

Some Ideas for Honoring Nurses During Nurses Week

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Nurses Week is about celebrating being nurses and the job we do to make a difference in someone's life everyday. It's also about bringing attention to the nursing profession and encouraging others to become nurses.

Many think it should be a time to be rewarded monetarily or lavished with gifts or a free vacation or to have the boss suddenly realize how hard we work and actually acknowledge it for one and do something to make the job easier for another. While all of that would be wonderful, it's not going to happen.

You'll no doubt hear someone say "*Save the money you spent on the dumb token gifts and give us a raise.*" Well, think about it... those "token" gifts probably cost very little and how far would very little go in giving each of your nurses a raise? Learn to accept the token gifts gracefully as an acknowledgement of a job well done. Sadly, in some cases, it may be the only positive statement you get from management all year!

And you may not be able to count on your management to come up with any kind of recognition of Nurses Day or Nurses Week... so don't let them disappoint you, plan your own celebration!

Here's a Suggestion...

An idea that could be adapted for Nurses Week is something I helped our nursing supervisor pull together a few years ago for a Quality Improvement meeting. We used this to draw more participants to the meeting, but it was also a very successful in honoring our staff. This was for a home health care agency, but think about how you could adapt the idea for your workplace.

Pick a Theme

We used the Academy Awards to base the program on. We matched each staff member up with a movie role and/or former Oscar winner, whose acting role or other position such as directors, cinematographers, etc. related to the personality or recent events for that staff member. (Not all of the examples were winning roles or even nominees, but they fit the theme.)

For example, a nurse who had demonstrated great efforts to get pictures of her patient's wounds for the charts was named *Best Cinematographer*.

Best Screenplay went to the nurse who demonstrated the best efforts at charting.

Best Actor went to our staff member who gave the best performance of a nurse who knew why he was making this home visit. (The information he was given about the patient and why she needed care was completely blank!)

Others were based on roles such as *Nurse Ratchet (not!)*. It could have been Best Actress as well, but we tried to use other ideas. This went to the nurse who gave the best performance of being extremely kind, caring and compassionate in the face of THE most difficult patient we had serviced in a long time. (She really just wanted to throttle the patient, but went overboard to be nice instead.)



Everyone received a certificate of their award with the brief blurb as to why they were chosen for the award. We had a Red Carpet (red fabric or paper rolled out) and made our own silly "Oscars" from toilet tissue rolls covered in gold wrapping paper with a Styrofoam ball on the top that was spray painted gold.

You could use movie themes, sports themes, even famous nurses. Let your imagination help you to brainstorm. Then let us know how it worked! Share your ideas on [The Nursing Site Forum](#).

Here's some other ideas...

● **Power Point Presentations**

During their buffet luncheon, one group of nurses played a Power Point presentation on a laptop computer. It looped continuously so everyone got a chance to view it at some point. They had taken pictures of their nurses with patients (who gave written permission to be photographed and their pictures used... be careful about HIPPA!!). They "caught" their nurses in the act of doing what they do best...caring for their patients.

This was a small group, but I think it could work well with enough prep time, for a large group especially where not everyone knows each other. The picture could be captioned with the nurse's name, dept., and even a short tribute from peers or patients.

The presentation could be more or less formal. If you have a projector, a slide show format could be the entertainment portion of your celebration. Or letting it run on a laptop continuously throughout the day so that everyone has a chance to see it.

Print some of the pictures and post in the nurse's lounge, cafeteria, or lobby. (Again be mindful of HIPPA if patients are included.)

● **Involve Your Patients**

Solicit tributes from current and former patients. Again, obtain permission to use their names, or allow them to be anonymous. Print their words on certificates, and read them at your celebration. Or post them in a prominent spot.

Hope this helps to get you going. Celebrate yourselves and your peers this year! And let us know what works, and even what doesn't.

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