

A Celebration of Nurses by Renee Shea

*Honor to those whose words or deeds
Thus help us in our daily needs,
And by their overflow
Raise us from what is low!*—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

This year has officially been named “The International Year of the Nurse”, partly in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the death of the founder of modern nursing, Florence Nightingale (1820-1910). It is a year to celebrate nursing and to encourage others to enter into that vocation. The selfless Nightingale is immortalized in the Longfellow verse above. It is from his 1857 poem “Santa Filomena”.

There are an estimated 15 million or more nurses in the world, committed to the health and comfort of all people. Among them are some of the people I most admire. I have had many comforting experiences with nurses, dating all the way back to my childhood.

My godmother was a nurse. She lived next door to me. She was petite in stature, (maybe 5’2’) and weighed less than 100 lbs.; but she was tough as nails. With a look, she could put the fear of God in you. But she was also a nurturing, caring person who dedicated her life to her husband and children, and to her patients. The entire block called on her at times of illness and she always responded.

I have met and befriended several nurses in my career. Their ability to remain unwearied and compassionate with each of their patients in an atmosphere of disease, pain, neediness and constant clean-up of body fluids, never fails to impress me. No matter what nurses are paid, I say it isn’t enough.

Our residents who need a little assistance with their activities of daily living are fortunate enough to be able to contract with a dedicated and capable home health agency called Continuum. This allows them to continue to stay in our beautiful, independent setting and receive the care they need rather than moving to an assisted living facility or nursing home.

The Continuum aids who work in our building are supervised by an extraordinary RN, Cheryl Willmann. I have observed Cheryl and her staff, with our residents. I witness their kindness, concern, professionalism and devotion. I feel fortunate to work in a community that offers such services provided by such a first-rate staff.

So celebrate nurses in 2010. Tell them how much you appreciate what they do for a living and how well they do it.

And don’t forget to tell your friends about this wonderful service. If they decide to move in, you get \$1,000.00 off your next month’s rent. Have a happy new year, and may God bless all nurses.