

# Connecting Educating Inspiring

53<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL EDUCATIONAL MEETING



Virtual Meeting • April 17–20, 2021

## 2021 Rising Star Award

**Kara E. Zimcosky, BSN RN CNRN**

**Nominated by Brandon Hostler**



This nominee has only been a nurse for two years but her impact on neuroscience patients, staff members, and our hospital has been profound. She impressed her colleagues on day one and she has only improved. The nominee quickly learned the complexity and subtleties of neuroscience nursing and her growth has been prodigious. She is regularly praised by her peers, recognized by her supervisors, and appreciated by her patients.

This nominee is committed to providing the highest level of care to her patients every shift. She works tirelessly to meet their needs and has wonderful customer service skills. Her kindness and empathy come through in every interaction. With confused and

difficult patients, she is patient and often able to calm and reassure them even when others have failed. The nominee is the consummate professional who does everything well and does everything right. She is never rattled and has nerves of steel. She exudes confidence and her poise puts others at ease. The nominee is thorough and does not miss anything. She notices neurologic changes early and follows through appropriately. She is a skilled clinician who performs all interventions in accordance with best practice guidelines.

The nominee is supremely intelligent and learns very quickly. Becoming CNRN certified this year, demonstrates her in-depth knowledge of neuroscience and the neuroscience patient. Even though she had only been a nurse for 1 ½ years, she began mentoring new nurses. Mentoring new nurses gave her the opportunity to share her knowledge and demonstrate her superb teaching abilities. Her mentees have all commented on how much they have learned from her and how much they respect her. If a new nurse is struggling, she is reassuring, patient, and supportive. She provides timely feedback and follows them even after orientation to ensure their success. Even nurses she did not mentor come to her with questions and concerns and they value her input. With every question, she is able to provide evidence-based information to both the new nurse and experienced nurse. The nominee continues to seek ways to expand her knowledge and she started Nurse Practitioner School this fall.

Besides being a mentor and leader, she has contributed to her team by becoming a “Blood Culture Champion”. When we launched a campaign to reduce the Blood Culture Contamination rates on our unit, she was chosen for her exception skill, her ability to communicate, and the high level of respect she garners amongst the other staff members. With the efforts of our nominee and other champions, we have cut our Blood Culture Contaminations in half.

The nominee has also started to think beyond our unit and is committed to neuroscience nursing as a whole. She has become an active member of her local AANN chapter and she is an integral part of their success. She comes to meetings faithfully, provides valuable feedback, and encourages other nurses to come with her. The nominee wrote a brilliant abstract and will be presenting her work at the 53rd Annual AANN National Conference. Her work on MELAS will help create awareness about a rare disease that many neuroscience nurses are not aware of.

To call this nominee a rising star is a bit of an understatement. She is already an excellent clinician, a caring healthcare provider, a respected leader, wise mentor, and someone who contributes to the growth of neuroscience nursing.