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Extraordinary Nurse Recognized as First DAISY Award Recipient at SoutheastHEALTH

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Tamra Decker, a registered nurse on the Neurosciences Unit at Southeast Hospital, has received the DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses. She is the first to receive this international recognition at Southeast Hospital.

The award is part of the DAISY Foundation's mission to recognize the exceptional, compassionate nursing care that nurses provide patients and families every day. There were 39 DAISY Award nominations for the quarter ending September 30. The next DAISY Award recipient will be announced in January 2020.

Decker received two nominations for the DAISY Award. Here is what one nomination, from the patient's wife, Dawn, noted.

"My 53-year-old husband was a patient on the Neurosciences Unit at Southeast Hospital for four months. There were many ups and downs during his stay. I have never been through an ordeal as serious as this. During this time, Tamra was always available to me. She always made sure I understood the care my husband was getting and made sure that I was able to be involved with his care because she could see that I need to help be his caregiver. She explained trach care to me and showed me how to properly turn him."

"My husband was in a lethargic state and could not respond. Tamra always addressed him when she was caring for him. It was very important to her that she got to know him. She asked one day, 'What was he like before he got sick?' That meant so much to me. When one day he started to respond, Tamra cried tears of joy with me.

"Tamra was always ready to give a hug, say a prayer or even bring me a snack. Her love for patients and their families is so evident. I continue to sing her praises. You could not find another nurse that embodies all of the DAISY criteria."

The DAISY Foundation is a not-for-profit organization, established in memory of J. Patrick Barnes, by members of his family. Patrick died at the age of 33 in late 1999 from complications of Idiopathic Thrombocytopenic Purpura (ITP), a little known auto-immune disease. DAISY is an acronym for Diseases Attacking the Immune System. The care Patrick and his family received from nurses while he was ill inspired this unique means of thanking nurses for making a profound difference in the lives of their patients and patient families.

Nurses may be nominated by patients, families and colleagues. The award recipient is chosen by a committee at SoutheastHEALTH. Honorees receive a certificate of commendation along with a DAISY Award pin and a beautiful and meaningful sculpture called "A Healer's Touch," hand carved by artists of the Shona Tribe in Zimbabwe.

SoutheastHEALTH Chief Nursing Officer Gina Leath presented the award to Decker and expressed the organization's gratitude to nurses who go above and beyond every day. Southeast President and CEO Ken Bateman added that "Tamra embodies everything we want in our nurses – exceptional care."

Between happy tears, a surprised Tamra said, "This is amazing. Thank you so much. I've been here a very long time. I left for a while, but came back for one reason – the spirit here. This is home and always will be. Patients put their lives in our hands every day. We must always be mindful of that."
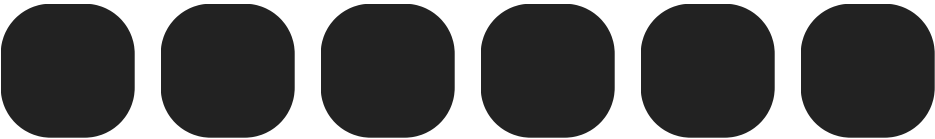
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At SoutheastHEALTH, the region's premier healthcare system in southeast Missouri, our patients receive excellent care of the highest clinical quality, close to home. Within our network are more than 50 care locations in 13 communities, including hospitals, primary and specialty care clinics representing over 30 clinical specialties and extending care for patients in a four-state area. Learn more at SEhealth.org.

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