

NEWS

St. Mary's Sacred Heart Hospital nurse Madison Dudley receives DAISY Award for Nursing Excellence

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LAVONIA, Ga. – October 1, 2026 – Madison Dudley, a registered nurse who works in the Intensive Care Unit at St. Mary's Sacred Heart Hospital, has received St. Mary's Health Care System's DAISY Award for Nursing Excellence. She was nominated by a colleague who desperately needed high-level care, higher-level caring when a loved one fell critically ill.



Madison Dudley, RN

Madison's nomination was in honor of "the extraordinary care, compassion and humanity she showed during one of the hardest moments of my life," her nominator said. "I was emotionally shattered – completely broken into a million pieces trying to navigate impossible decisions while watching someone I love suffer. Madison cared for my loved one during some of the most crucial moments of her hospitalization, and she cared for me, too.

"I will never forget the way she spoke to us, reassured us, advocated, listened, and remained calm even when everything around us felt terrifying. She helped restore hope when I honestly thought there was none left," her nominator wrote.

"Madison represents everything the DAISY Award stands for," he concluded. "Her compassion, empathy, clinical excellence and emotional support changed not only my loved one's experience, but mine forever. I will carry gratitude for her and this entire team for the rest of my life."

A resident of Royston, Madison began her career at Sacred Heart nearly eight years ago and has provided care in the Emergency Department, Family Birth Center and now serves in the ICU. Outside of work, she enjoys gardening, reading, and spending time with her dog, Rubeus.

"From the moment she joined St. Mary's Sacred Heart Hospital, Madison's unwavering commitment to her patients and her compassionate approach to care has remained constant," said Regina Hooper, associate chief nursing officer, St. Mary's Sacred Heart Hospital. "Her exceptional clinical care, genuine compassion, and daily commitment to those she serves

ultimately led to her nomination for the DAISY Award, a well-deserved recognition of the impact she has on patients, families, and colleagues alike. She is a beautiful person inside and out.”

About the DAISY Award

The DAISY Award is an international recognition program that celebrates the skillful and compassionate care nurses provide day-in and day-out. It was created in gratitude for the nurses who provided care to Patrick Barnes, a 33-year-old husband and father who lost his fight against a deadly autoimmune disease in 1999. His family created the DAISY Foundation, which partners with more than 7,600 healthcare organizations and nursing schools in all 50 states and around the world to honor and inspire extraordinary nurses. Learn more about the DAISY Award at <https://www.daisyfoundation.org/>.

At St. Mary's, each DAISY Award recipient is recognized at a public ceremony with their colleagues. They receive a certificate, a DAISY Award pin, and a stone sculpture entitled "A Healer's Touch" that is hand-carved by sculptors in Zimbabwe. In addition, the award recipient and their colleagues are invited to celebrate the occasion with cinnamon rolls, a treat Patrick would request – even though he couldn't eat them – as a thank-you to the nurses caring for him.

Anyone can nominate a St. Mary's nurse for the DAISY Award, including patients, patients' family members, providers, and colleagues. The nomination simply asks you to share your story of why a St. Mary's nurse is special to you. Submit your nomination at <http://www.daisynomination.org/5944>.

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