

Sample Package – Robert Salter Humanitarian Award Nomination with a Letter of Support

This form should be replicated/copied on computer by the nominator. The numbering and heading system shown herein should be followed:

Name of Person Being Nominated: **Carly Mutch**
Program/Department/Division: Rehabilitation Services (Occupational Therapist)
Mailing Address: 555 University Avenue, Toronto, ON
Postal Code: M5G 1X8
Telephone No: 416-813-2153
Email: carly.mutch@sickkids.ca

Nominated by:

1. Name:

SickKids Staff Member Patient Family Member
Program/Department/Division: General Pediatrics
Mailing Address: 555 University Avenue, Toronto, ON
Postal Code: M5G 1X8
Telephone No: 416-813-4943
Email: Kathy.netten@sickkids.ca

2. Name:

SickKids Staff Member Patient Family Member
Program/Department/Division: General Pediatrics
Mailing Address: 555 University Avenue, Toronto, ON
Postal Code: M5G 1X8
Telephone No: 416-813-5500
Email: Jeremy.friedman@sickkids.ca

Name of Program Director or Department/Division Head that supports this nomination:

Name: Dr. J. Friedman
Position at SickKids: Head, Division of Paediatric Medicine

Please answer the following questions using as many examples as possible. Candidates about whom the Selection Committee has little information will be disadvantaged. Staff members or teams will have demonstrated some or all of the values listed in the questions below. The nomination should provide clear examples of how the individual or team has consistently demonstrated these qualities in an exceptional manner.

1. How long and in what capacity have you known the Nominee?

It is with great honour that the Division of Pediatric Medicine nominates a truly exceptional member of our team, Ms. Carly Mutch for the Robert Salter Humanitarian Award. Carly has been employed as an Occupational Therapist at SickKids for eight years. She exemplifies the qualities of integrity, collaboration, excellence, compassion and humanitarianism. We hope that we can adequately describe the special qualities that Carly brings to her work with infants, children, families and to the staff that are fortunate to work with her everyday.

2. Please give some examples of how the Nominee provided exceptional care and attention to families while working at SickKids?

(These values include the ability to understand, respect and support the pivotal role parents play in the lives of their children.)

Although Carly is responsible for children in the areas of Critical Care and Inpatient Pediatric Medicine she is often found in the Complex Care Clinic, Failure to Thrive Clinic, and Outpatient Pediatric Medicine Clinic where she sees children as a “favour” to staff. Carly is here early in the morning and she is often of the last people to go home in the evening. Carly works with pediatricians, Social Workers, dieticians, Child Life Specialists, Physiotherapists, Nurses, advanced Practice Nurses, Pharmacists, Lactation Consultants, Palliative and Bereavement Care, Chaplaincy, Community Care Access Centre Coordinators and with myriad professionals in the community.

As Debbie Stone, Lactation Consultant comments “although we all practice family centred care, Carly goes out of her way to assist mother/infant pairs” Carly “always shows care, compassion and understanding in working with her colleagues to support the establishment of breastfeeding or strategies that will include the mother to help achieve the best compromise for the mother/infant pair.” Debbie Stone described a situation in which Carly was working with a hospitalized infant to establish oral feeds. Carly contacted Debbie to express concern that the infant’s mother was showing signs of depression over the infant’s continual refusal of oral feedings. Carly consulted with Debbie to see if breastfeeding could be discussed and possibly be reestablished as the loss of nurturing through breastfeeding was very disappointing for the mother.

Joyce Touw, another Lactation Consultant, describes Carly as a “respectful listener for professionals and patients”; and she notes that Carly is “kind and gentle in her approach to families but also ensures a practical feeding plan for the infant and family.” When approached about this nomination process, Joyce shared that she had thought of identifying Carly for the Robert Salter Humanitarian Award last year because “as a fellow professional [she] feels very comfortable working with [Carly] and confident in her care.”

- 3. Demonstrate how the Nominee understands the social, emotional and developmental impact of illness and hospitalization on the child and family.
(These values include providing care that is developmentally appropriate, psychosocially sound, culturally sensitive and family-centered.)**

Valerie Renn, registered Dietitian, echoes the sentiments of the Lactation Consultants remarking that Carly “is always willing and able to provide her expertise to even the most complicated cases and always considers the family and their social history in her assessment.” Val notes that Carly has “the ability to support and help calm families who may otherwise be under a lot of stress and anxiety due to the medical complexity of their child. Her approach is not limited to the physical nature of the disease but focuses on the entire patient, family, environment, and general well being.” Val has worked with Carly for six years. She stresses that Carly develops plans that encompass all aspects of the child’s care. To this end Carly identifies the need for additional services and involves the necessary members of the care team. Carly will often contact Dietetics, Social Work, Child Life etc. to ensure the child and family’s needs are being appropriately met.

