CELEBRATING NATIONAL NURSES WEEK, MAY 2021

Recognizing 10 outstanding nurses who make the Helena area a better place
In honor of National Nurses Week, this annual publication recognizes 10 nurses who make the Helena area a better place.

The Independent Record solicits nominations for these awards each year. One of the winners was selected by our readers in an online poll, and nine were chosen by a committee that includes representatives from Lewis and Clark Public Health, the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, the Montana Hospital Association and the Independent Record.

## ABOUT

Jacque is an RN who works in our Pre/Post Op areas. She is the nurse who is either preparing the patient for surgery or helping them recover after. She is an amazing nurse, and her co-workers and patients love her.

Jacqueline Anderson

## CONTENTS

2. .............................................................. Jacqueline Anderson, Helena SurgiCenter
4. .............................................................. Kat Ballenger, Shodair Children’s Hospital
6. .............................................................. Sarah Allen, Montana VA Health Care System
7. .............................................................. Chris Duncan, St. Peter’s Health
8. .............................................................. Rhonda Hinrichs, St. Peter’s Health
9. .............................................................. Shari Peterson, St. Peter’s Health
10. .............................................................. Carissa Petty, St. Peter’s Health
12. .............................................................. Diane Olsen, Women’s Health Care Center
13. .............................................................. Destiny Boyd, Frontier Home Health and Hospice
14. .............................................................. Lori McCurdy, Montana VA Health Care System
JACQUELINE ANDERSON
Helena SurgiCenter

NOLAN LISTER
nolan.lister@helenair.com

The nursing profession, more than many others, requires a sharp eye.
Jacqueline Anderson, a registered nurse at Helena SurgiCenter, is responsible for caring for patients pre- and post-operation.

During a recent shift, Anderson was tending to a patient about to undergo a surgical procedure. The man was about to receive anesthesia when Anderson noticed he was on a blood thinner and did not stop taking the medication prior to the surgery.

She notified the anesthesiologist and averted a potentially dangerous situation.

That man’s wife nominated Anderson for the nurse appreciation award.

“We are so grateful for her knowledge and quick thinking. She is the best!” the woman wrote in her nomination.

Anderson said such care and attention is critical in the pre- and post-operation settings.

“Families and patients let us into the most vulnerable parts of their lives and trust us to take care of them,” she said.

The work appealed to Anderson at an early age. As a high school student, she worked as a veterinarian technician and knew then that she wanted to work in the medical field.

“It’s challenging,” she said. “You have to think on your feet, and things are changing every day. Not a day goes by that I’m not evolving and growing.”

While Anderson’s individual efforts have drawn the attention of her peers, she said it is the entire staff working as one team that allows her to succeed.

“We couldn’t do what we do without each other,” she said.

That team mentality carries over into her family life as well. Anderson helps to raise her step children and six “doggos,” which she said count as her children too.

“My family, they know that’s the nature of what I do,” she said, referring to days when she has to work later than expected. “They’re incredibly supportive. They’re flexible and adaptive too.”

Helena SurgiCenter Clinical Director Debbie Esposito said Anderson is more than deserving of the recognition.

“She is an exceptional nurse,” Esposito said. “I could tell from the moment we hired her that she was a good choice. It’s just been a pleasure working with her.”

When asked what the award means to her, Anderson said she does not normally enjoy the spotlight.

“Honestly, I don’t like recognition,” she said. “But it’s incredibly humbling and a very kind thing…”

“It’s challenging, you have to think on your feet, and things are changing every day. Not a day goes by that I’m not evolving and growing.”

Jacqueline Anderson, Helena SurgiCenter

A Career in Nursing Starts Right in Your Backyard

Why Helena College?

• Helena College’s RN program is the #1 two-year program in Montana, as ranked by RegisteredNursing.org, a nursing advocacy organization.
• NCLEX pass rate: 93%
• Retention/Completion rate: 100%
• Job placement rate (within 6 months of graduation): 100%
• The RN program is currently accredited by ACEN (Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing) until Spring 2024.

