

The 2009 Legend Awards

The Legend Award was introduced in 2005 to formally recognize individuals and teams who consistently demonstrate extraordinary achievements and consistently exemplify our Mission and Values.

The award is named after Sister Marcella Herlehy, a retired Chaplain. Sister Marcella devoted her life to ministering to the sick and supporting staff, physicians and volunteers at St. Joseph's. This award honours her dedication and enthusiasm.



The 2009 honourees included:

2009 Legend award winners pose with Sister Marcella.

EXCELLENCE

The Emergency Department Team

"The Emergency Department Team and patients and visitors, and indeed every member of the staff who support our Emergency, can find examples of our commitment to excellence in the words of a patient's mother, Reverend Shirlee. Our Emergency Department Team made a remarkable impact on her son, Ralph and his mother, and they in turn help us to strive for excellence."

(Reverend Shirlee wrote:)

'I greatly appreciate the 'care' received by my son at your Hospital and so, I have pulled up your Vision Statement as it appears on the Web, so that I could share some of my thoughts with you.

"Each person is valued as a unique individual with a right to respect and acceptance." I saw this played out with the care given to my son.

Even though Ralph can change like the wind and has memory impairment still, on that one day he knew that he was being involved in discussions concerning his own care and that felt pretty special to him. I know, because he told me so! He was treated with 'dignity' and I will not ever forget that!

Compassion, on the other hand, is a 'feeling' – a feeling of the heart. It is an understanding that 'the other' is in pain, or different, defenseless, that they need help. And, like 'empathy', it involves the acceptance of knowing that what is happening to 'another' can also happen to any one of us.

I appreciate the statement about 'Excellence'. I saw this reflected as I saw the Emergency Social Worker (Stephen Porter) struggle to find Ralph a place of 'safety' – not necessarily the 'best place' – but a place where he would be 'safe' and where he would not be attacked and beaten – where he might not have so many 'falls' and a place where there would be some 'accountability' involved in his care. This, the working under difficult circumstances to try and solve that which seems unsolvable – 'this' is Excellence!

To try and name just a few, I saw how EMS people, the Police, Doctors, nurses, Social Workers and Team Leaders worked together. I saw how important the works of persons in all the different areas of expertise were part of the Team. It works. It did work for my son! And I will be forever grateful!

Once again, in closing, I thank you for the care given to my son Ralph, when he was in your care. I hope that others write and tell you their stories because it must help, when you can see that you are indeed living out, to the best of your ability, your Vision statement.'



"Ralph's story and your ability to mirror for staff our Values in action has touched the minds and hearts of many of us here at St. Joe's. Your gift to us is shared every time we welcome new staff into our healing Ministry."

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Esther Marshall, Pharmacy Technician

"Esther's 30 years of dedication to the hospital has contributed to the welfare of our patients. Working as a Pharmacy Technician, she was involved in medication distribution, always ensuring that medications are filled correctly. As a Purchasing Technician she makes sure the pharmacy is well-stocked with life-saving medications.

In her capacity as the pharmacy's Purchasing Technician, Esther knows the importance of providing medicines to our patients. She would never leave the department until she makes sure that much needed medications are on stock and available for dispensing. She is even willing to go back to the pharmacy even on her days off just to provide these much needed medications.

Esther has always been a supporter of fundraisers in the hospital. She is a diligent fundraiser of the annual Lori's Walk and has inspired her colleagues to do the same. She does not only raise funds, but also joins the walk – a great example of practicing what you preach.

Esther's good works are not limited only to St. Joseph's Health Centre. She is also active in church work where she has shared her talents. In their community garden, she lends a hand and shares her expertise in nurturing flowers and vegetables. This garden is called HOPE community garden, which stands for Healthy, Organic Parkdale Edibles. This activity has raised consciousness among the youth of their church group and the youth, artists, psychiatric survivors, immigrants of the Parkdale community about the giving back to the community.

Outside the hospital, on a bigger scale, she is a member of the committee of the Ontario College of Pharmacy, which oversees the certification of Pharmacy Technicians. Their work has increased the awareness of Pharmacy Technicians of the importance of providing pharmaceutical care to their patients.

Throughout the year, she also helps out in other outreach programs of the church. Some of these are: clothing distribution to the different agencies (e.g. women's and children's shelters, Parkdale Activity and Recreation Centre), and also food distribution through the St. Francis Table and Food Bank.

If you are new to the department, don't know anyone, and feel so alone in a new environment, Esther is one person who is genuinely supportive, approachable, and makes everyone feel welcome. She is a good listener and a confidant. A new staff will learn a lot from her experiences.