- 4. How does the individual collaborate and communicate meaningfully with patients and families?
(These values include the ability to recognize and respect the individuality of each patient and his/her unique and changing needs and to support the autonomy of patients and families, as well as respect and support the unique coping methods of each child and family.)**

Carly allows parents to be the experts caring for their child while she provides consultation and strategies to help parents maximize their child’s abilities. Carly seeks input from key team members to address the questions parents have about their child and she makes every family feel that their issues are important, unique and deserve attention.

We have chosen one case in particular to illustrate some of Carly’s remarkable compassion, dedication, commitment to children and families, and her ability to mobilize large numbers of people with grace. An infant with complex medical issues was admitted to General Pediatrics. Carly tried to establish oral feeds and visited the child several times per day. At times the parents were present, at times parents were absent. Carly quickly identified that the child was unsafe to orally feed due to risk of aspiration. Carly explained the reasoning to the child’s parents and she spent a great deal of time supporting the family around this loss. Carly stressed that although the child could not feed in the present, she would continue to work with the child and assess the child’s swallow so that feeds could be established in the future if there was improvement. Carly also assessed the child’s development and she designed a series of activities for the parents to follow. Carly typically takes pictures of children for these hospital and home programs. She will work tirelessly to obtain pictures in which the child is looking their best – sometimes this is a time consuming and challenging endeavour. The pictures help parents learn the exercises even if English is not their first language. Also, the pictures serve as a memory of the child’s time in hospital and sometimes these pictures provide a photographic legacy when children succumb to their underlying life-limiting condition. This particular child was eventually discharged home with a Nasogastric tube. Six weeks after discharge, Carly was paged by the child’s father who reported that the baby looked unwell and he asked Carly to cancel a clinic appointment scheduled that day. Carly obtained detailed

information about the child's condition and advised the family to come to the Emergency Department or to see their community pediatrician. After multiple pages, the father explained that the child did not have a community Pediatrician. Carly helped the family problem solve the situation – a nurse from the Community Care Access Centre went to the home to assess the child. Once Carly learned that there was no community Pediatrician, she contacted a staff Pediatrician at SickKids. She also involved Social Work as the family did not know how to obtain Nasogastric supplies and they were confused about other aspects of their child's situation. Carly re-involved the Dietician as the baby was having trouble with weight gain. To ensure continuity of care, Carly arranged for the members from Pediatric Medicine to see the family during an outpatient clinic visit in a different program. A community Pediatrician was found; resources were reassessed and developed; a feeding plan was redesigned; and Carly helped the family navigate a complex hospital environment. Language and cultural issues were very challenging. Carly has continued to advocate for the best interests of this infant and these parents as they baby has become palliative. Carly typically attends funerals or visitations to pay her respects to the family and share her memories of their child. She also reaches out to team members to allow them to participate in sending a card of condolence. Carly provides this type of care to all of her patients and families.

5. *What differentiates this individual apart from other staff in terms of acting above and beyond what is expected of them?*

Dr. Adam Rapoport was very enthusiastic when approached about this award for Carly. He noted that Carly is committed to all aspects of care and that she “embodies interprofessional practice.” Dr. Rapoport stated that Carly recognizes the value of her role in patient care and she subsequently makes other professionals feel that they too are crucial in caring for children and families. Dr. Rapoport explained that Carly will often identify social and/or medical issues that need to be pursued by him as part of a uniquely crafted care plan. He views Carly as being proactive and he stressed that her interventions have an immediate and lasting impact on the child and family.

Carly's passion for exemplary family-centered care is contagious. Cindy Lott, Clinical Support Nurse and Flow Coordinator, agrees saying Carly “goes above and beyond the expectations of her role” working long after scheduled hours, showing genuine interest in patients and families; and communicating issues with the multidisciplinary team.” Cindy adds that Carly's dedication and compassion extend beyond the hospitalization. Carly telephones families at home to “ensure they are coping” and Carly will often see children in clinic to bridge the gap between hospital and community services.

On General Pediatrics, some parents are unable to be present at their newborn's bedside. Carly becomes the infant's primary feeder. Carly will attempt to be present during as many feeding challenges as possible. She always handles the babies gently, with a smile, and a caressing touch. Even when Carly thinks no one is watching, she talks to the infants, cradles them and has special names for each child. She recognizes the strengths and value of each baby in her care.

6. How does this individual work with other members of the team? (These values include collaborating and communicating meaningfully with all members of the interdisciplinary team.)

