

Alan M. Pedersen Humanitarian Award

May 20, 2014



Our Winners

Tonya Reaves, Medical Office Assistant

ENT and Audiology Department - Nominated by: Nicole Raia, Sc.D., CCC-A, FAAA

Tonya is a vital member of the ENT and Audiology Department. She is the first face patients see when they arrive and is never without a smile and a warm greeting.

The department can be challenging, as patients use numerous languages and often present with conditions that can make communication difficult, including varied levels of hearing loss, head and neck cancer, and those who use devices to speak. Tonya is able to quickly determine the most effective manner of communication. She seeks the help of an interpreter only when necessary, and communicates with the patient while maintaining eye contact with them. Often the patient's illnesses are physically noticeable. Tonya remains highly compassionate and professional with them at all times. Tonya is also responsible for obtaining pre-certification for the patients. She does this in an organized and time effective manner. She also helps to coordinate appointments for patients in outside facilities when their hearing loss makes using a telephone impossible or they do not have a family member that can assist them.

Tonya's dedication to the patients of University Hospital is unparalleled.

Akosua Serwah-Boadu, Advanced Nurse Practitioner

Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery Service - Nominated by Evelyne Kalyoussef, MD

Akosua is an exemplary member of the Head and Neck Surgery Service. She is truly dedicated to her patients, often coming in early or staying late into the evening to complete her work.

Akosua works tirelessly to provide excellent, efficient and well-rounded care to her patients. Many of the follow-up patients often ask for her specifically, even after being evaluated by the resident and attending physician!

When Akosua is with patients, she is warm, compassionate and funny and very easily puts them and their families at ease. Her absence is immediately noticed by residents, physicians and nurses. The staff jokingly forbids her from taking vacations as she is such an integral part of the service! Akosua never says no to a patient or member of the medical team. She is quick to help and always manages to do her work with a smile! The department feels very lucky to have her as part of the Head and Neck Surgery Service.



UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL
Newark, New Jersey

Our Nominees

Olivia Valentino-Davis

Administrative Coordinator, Patient Relations Department

- Nominated by: Minnie Presley, University Hospital Auxiliary

Olivia is very compassionate with patients and is willing to help whenever asked. She's been very responsive to the University Hospital Auxiliary, specifically with minute-taking and the Farmer's Market activities. Olivia has also helped many of the Auxiliary members to connect with their doctors, maneuver their way through complex medical systems and make appointments.

We have received considerable feedback from patients who state that Olivia is very helpful, a good listener and quick to solve their myriad of problems. She greets everyone who walks into the Patient Relations office with a smile and warm welcome. When you bring a patient into the office for help, Olivia listens carefully and works diligently to resolve their problem. She always thanks the individual who brings a patient to her seeking help.

Recently, Olivia assisted a patient who had just been discharged from the Emergency Department. Olivia made sure that before the patient's long bus ride home, she received a meal and some encouraging words of kindness and support.

Iris Borison and Robinson Christian

Certified Nursing Assistants, H-Yellow

- Nominated by: Sima Farid, MSW, LSW, Care Coordination

It is with great pleasure that we commend the teamwork, compassion and empathetic spirits of Iris Borison and Robinson Christian. These two workers always put their best foot forward despite continual demands and heavy case loads. Iris and Robinson can always be seen going the extra mile - not only doing what is required of them - but well beyond.

It's not unusual to hear Robinson use his warm, compassionate voice to calm down a difficult patient and encourage him to stay for needed treatment, rather than sign an AMA (against medical advice) form. If a patient is afraid and frightened by the unfamiliar hospital environment, Iris is the first to reach out and hold her hand, providing comfort and understanding.

It's important to note that when Iris and Robinson are on the same shift, they work as a team - tackling even the most difficult tasks together. H-Yellow has a few long-term patients who are unable to express themselves and have no one to advocate on their behalf. Robinson and Iris extend themselves to ensure that these patients, in particular, are treated with thoughtfulness and compassion. You can often see Iris and Robinson talking to our non-verbal or non-alert patients, providing them with supportive visits, a friendly voice and a joyful smile. We are proud to salute the team of Iris Borison and Robinson Christian. They are a true asset to University Hospital.

YOU RADIATE PURE AWESOME.