

Sample Package – Volunteer 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/Team Being Nominated: Sandra Lowe
Program/Department/Division: HIV Program & Infectious Diseases Program
Mailing Address: 525 University Avenue, Toronto, ON
Postal Code: M5G 2L3
Telephone No. 416-813-6166
Email: N/A

Nominated by:

1. Name:

SickKids Staff Member Patient Family Member Peer Volunteer
Program/Department/Division: All HIV Team Members & Infectious Diseases Clinic Staff
Mailing Address: 555 University Avenue, Toronto, ON
Postal Code: M5G 1X8
Telephone No: 416-813-6502
Email: robyn.salter@sickkids.ca

2. Name:

Patricia Malloy
SickKids Staff Member Patient Family Member Peer Volunteer
Program/Department/Division: Infectious Disease
Mailing Address: 555 University Avenue, Toronto, ON
Postal Code: M5G 1X8
Telephone No: 416-813-8327
Email: patricia.malloy@sickkids.ca

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

Name: Upton Allen
Position at SickKids: Chief, Division of Infectious Diseases

Please answer the following questions using as many examples as possible. Candidates about whom the Selection Committee has little information will be disadvantaged. Volunteers or teams of volunteers will have demonstrated some or all of the values listed in the questions below. The nomination must 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?

The HIV team and the Infectious Diseases clinic staff at SickKids would like to nominate our wonderful, long-term volunteer, Sandra Lowe, for the Volunteer Humanitarian Award.

Sandra has been volunteering in our out-patient clinics on Monday and Thursday mornings since 2001. She's like of the postman in that she is always in clinic regardless of the weather. But unlike the postman she delivers humour, a friendly face, and always ready to listen. Sandy creates an environment that distracts from the clinic visit. At times these distractions are so engrossing that it is difficult to get the children to come to the exam room as they would prefer to finish their project. We have to promise as does Sandy that it will be waiting for them when we finish.

Sandra has also helped the staff by organizing letters of support from the children to recognize important occasions such as the retirement, due to illness, of one of our doctors and to our other volunteer who was ill.

2. How has the Nominee provided exceptional support and attention to families? (These values include the ability to engender a caring, supportive and welcoming environment for families, as well as understanding, respect and support the pivotal role parents play in the lives of their children and support both as appropriate.)

We may have up to 25 children in our clinic space as well as their families. Sandra provides a calm, caring presence in our clinic. She gives a gentle, loving welcome to children and arranges activities according to their ages and interests. She is comfortable holding and playing with babies, play with preschoolers, organizing crafts, reading stories, arranging video games and talking with teenagers. Our clinic has a child-friendly atmosphere, giving children and their parents comfort during stressful times. When Sandra is present, children know they are important people and they love to see her. Another child-friendly action is that Sandra dresses for the season, e.g. just before Christmas, she dresses as one of Santa's elves and does holiday crafts.

Children and parents talk to Sandra and she supports them during general discussions, helping to pass the waiting time and keeping the atmosphere in the clinic supportive and more like "normal" social occasions. Social conversations are particularly important for families going through stress and for families who are new to the health care system and Canadian culture. If discussions become specific to health care, Sandra directs children and

parents to the appropriate professionals. They often confide in her and she handles these situations like any professional, validating their concerns and telling children she will help them talk with staff, if necessary.

3. How does the Nominee make the hospital experience easier for patients and their families? (These values include the ability to communicate in a supportive manner with patients and families; present a caring attitude; appreciate the emotional impact of illness and hospitalization on the child and family.)

Sometimes Sandra sees or hears discriminatory and even racist comments to children or parents from other parents. She has a gentle way of confronting people and letting them know if comments are unacceptable here. She models non-judgmental attitudes, so important in our diverse population. She celebrates the vast diversity, making everyone feel welcome. She also monitors the content of the television programs showing in clinic to make sure they're suitable for children.

4. What differentiates this individual or team apart from other SickKids volunteers?

Volunteer is defined by words charitable, helpful, free will and service. It doesn't mention anything about decorating your sweater in Christmas theme, painting your face, and donning a cap so you look like Santa's elf. It doesn't talk of a woman who cradles infants while their mothers chat with the staff about the trials of living with HIV. Nor does it talk about how she places toys strategically to allow even the smallest of patients to play.

5. Demonstrate how the Nominee partners with staff to support patients and families.

Sandra's long-term experience and familiarity with clinic flow is tremendously valuable to staff as she helps us keep track of children and parents. Has someone gone for blood work, coffee, lunch, to the washroom? Has this child's mother gone to put money in the parking meter? Has this child gone to an appointment in another clinic? When will they be back? Are they in the pharmacy? Is mother with the doctor, can father join the discussion? Is a child searching Mom or Dad? Sandra keeps track of everyone, helps everyone find people they're looking for, keeping the clinic flowing smoothly.

Sandra discreetly provides clinic staff with valuable assessment information such as child behaviour problems and family interactions she observes in the waiting room. This information may lead to assessment of difficult situations or confirm our assessments and is always helpful in providing another viewpoint.

When staff members need to talk alone with parents, Sandra provides interesting activities to encourage children to stay in the waiting room. If necessary, though, she lets parents know when their children need them. Her care of children provides staff with much needed adult discussion time, which is very important in our clinic, particularly leading up to telling children that they have HIV. During planning for this, parents need time to talk alone with staff members.

6. *Why should the individual or team you are nominating receive a Volunteer Humanitarian Award?*

Sandra has cheerfully provided volunteer services, meeting and exceeding all the qualities listed in the criteria for this award particularly:

- Providing a caring, supportive and welcoming environment for families
- Appreciating the emotional impact of illness on children and families
- Through per presence and caring attitude making clinic experiences easier for patients and their families
- Partnering with staff to provide support to patients and families.

Sandra can always be trusted to keep her observations discreet and private from patients and families. She understands confidentiality in health care and the importance of this to families.