Applications are accepted for the RN program in April and November of every year. The LPN program accepts applications each November for a spring semester start.

For more information, please call 406.447.6985 or visit www.helenacollege.edu
Kat Ballenger was a psychiatric nurse at Shodair Children’s Hospital for nearly three years.

She first came to Montana as a travel nurse and enjoyed the Helena area. That coupled with her love for working with children made her decide to stay for several years.

“I loved working with the children at Shodair. You learn something new from them every day,” Ballenger said. “I wish I didn’t have to leave.”

According to Ballenger, she liked Montana but loved the kids she worked with. She first decided to travel as a nurse after injuring her knee while working in a Texas emergency room. She would go on to travel from her home in San Angelo, Texas to Amarillo, Texas. She would then go on to spend time in Sioux Falls, South Dakota and then Helena.

Ballenger said her daughter was mauled by a dog at the age of 4 and Ballenger enjoyed the work that went into taking care of her. Ballenger decided then that she wanted to learn how to take care of people. Over time she found her way into psych nursing, which was her favorite kind of nursing. According to Ballenger, the most important characteristic of a good nurse is having compassion and empathy.

“You have to want to help people,” Ballenger said.

Ballenger believes that psych nursing takes even more empathy and compassion than other kinds of nursing she has done in the past. Ballenger said she even took a pay cut to keep working with the kids at Shodair.

“The drive to change someone’s life,” Ballenger said. “That is where nursing should start.”

However, being a psych nurse isn’t an easy job. She said the work can be emotionally draining, especially during the time of COVID-19.

“You’re often the sole person these kids have,” Ballenger said. “Sometimes you just have one person that appreciates you for it, and that makes it all OK.”

Ballenger said that seeing the difference she has made in the life of her patients is what keeps her going as a nurse. She enjoys giving them a listening ear, building a community with them and helping patients progress.

Ballenger has since moved back to San Angelo, Texas to be closer to her family as she goes through a second battle with cancer.

“Kat is one of the most knowledgeable and compassionate nurses I have met. I have had the honor of working with her for over a year now and I haven’t met anyone that loves teaching other people more than she does,” Casee Conant wrote in her nomination for the nurse appreciation award. “She is a mentor to many and leads her staff to success everyday.”
WE LOVE OUR NURSES.

Amy David • John Brewer
• Alicia Galahan • Abe Christianson • Allison Maricich • Amy Harrison
• Andrew Schneller • Angie Johnson • Anna Sacry • Brittany Girolami
• Caitlyn Patera • Cindy Farr
• Cole Brilz • Cynthia Asbury
• Deianeira Hill • Elize Cline
• Evan Thompson • Hailey Seedall
• Hannah Johnson • Jaime Evans
• James Harris • Jamie Bagley • Jennifer Swigart • Jen Buscher • Jennifer Walsh • Jessie Kristof • Jennifer Hawkins • Jessica Lindsay
• Jordyn Rollins • Katie Hanson • Katie Waits • Kathleen Wilkins • Katie Lee
• Kelli Robinson • Kendra Lloyd • Kirk Fuzesy
• Kristie Noonan • Kristin Steinke • Laura Rear • Lisa Marcille
• Makenzie Chamberlin • Maggie Phillips • Mary Hall • Matthew Grigsby
• Megan Moran • Megan Cady • Meghan Erickson • Michael Sanders • Michelle Herron • Mikel Allen • Natalie Tocas • Nikki Larue
• Paula Strand • Phillis Asiata • Rehanna Neace • Russ Biddle • Sara Stoeckel
• Shane Gabriel • Sheri Onstott • Tabitha Cole • Terri Sanchez • Tonya Dehaven
• Tracy Horton • Trevor Greene
• Willow Sheehan

They are healthcare with heart.
Thank you for all you do.
Sarah Allen said she always knew she wanted to do something in health care and when her business degree didn’t get her where she wanted to go, she went back to school and studied to become a nurse.