HUMAN DIGNITY

Dorje Gyaltzen, Health Care Assistant, Family Medicine

"Dorje is the most helpful person in our department. We can ask for his assistance and we know that he will do his utmost to help in whatever task we ask of him. There is always a friendly hello and a wave when you come in each morning. He will step out of an office to ensure he has welcomed you. This small gesture each day makes all his co-workers feel worthwhile and valued. Dorje is approachable, kind, and very willing to help in any way he can, without a second thought. He treats staff and patients with the utmost respect and extends his help even without being asked.

Dorje is a great team worker who is able to effectively seek the help of fellow health care workers to accomplish a goal. He is always ready to assist and remains calm, however busy he may be. He treats staff with kindness, whether it is housekeeping, nursing, physicians or clerical. He goes above and beyond the other workers in anticipating the needs of the clinic and being proactive in attending to clinic and patient needs.

'Joyce' was an 80 year old patient of mine with diabetes who was on dialysis 4 X per week, had many social challenges, and significant financial difficulties. Somehow (and I never figured out how), Dorje seemed to know when she was coming in for an appointment with me. He would quietly knock on my office door – and give her a small meal of a sandwich and juice, which he had ordered ahead of time. It meant so much to her – she struggled to buy nutritious meals, but would never ask for help – by respecting her life situation, and being compassionate in his actions. I will always be indebted to Dorje for doing this for the patient, who finally passed away in the fall of 2007.

He knows 3 languages and his help with patients of diverse backgrounds is invaluable.

COMMUNITY OF SERVICE

The Childcare Workers Team, The Women's Health Centre

"The Childcare Workers are always taking extra time to talk to parents who participate in our programs about their children's successes, behaviour and development, they also share with them and with staff any concerns they might have and suggest resources for parents from the community. They often wait beyond the time that their shift ends for a parent with an appointment in the Health Centre, or for a mom who requires some extra support and time talking to their counsellor.

The Childcare Workers ensure daily that the playroom is safe, that the toys are cleaned and that the room is set up for the next day, even when they have to stay a few minutes late to do this. They inform the coordinator or manager immediately of unsafe situations in the room like a leak in the ceiling, and are flexible in caring for the children until it can be repaired.

The team takes the time to plan activities for a range of ages of children, from birth to 6 on a daily basis and up to age 12 for special events. These children often are also impacted by additional challenges that the family may be facing at home – such as poverty, high levels of stress, or a mother who is experiencing post-partum depression. This means that the children can be anxious and difficult to care for, but our childcare team members who tremendous compassion and patience with each and every one of them.

One example of dedication and collaboration is an instance when a Childcare Worker took her own time to accompany a Tamil-speaking patient and participant of one of our programs who was in extreme pain to an appointment with a doctor in the Ambulatory Care Centre. This patient had requested an interpreter and due to miscommunication, one was not booked to be available at the time of the appointment. Our Childcare Team understood this as an important way of supporting a mother in distress, she attended long enough to translate the crucial information and instructions for the client, so that she would not have to make a new appointment and her needs could be attended to immediately. This client had already been in the Emergency Department twice that week. This staff member ensured that her colleague was able to supervise the two children who were in our playroom that day, and also consulted with her Coordinator prior to accompanying the client. She was mindful of her responsibilities and role in promoting safety and timely client care.

All our Childcare Team members assist project staff and volunteers in order to make the program go smoothly and to respond to our clients' need in a timely manner. They are a great example of dedication, participation and collaboration within the team and for other women who come to our Centre.

Each staff member uses their skills as a team that includes several languages – Spanish, Tamil and Chinese – that are crucial for us in communicating health and wellness information to our clients, the little ones and the big ones.

No counsellor or program could operate at the Women's Health Centre or offered to parents in St. Joe's without this crucial service. Childcare is often overlooked when providing services to families and we are able to do it well because of the strength and commitment of our team of Childcare Workers.

COMPASSION

Liz Siydock, Child Life Specialist

"Liz shows genuine affection and compassion to both the patient and his/her family. Liz's consistent care and kindness leave a lasting impression on her patients that will last a lifetime. Liz is also quick to share any credit with the people she inspires to help make this magic happen.

Liz takes on the most difficult subject matter anyone can deal with: death. She helps guide and prepare children and their families throughout this life-changing journey. She listens, laughs and cries with families going through a devastating time in their lives. By understanding and listening to their feelings, fears and concerns, she is a precious anchor that these families can hold onto.

Liz is an exceptional team player as a participant in the Healthy Child Screening Initiatives. Working with diverse agencies across the continuum of care, she has contributed to developing a school-based screening service for at-risk children, many of who are newcomers to this country and are facing multiple health challenges.

Every year Liz agrees to provide Child Life Specialist students with a placement to fulfill their practice requirements. Liz is a highly regarded mentor and teacher for Child Life Specialist students, and hospital wide staff. She has a training session for best practice in paediatric care.

Liz is a strong advocate of family-centred care, and especially believes in putting our patients first. Teacher and student evaluations consistently rate Liz as one of the best communicators that the children can relate to. Plus they love her colourful hair!"