

DAISY Award Nomination
Winner, November 2012
Cindy May, executive director and chief nursing officer
Harrison Medical Center, Bremerton, Washington



Stephen Covey said, “Every human has four endowments: self-awareness, conscience, independent will, and creative imagination. These give us the ultimate human freedom: The power to choose, to respond, to change.”

This summarizes the question: What is the essence of a nurse?

I have known Cindy May for four years, but there is no doubt in my mind that she has lived her life in a manner that is consistent with how we all see her today. She’s the woman who has always been and will always be a caregiver. She does not necessarily have the ego to express that she is selfless, courageous, and strong. Rather, she is *aware* of her ability to be strong for others, courageous for those she cares for, and selfless enough to respond by expressing her opinions and standing up for change. She is one of those rare human beings that listens and chooses to act based on her conscience. Cindy May does this consistently.

Cindy is the off-duty nurse who found an injured homeless man lying in the snow on the edge of the street at night after he was hit by a vehicle. She helped him into her car and proceeded to drive him to the nearest hospital.

She is also the nurse who saw a red and white uniformed nursing student running up the hill, while looking for a parking space for herself, and offered him a ride to the nearest hospital entrance because she suspected he was late for work.

Cindy is the chief nursing officer who gave up an available hospital mattress to a tired physician during the last snow storm, while she chose to sleep on the floor of her office. She then worked 36 to 40 hours helping others change linens, deliver food, and collect vital hospital employees so they could relieve an exhausted crew of nurses, CNAs, and many others.

Cindy is the executive director and chief nursing officer who loves floating all of the units because she finds herself in the world she loves, surrounded by other dedicated caregivers and those who need them. Cindy is the conscientious nurse who found a family member secretly trying to sleep one evening on the edge of a window sill of her husband’s room with nothing more than a blanket to cover her. She made some phone calls and arranged for the patient’s wife to use the empty bed that was set in the same room. A sleeper chair was on stand-by just in case the hospital needed that bed.

Cindy is the hospital administrator who sent beautiful yellow roses to an elderly couple’s home who needed it.

She is the one who attended a patient’s funeral and has since kept his memorial keepsake on her wall for three years. It reminds her how precious and fragile life is and, what a privilege – and responsibility – it is to be able to take care of those who trust us with their lives.

You see, Cindy is a nurse who is aware of the bigger picture of true healing. It's possible to heal the human body with surgery, medication, physical therapy, and nutrition, but what about the healing of a person's spirit? Cindy believes a person in need of healing can recover just as quickly with the touch of another caring human being. She sees the value of having a caring family member in the same room as her husband. She sees the value of another human being who has nothing and no one, who is lying injured on the street.

Cindy expresses her opinions openly and constructively to everything that affects a patient and their loved ones. This includes policies involving how we present ourselves as caregivers. It includes opinions about tile ceilings being painted with soothing art, and floor tiles that provide a more healing ambiance.

Her ultimate goal is not to bring attention to herself, but to have what we all want: the best possible environment for healing. A patient should wake up, take a look around, smile, and say, "Hi, wow, is this Heaven?" Nurse Cindy would smile back and confidently respond, "No, it's Harrison."

Cindy May is a gift to all those who truly know her and understand her mission and intentions. To know her and be inspired by her is the gift. She teaches you that there is more to life than what's just in front of you. There's a bigger picture: being a positive role model, setting the example, listening to your conscience (and heart), standing up for what you believe is right, and to be your best and give your best.

Please consider Cindy for the DAISY award. Thank you.