“I haven’t looked back since,” she said.

Allen came to the Montana VA Health Care System at Fort Harrison as a licensed practical nurse and said she was “lucky” to get her clinical rotations completed there as a student. She was with a family member who came to the VA for treatment, and the care that relative received left an impression and “solidified” her decision to come there to work.

That family member was her father, Allen said, adding the care he received was “phenomenal.”

“They kept me very much in the loop and took care of my dad and all of the staff was fantastic,” she said. “I do my best to try and personify that every day.”

Being a nurse and working at the Montana VA were both good fits.

“First and foremost, I absolutely love the veterans,” Allen, whose husband Chris is a combat veteran, said, adding she briefly worked out in the community for four years.

“The only time I had pure joy in my job is when I worked with the veterans,” she said. “That is where is my niche is — to work with these ladies and gentlemen who have served and be able to give back to them.”

“This is where I do well,” Allen said. “It’s an amazing profession.”

Her nomination for the nurse appreciation award supports that claim.

“Sarah has worked in many fields of nursing, from pediatrics, home health, family medicine, outpatient, medical/surgical, and most recently serving our veterans as a nurse at Fort Harrison VA center,” Carol Huston wrote in the nomination. It notes she recently volunteered to participate in many COVID-19 vaccination clinics across the state.

“This has helped make the vaccine available to veterans, especially in our rural communities and facilitate the roll-out of the vaccine. This has meant early mornings, long days, and hundreds of miles, and yet when asked about it she will tell you she is so honored to be able to provide this service for those who served,” the nomination states. “She is compassionate and caring, always putting her patient’s needs first.”

Sarah Allen

She notes there are so many opportunities as a registered nurse.

Allen, 37, is a clinical care coordinator for the sobriety wellness center in the residential rehabilitation program.

Allen said she does not know if any of her three daughters will follow in her footsteps.

Her 2-year-old thinks it’s cool to put on a stethoscope and listen to things.

The middle daughter sometimes thinks of becoming a doctor or a nurse.

And the oldest daughter has seen on TV shows the intensity and heartbreak of the medical profession.

Allen said she would encourage those who consider such a profession to approach it with a realistic viewpoint.

“Like all professions, nursing is a passion,” she said. “It is something you would not pick up mildly.”

As for the VA, Allen she plans to hang around for quite a while.

“I am not leaving until retirement,” she said.

Assistant editor Phil Drake can be reached at 406-231-9021.
Chris Duncan

Chris Duncan said she was drawn to nursing not only by the science of medicine, but also by the art of working with people.

“I have many family members that are nurses, but I just loved the idea of science and art, and I think that’s what nursing is about,” she said.

Duncan is originally from Livingston and earned her nursing degree from Carroll College, where both of her parents went to school.

She stayed in Helena because of its abundant outdoor recreation opportunities and because of St. Peter’s Health, which is where she has spent all 28 years of her nursing career. She spent 21 years of that time in the emergency room and now works in urgent care, which was open only to COVID-19 patients for a time.

“St. Peter’s has been great to me, and all the people I have worked with have really been a blessing in my life,” she said.

Duncan has also volunteered at the drive-through COVID-19 vaccination clinics held at the Lewis and Clark County Fairgrounds, where she has provided hundreds of injections.

“She also brings cheer to her fellow workers with her positive attitude and humor, which is important in their sometimes-taxing line of work,” her sister Pat Sanders wrote in her nomination for the nurse appreciation award. “She frequently steps in to cover shifts or partial shifts when co-workers or her supervisors are in need.”

Her lifesaving efforts and cheerful disposition have not gone unnoticed in the community, as Sanders said it’s not uncommon for people to approach Duncan in public to say thanks for the care she provided to them or a loved one.

And Duncan seems to get just as much joy out of her relationships with her patients.

“If you want to be helping people, you will love your job,” she said.

