

ADVANCE FOR NURSES

Regional Nurse Wins National Award

Peggy Matthews, a nurse from Somerville, TN, is being honored for her end-of-life compassion.

As a hospice nurse, **Peggy Matthews, RN**, knows well the difficulties that face families caring for loved ones at the end of life. But after losing her beloved father, Matthews returned to her work at **Methodist Fayette Hospital** with an even more profound passion for her patients and their caregivers.

Today, her compassionate care has led to a more peaceful environment for all those involved. For her efforts, Matthews was recently named one of just four nurses nationwide to receive a 2010 Cherokee Inspired Comfort Award.

"Peggy Matthews's care and compassion for the patients and families dealing with end-of-life issues is truly inspiring," said Wendell Mobley, director of Cherokee Uniforms' charitable and scholarship programs. "She offers families an oasis of calm during their most difficult, heart-breaking time."

Compassionate Construction

Taking the room with the nicest view of the Somerville, TN, hospital's picturesque grounds, Matthews has turned a clinical scene into a warm, home-like environment. She designed a space with warm colors, soft lighting, calming artwork and comfortable furniture. For an additional, personal touch, Peggy established a collaboration with a local quilting club to create beautiful blankets for the patients.

The award is granted by Cherokee Uniforms as a way of recognizing the caring work of nurses and other non-physician healthcare professionals who provide exceptional service, sacrifice and innovation while positively impacting others' lives.

Matthews was nominated by Janet Hunt, administrative director at Methodist Fayette.

In her nomination, Hunt explains, "Peggy could truly empathize with the emotions that families dealing with a loved one who is dying are feeling. She channeled the pain of her own loss into creating a supportive environment for others dealing with the same situation."

As the "national-prize winner," Matthews has earned an all-expense-paid trip to a 2011 medical conference of her choice in the continental U.S.; a wardrobe featuring Cherokee Uniforms and Cherokee Footwear worth more than \$1,000; annual membership to her preferred clinical association; a \$500 donation in her name to the DAISY (Diseases Attacking the Immune System) Foundation; a trophy; a gold-plated commemorative pin and a year's subscription to a nursing magazine.

Greatest Achievement

For Matthews, the most rewarding part of nursing is establishing empathy with her patients. "It has been said that empathy is the foundation of caring," she said. "In my years of nursing, I have found that the most emotional messages are without words - a silent connection that binds people together."

Since the award was established in 2003, more than 9,000 healthcare professionals have been nominated across the various nursing and non-physician disciplines. A panel of Cherokee representatives and past award recipients evaluates nominations and grants the awards.

For each nomination, Cherokee donates \$1 to Nurse's House, a national fund that provides short-term financial assistance to RNs facing serious hardship. Cherokee will be accepting nominations for the 2011 awards beginning March 1. For further information, visit