



Daishany Rakestraw receives St. Mary's DAISY Award for excellence

Contact: Mark Ralston, Public Relations Manager
706.389.3897 | mrалston@stmarysathens.org
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Athens, Ga. – Daishany “Dai” Rakestraw, a registered nurse who provides care on St. Mary’s Hospital’s 5th Floor Medical/Surgical unit, has received St. Mary’s DAISY Award for Nursing Excellence. She was nominated by a patient and his wife for the exceptional care she provided.



Daishany Rakestraw, RN

“I was in the hospital for 14 days,” the patient wrote in Dai’s nomination. “Several nurses were great, but Dai was beyond the others. She was compassionate. She listens to you and didn’t complain. She checked into any questions we had. Whatever I needed, she provided. I can’t describe all that I feel for her wonderful care.

“I have a hard time putting on paper how I feel in my heart about this young lady,” the patient concluded. “I hope this will be enough.”

“Our DAISY Award committee was deeply touched by how much Dai’s care meant to this patient and his family,” said Ann Gomes, director of Orthopedics and chair of St. Mary’s DAISY Committee. “It meant so much that they took the time and effort to write a nomination for her, even though they struggled with putting their feelings into words. Dai demonstrated tremendous compassion and reverence for him and his whole family during his extended stay. His words were enough. She certainly deserves this honor.”

A resident of Athens, Rakestraw is a new nurse who joined St. Mary’s in May 2024.

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 now partners with more than 6,500 hospitals and 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, they 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. Any nurse in the St. Mary's system is eligible, including those at all three hospitals as well as home health care/hospice services and medical group offices. The nomination simply asks you to share your story of why a nurse is special to you. St. Mary's honors eight nurses each year.

There are two ways you can nominate a St. Mary's nurse:

- Visit St. Mary's DAISY Award webpage at <https://www.stmarys-health.org/for-patients/after-your-stay/daisy-award>
- Contact Melissa McDaniel, Marketing Administrative Assistant and Volunteer Coordinator, at 706.389.3892.

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