Her supervisor Rhonda Hinrichs, practice administrator of primary care and urgent care at St. Peter’s, said Duncan is the type of nurse others aspire to be.

“I have been told this very statement by two young nurses in the past couple of months!” Hinrichs said in an email. “Chris walks the walk and does right by our patients, her coworkers, and our organization. I could not be more pleased to write these comments about this most awesome RN!”

Editor Jesse Chaney can be reached at 406-447-4074.

SAFER AT HOME

Stairlifts • Elevators • Wheelchair Lifts

Access Outfitters
Family Owned and Operated
Licensed and Insured
Montana Registered Contractor
We are based in Helena

406-241-6834 (Cell)
406-241-1668 (Office)
accoutfitters@gmail.com
Rhonda Hinrichs has served as the practice administrator for primary care and urgent care at St. Peter’s Health for the past decade.

Hinrichs started her career in nursing nearly 30 years ago in 1987 in Seattle, Washington on a gynecology and oncology floor. She spent approximately two years there before moving back to Montana and working in intensive care in Billings. She would then work as a cardiology coordinator in Billings before moving to Helena in 2001.

That year, Hinrichs started part-time in St. Peter’s ICU. She would go on to work in the “cath lab” office part-time in 2003. Later, Hinrichs was asked if she wanted to get into a management position. She interviewed for her current job but spent two years turning it down before changing her mind.

According to Hinrichs, the choice to become a nurse was one of circumstance.

“I remember I was trying to decide between nursing and social work,” Hinrichs said. “I think we are both cut from the same cloth.”

Hinrichs said she had planned to go to college in Moorhead, Minnesota for social work. The recruiter would keep calling her asking if she was ready to enroll. However, Hinrichs wasn’t ready to move away from her friends and family in Montana, so she opted to attend nursing school at Montana State University.

Her decision to pursue nursing was based on her desire to help others.

“I like to help people. I also like to problem solve and be resourceful,” Hinrichs said. “I get angry patients sometimes and it is my job to win them over and make them feel heard.”

It’s this empathetic bedside manner and the ability to listen that make a good nurse in Hinrichs’ eyes. Hinrichs said she knows how to be empathetic but also knows how to keep her boundaries and not become distraught at the loss of a patient. She described herself as practical and understanding the circle of life.

Listening is the most important skill a nurse can exercise, according to Hinrichs. This is applicable to both a nurse’s bedside manner and in a management position, said Hinrichs.

“You could miss medical signs if you don’t listen,” Hinrichs said.

Being in management, the hardest part of the job to Hinrichs is disciplining her employees. Hinrichs said it can be hard knowing you impact their livelihood. She said the day this becomes easy for her will be the day she shouldn’t do it anymore.

The most rewarding part of the job for Hinrichs is the people she gets to work with every day. She said her employees are her family and they treat each other as such. After 10 years in her position, Hinrichs knows the people she works with well.

“Rhonda is a strong leader with a great sense of community responsibility. She is very dedicated and selfless,” Krystal Jerome wrote in her nomination for the nurse appreciation award. “When the pandemic hit, the safety of others came first. She made sure we were educated on the latest COVID facts and had what we needed to work safely. She also made sure our patients were cared for as quickly as possible.”
Shari Peterson has known she wanted to be a nurse since she was in elementary school.

On her first day of third grade, she completed an assignment that included a question about what she wanted to be when she grew up.

"Back in third grade I said ‘a nurse,’ and I never looked back," she said.

Peterson has spent all 33 years of her nursing career at St. Peter’s Health, where she works on the medical floor providing care for adults who have suffered heart attacks, strokes and a variety of other health issues.

“My aim is to just look at the whole patient, not just their physical struggles. Many of them have emotional and mental and spiritual struggles coming in," she said. “I like to hear their stories. I like to connect..."
Carissa Petty is a nurse on the medical floor of St. Peter’s Health.

Petty graduated from Carroll College in 2016 and has worked at St. Peter’s ever since then. After five years with the hospital, Petty says she wouldn’t change it for the world.