Carly's concern for others generalizes to all of the staff that she works with. Carly knows the names of all of her colleagues as well as some unique attribute of each team member. This is a remarkable feat in a program with numerous staff, rotating medical students, and three units. Carly is genuinely interested in the well being of her colleagues and makes everyone feel that they are special to her.

7. Has the Nominee used his or her professional experience in the Hospital to help the community? i.e. – is there anything that would be relevant to humanitarianism – for example volunteer work?

Carly's involvement with the most medically, socially, and ethically complex cases at the hospital has motivated her to begin a Master's Degree in Bioethics at the University of McGill. Carly spent one year working at the hospital during the day, travelling to Montreal on the night bus, and attending morning classes. After class, Carly returned via the night bus, came to Toronto and arrived at SickKids dedicated to the children and families in her care. Carly has now completed her course work and she is almost finished her thesis. Carly's interest in Bioethics extends beyond her degree. She has volunteered her time to participate in Bioethics lectures at the University of Toronto. Carly also organized a panel discussion about Moral Distress in Rehabilitation for Bioethics Week at SickKids.

Carly is also involved in her community. This past year for example Carly joined "Future Possibilities for Kids" which is a school-based program in which professionals are paired with children having leadership skills. The professional then coaches the child by means of weekly telephone calls and monthly activity days. The purpose of this organization is to show all children that they can contribute to their community and the world. Children in this program are between the ages of eight and twelve years. Carly herself is paired with a ten year old girl. Carly laughs as she shares stories about her experiences working with this ten-year old and the others girls that she has met. For Carly, the joy seems to be in sharing the lived experience of these children, not her own contribution. Indeed Carly is very reticent about her own gifts and capacity to make a difference. Her humility is striking.

8. Has the Nominee taught others these values in a meaningful way? If yes, please give examples.

In addition to Carly's clinical responsibilities, she volunteers to mentor Occupational Therapy Students from the University of Toronto annually. Carly ensures that she knows her students' strengths and helps them meet their learning objectives. One group of students for example was distressed about the interface between pediatrics and child welfare. Carly arranged an informal meeting with social work to address the students' questions, provide support, and explain the role of child welfare within the pediatric context.

It is with great pleasure that I provide a letter of recommendation for Carly Mutch.

I can't imagine that there are many things in life that are worse than being in the hospital with your newborn child. HSC is a renowned facility and as a patient you feel very grateful to receive excellent medical attention. However, it is a very stressful place to be. I can honestly say that there was only one visit we looked forward to each day and that was Carly Mutch. She became the highlight of our days and we looked forward to her visits each day. She was always happy and completely interested and concerned about my daughter Olivia's status.

Carly is one of the most professional health care providers I have ever encountered. She always did what she said she was going to do, even if it required her to stay into the evening, which it often did. We were unclear of our diagnosis, and Carly always provided the information she could, but never spoke about things she was not able to or knowledgeable of. We always felt she had our best interest at heart and was being truthful. She conducted herself with the utmost integrity always. Carly never dwelled on what Olivia couldn't do, but focused on the developments she had made. Even on days when we felt there was no hope, Carly could find something positive to bring to our attention that would restore our hope. We always felt better after her visits.

Carly exhibits the qualities of someone who loves their job. As one of her patients, you feel as though she has all the time in the world to spend with you to alleviate the anguish you feel. Carly is completely dedicated to improving the well being of others and she treats all those she encounters with respect and dignity. She is unbelievably compassionate and does whatever she can to improve your stay in hospital.

I first met Carly as an outpatient when she assessed my daughter's feeding issues. I had never seen someone with a natural love and comfort with babies. We spent the day at HSC and we entertained ourselves during the day and paged Carly when Olivia was ready to eat. Carly would rush down and work with us in the OT department. Not only did she work with our pediatrician to diagnosis Olivia's issues, but she taught us so much about how to work with the feeding issues. After being an inpatient for three weeks, I was able to observe how much Carly was respected by other health care professionals and how she helped other families like ours. After observing first hand how busy she was with inpatients, I often think back to that day when she cared for us as an outpatient and wonder how she could have found the time to be with us. But this is quintessential Carly. She took the time because she is empathetic and genuinely feels sorrow for those who are stricken by misfortune and she exhibits a strong desire to alleviate their suffering. When she sees a difficult situation, her first impulse is to rush to comfort or help them. I can't begin to express how much we appreciate having Carly care for Olivia. We are truly blessed to have met her.

I am more than happy to provide more detail if necessary. Please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Linda Blair

Mother of Olivia Blair, who was admitted to HSC at 5 weeks old