

Coastal nurses honored through MCHFoundation Charlene McAllister Excellence in Nursing Award 2021

MCHFoundation announces the winners to highlight and promote local expertise and dedication.

Fort Bragg, CA---August 31, 2021—The Mendocino Coast Healthcare Foundation is proud to announce the inaugural winner of the Charlene McAllister Excellence in Nursing Award, Ellen Lara of Sherwood Oaks Health Center.

Excellence in Nursing Special Recognitions were also awarded to Mark Bellm RN, Sherwood Oaks Health Center; Maria Bermudez LVN, Mendocino Coast Clinics; Linnea Matthews NP, Mendocino Coast Clinics; and Kelly Hendricks RN, Adventist Health Mendocino Coast.

The Excellence in Nursing awardees demonstrate expertise in their professional practice, work to positively impact patient outcomes and experience, foster respect among their peers, and embody nursing ethics in their work.

MCHFoundation is proud to recognize Ellen Lara for her exceptional patient care and leadership during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. After an early outbreak of COVID-19 at Sherwood Oaks, Ellen took decisive action, playing a critical role in training staff on safety protocol, interfacing with CPDH Infection Control, and coordinating widespread testing and vaccination for residents. Ellen's leadership earned the admiration of team members and the California Department of Public Health.

Ellen's supervisor, Victoria Joy LVN DSD, highlights Ellen's compassionate patient care, "Ellen Lara is an exemplary role model for all those who work with her. She is tireless in promoting the rights and dignity of our elder generations who seek care in a skilled nursing environment. She bends to the tune of singing and laughter, as they are often the medicine that brings the most peace."

Victoria described Ellen Lara's dedication, "She is a fierce advocate and aligns herself daily as a protector and voice for those too ill to speak for themselves. She reaches out to connect with the residents and families and is amazing in her ability to listen and reflect their concerns."

The Mendocino Coast Healthcare Foundation planned to present the Charlene McAllister Excellence in Nursing Awards during the Winesong 2021 Dahlia Garden event. Because of the necessary decision to postpone in-person gatherings, the awards will instead be delivered individually, in accordance with current COVID safety protocol.

MCHFoundation Executive Director Mary Kate McKenna CFRE explained, "While we will miss the opportunity to celebrate coastal nurses with our dearest friends, volunteers, and donors, MCHFoundation could not be more humbled by the awardees. There has never been a more important time to express our appreciation for healthcare staff who daily put themselves on the line for our community. I have never felt more honored to have a role in supporting the

coastal healthcare system and looking for opportunities to provide celebration, respite, and relief."

The namesake of the Annual Excellence in Nursing Award is MCHFoundation Vice President and lifelong nurse, Charlene McAllister. Charlene worked as a nurse for over 40 years, moving to the Mendocino coast in 1982 to work as Director of Nursing Services at the Mendocino Coast District Hospital.

Charlene has been involved with the Mendocino Coast Healthcare Foundation, formerly the Mendocino Coast Hospital Foundation, since 1987. She remains an active volunteer with a rich history of contributions to health and wellness. MCHFoundation is pleased to recognize Charlene's many years of service, and dedication to the Foundation's mission, through this award.

The Charlene McAllister Award is a project of the Mendocino Coast Healthcare Foundation Excellence in Nursing Initiative to support the recruitment and retention of skilled nurses on the Mendocino coast. The Excellence in Nursing Initiative provides critical funds to support our community's current and future healthcare providers.

The Excellence in Nursing Initiative includes a scholarship campaign that provides funds for the continued education of working coastal nurses, college students working toward their nursing degree, and high school students considering a healthcare career. The Excellence in Nursing Initiative includes a component to work directly with our health and wellness partners to address the immediate needs of the local nursing community, including the housing and childcare issues.

The Mendocino Coast Healthcare Foundation supports organizations that care for the health and wellness of the Mendocino coastal communities. To learn more about MCHFoundation and its mission, visit their website at www.MCHFoundation.org. To support the Excellence in Nursing Initiative with a donation, reach out directly to MCHFoundation at (707) 961-4671 or use the online donation form on their website.

####