According to Petty, she has been interested in nursing ever since high school. Her high school offered a certified nursing assistant course, and after completing that she worked as a CNA for four years.

“I admired the Registered Nurses I worked under so much,” Petty said. “And I remember thinking ‘I Don’t know how they do all of that, I could never be that amazing.’ It was those same nurses who convinced me otherwise. They were the reason I decided to pursue nursing as a career.”

Petty said she believes having empathy is the most important aspect of being a good nurse. She said it can be difficult to put yourself in another person’s shoes in order to understand what they’re going through. Petty said that on her hardest days as a nurse, empathizing with her patients is what gets her through the day.

“Nobody wants to be sick,” Petty said. “And it’s not my job to judge why they are in the hospital, but rather, what I can do to help them stay out, regardless of the path that led them to illness. Learning to be empathetic has enabled me to care for others on a level that would not be possible otherwise.”

The most challenging part of being a nurse is watching people hurt, according to Petty. She said there are many different kinds of pain and nurses see them all.

“As nurses, we see people at their worst,” she said. “And it is hard to watch people hurt as we help them navigate through chronic illness, acute injuries, end of life, etc.”

However, Petty said working as a nurse is a rewarding job. The most rewarding part is the ability to serve her community.

“Helena is my home, and I love knowing that every shift I work, I am hopefully making a positive impact on where I live,” she said.

In her nomination for the nurse appreciation award, Cathy Frohberg praised Petty’s compassionate care.

“The pandemic ushered in a tidal wave of unknowns, however, Carissa forded her way through these unknowns to continually provide extraordinary care to patients,” her nomination says. “Carissa’s positive relationships with her fellow nurses on the medical floor/ICU helped facilitate the ongoing mission of St. Peter’s Health. Even with the ongoing pandemic, Carissa continued to provide care not only for her patients but her family as well.”
Nurses are always on the front lines of health care.

But with COVID-19 – there isn’t a single community in Montana that would have made it through the pandemic without nurses. Thank you to every nurse – for all you do every day, and for all you have done to help us navigate this crisis.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Montana. With you. For you.

Through It All®

bcbsmt.com
For some people, it seems they were born to do the jobs they end up with in life — the detective with a fierce sense of justice, an accountant with blazing mental math skills.

Diane Olsen, a licensed practical nurse at Women’s Health Care Center, is no different. Her colleagues and family say she is selfless and has a high level of compassion for those around her.

“She treats patients with the same level of care that she does her family, which shows in the relationships that she has built,” Kyndra Cozzie wrote in her nomination for the nurse appreciation award. “She is the kind of nurse that anyone would wish for, in good times or bad.”

A Helena native, Olsen has worked as a nurse in her beloved hometown for more than 25 years.

“Being a girl from Helena, it means a lot to me to make an impact,” she said. “I love being a nurse in this community. We have some wonderful people.”

The job also requires a substantial amount of communication.

“If someone needs to speak to me, I stop, turn around and listen no matter what it is or how busy I am,” she said. “Communication is key. That’s the biggest thing.”

Olsen described the field of obstetrics and gynecology as one that comes with “all kinds of emotions,” the joy and the pain.

“It’s pretty intense there, and I love it,” she said. “It’s amazing to know you have impacted someone’s life. When you see that, it feels amazing.”

Cozzie summed up her compassion nicely in her nomination letter.

“Diane exemplifies compassion in every way, never wavering from an exceptional level of professionalism and empathy,” the nomination letter reads. “She naturally exudes warmth and kindness that immediately makes you feel at ease. She is selfless and does not require recognition, even though she deserves it.”

Olsen has worked at Women’s Health Care Center for about eight years. She said working under Certified Nurse Midwife Carol Kolar during that time has been an invaluable experience.

“I’ve learned so much from (Kolar),” Olsen said. “I’m just really blessed to have worked with her over the years.”

One of the more important lessons she has gleaned from her years as a nurse is self-confidence.

