA, RN-BC - Clinical Educator**

Sandra has been in nursing for 40 years, including the last six years at Winthrop. She is a clinical educator for the pediatric and pediatric intensive care units. With her vast experience in so many roles, she utilizes her knowledge to educate staff RNs, patient care associates, clerical support staff, and other educators and nursing managers. She possesses a style of teaching that facilitates learning. As a staunch advocate for patient education, she provides CPR training to parents of infants who have experienced acute life threatening events and whose children will be discharged with a tracheostomy or on a ventilator. She developed an asthma action plan in both English and Spanish for patients so that their discharge instructions would be clear. She partnered with diabetic educators and coordinated a pilot on the pediatric unit for patients with insulin pumps, so that the treatment the patient had become accustomed to was not interrupted due to hospitalization. She is a role model, mentor, teacher, and consummate professional who delights in the success of others.



*The teapot tradition began in the 1980s with the New York State Legislature’s Nurse of Distinction Program. The first recipient of the Long Island Nurse of Distinction nomination spoke of the challenges that nurses and all of health care face, and will face, in the decades to come. In keeping with the message that day, it was recollected her comments included, “most of us nurses are like teabags, we don’t know our own strength until we get into hot water.”*

*The allegory resonated among those involved in the program and it eventually became a custom for a prior recipient of the Nurse of Excellence award to bestow a teapot upon the current honoree. The teapots remind our honored colleagues of their achievement and of their strengths. Like each of us, the teapots are seldom exactly alike. They celebrate the unique value that each Nurse of Excellence brings to those they serve. And, the teapot symbolizes and reminds us that “hot water” often brings out the best in us and in our profession.*



Nassau-Suffolk  
**Hospital Council, Inc.**

*Representing the not-for-profit and public  
hospitals serving the residents of Long Island*

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