“I think that I can be pretty calm when I need to,” Olsen said. “I can be strong. I’ve learned that.”

She said that while she does not always enjoy the limelight, she is “very honored” to receive the recognition for her care.

“I never imagined I’d be nominated for anything,” she said. “I love what I do, and I’m really appreciative of being picked.”
Destiny Boyd was in a motorcycle accident when she was 18 and received “fantastic care” from some nurses.

And she said she received some care that wasn’t so great.

She decided to become a nurse and be the kind who provided exceptional service and helped people in what can be their most dire time.

It’s that dedication that got Boyd, who works as a clinical supervisor at Frontier Home Health and Hospice, nominated for a nurse appreciation award.

“Isn’t that cool?” she said, when asked about an award, giving much of the credit to the nurses she supervises.

“This whole team … makes me love to be a leader,” the 41-year-old Boyd said. “They make my job easy, it’s not me.”

But she does admit her children now think their “mom is so cool.”

Boyd’s coworkers apparently think the same thing.

“Destiny is lively and always presents with a fun, positive attitude when in the office, that at times can be dealing with some difficult situations. She keeps a level head and upbeat spirit,” Jalissa Hartford wrote in her nomination. “Destiny promotes our office mantra from our first day of employment to ‘Do the Right Thing!’”

“Destiny is the first one to arrive and the last one to leave our office each day,” the nomination said. “She has each employee’s client updates, new clients added to their case load and the specifics of their needs ready when we all begin our work day.”

“Destiny is indeed an extraordinary nurse.”

Frontier Home Health and Hospice provides skilled services for people who cannot leave their house for care. Boyd said it’s a tough, but rewarding job.

“In order to work in this field … it has to be a calling,” Boyd said. “Not everyone can deal with death and dying daily and find beauty in it. There can be beauty in death.”

She talks about the client who insisted she share a bacon, lettuce and tomato sandwich with him. Although rules frown on nurses eating, he insisted and she would take it anyway. She later attended his funeral and family members told stories about how his biggest joy in life was to provide a meal for somebody.

“You do get close to these people, you have to,” she said. “They say in nursing you are to have boundaries, and you do, but if you don’t you can’t be a good clinician.”

She plans to remain a nurse.

“I always say I will retire with Frontier,” she said.

Assistant editor Phil Drake can be reached at 406-231-9021.
Lori McCurdy said that as a child, science was the class where she performed the best.

“Well, that and PE.

But she always enjoyed learning about the intricacies of the human body. And she liked to take care of people and make a difference in their lives.

And so she became a nurse.

“It was an obvious career choice,” she said.

Coworkers agree.

“Lori leaves a lasting impression on anyone who has ever met her or knows her,” Jerry Hamlin wrote in her nomination for the nurse appreciation award. “She is a friend to everyone she meets. She has been an exceptional Registered Nurse in the Helena community for close to 25 years.”

“Her skills are unmatched,” the nomination states. “She treats every one of her patients with the utmost care and compassion, easing patient’s anxiety simply by carrying on a friendly conversation.”

Her nomination notes that she started her career at the St. Peter’s ICU and then transitioned to the ICU at the VA hospital, and she has been a registered nurse for the Montana VA Health Care System for 22 years.

It also says she abruptly changed her schedule to help aide in the recent COVID-19 crisis, and she has worked in the ER, ICU, COVID medical unit and medical floors.

“She transitioned into these areas with ease and patients were lucky to have her taking care of them,” it states.

McCurdy said there was nothing specific that drew her to the VA, but said it is a privilege to be there, where veterans receive medical care.

“The fact that I can be of help to them is a huge blessing,” she said. “I have a lot of respect for our service men and women and I am grateful I can work with them.”

“I like meeting new people every day,” she said, adding she enjoys meeting new veterans and hearing about their experiences. And she likes her colleagues.

“I work with great, great nurses,” McCurdy said, adding there are four who work in her department.

“We are all good friends and we work like a family,” she said. McCurdy noted being nominated for the nurse appreciation award was both “an honor and humbling.”

MCCURDY works in the pre-op surgical area and the recovery room, where she helps patients get to surgery, stabilizes them and then helps them get discharged.

“The veterans are great,” McCurdy, who lives in East Helena with husband Russ, said. “A lot of the veterans tell stories of their experiences. I am glad to listen to their stories and lend a listening ear.”

McCurdy has a niece who is a senior at Capital High School and wants to go into nursing. A nephew wants to be a nurse as well.

“I think the influence is a little bit there,” she said, adding she often tells nursing stories.

And as a profession, she notes that nursing is “very rewarding.”

During this April 20 interview, McCurdy said she would be turning 50 within a few days. But she has no plans of slowing down soon.

“Lord willing, I will be doing this another 10-15 years,” she said.

Assistant editor Phil Drake can be reached at 406-231-9021.
Peterson continued from Page 9

with them that way and show them loving kindness and show them somebody cares.”

Peterson said the pandemic has added to the challenges of her job, especially during times when the hospital had high numbers of COVID-19 patients.

One of those patients said he received care from many great nurses during the nine days he spent at that hospital after contracting the disease, but Peterson went above and beyond.

“However, one nurse, in particular, stood out to me because she displayed unparalleled professionalism, efficiency, enthusiasm and comfort in some of my worst moments. This nurse was Shari Peterson,” Jerry Hamlin wrote in her nomination for the nurse appreciation award. “She was always cheerful, fun and positive when she came into my room and my spirits were always lifted after her visits. She made me feel like she felt my pain, she always treated me with respect and she always asked what she could do to make me more comfortable. She even came to check on me after working a grueling 12 hour shift, on her own time!”

Peterson attended Clancy School and Jefferson High School before earning her nursing degree at Fairview Deaconess Hospital School of Nursing in Minneapolis and returning to the Helena area to work at St. Peter’s.

“I just love Montana,” she said. “Montana’s in my blood, and my family is here.”

According to her supervisor Deborah Fry, director of the medical floor at St. Peter’s Health, the Helena area is lucky to have her.

“Shari is one of a kind and many times she is the glue that holds us together. Her experience and knowledge ensures that every patient on the unit is going to receive the very best care,” Fry said. “Shari is diligent in ensuring that all of her patients’ needs are being met and she won’t stop until she knows that she has made a difference for them and their families. Shari’s compassion and kindness isn’t just for her patients, but extends to her co-workers as well.”

Editor Jesse Chaney can be reached at 406-447-4074, or find him on Twitter: @IR_JesseChaney.

“I just love Montana. Montana’s in my blood, and my family is here.”

Shari Peterson, St. Peter’s Health
A COMMITMENT TO CARE WORTH CELEBRATING

Congratulations to the St. Peter’s Health team members recognized this year as Helena’s top nurses.

CHRIS DUNCAN, RNC
Chris has spent her entire 28 year career as a nurse at St. Peter’s and now works at the Urgent Care clinic at the Regional Medical Center. Her favorite thing about nursing is all of the people it has brought into her life.

CARISSA PETTY, RNC, BSN
Carissa works in St. Peter’s Medical and Advanced Medical units. She loves coming to work every shift knowing that she has the opportunity to make a positive impact on someone’s life.

RHONDA HINRICHS, BSN, RN
Rhonda has been at St. Peter’s for almost 20 years and is now the Medical Group’s Practice Administrator for Primary Care and Urgent Care. She loves nursing because it gives her the feeling of having made a difference in people’s lives.

SHARI PETERSON, RNC
Shari’s entire 33 year nursing career has been spent caring for patients on the St. Peter’s Medical Unit. Building relationships with patients is her favorite thing about nursing because connecting with patients on multiple levels helps ensure they are wholly cared for.

We can never say thank you enough to all St. Peter’s nurses who work every day to provide the highest quality care to our families, neighbors and friends.