



WE LOVE WHAT WE DO

Pediatric CARE CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION FOR PEDIATRIC CLIENTS AND FAMILIES OF BAYADA HOME HEALTH CARE



BAYADA Pediatrics Nurse Mat Gunkel, RN

Follow the 1,000,000 Hearts and Homes Client Spotlight Series This Summer

We are honored to share the news that in early May we cared for our one-millionth client. Delivering your care is our highest priority, and acknowledging this milestone by celebrating your accomplishments is our greatest joy.



Do you have a story about your care and successes that you'd like to share?

Please email MilestonesThatMatter@bayada.com if you'd like to participate in our storytelling efforts and send us photos or videos of your special moments.

We invite you to join us on Facebook each week as we shine the spotlight on our clients and their special milestones—from life-changing accomplishments to simple, everyday victories.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to share your stories and help other potential clients in the process. ■



Our Vision
 With a strong commitment from each of our BAYADA Home Health Care teams, we will make it possible for millions of people worldwide to experience a better quality of life in the comfort of their own home. We want to build an...

We will accomplish our mission following our core beliefs and values.

1,000,000 HEARTS AND HOMES

BAYADA
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Two Pediatric Nurses Honored as National Heroes of the Year

On Saturday, April 27, BAYADA's four National Heroes of the Year took the stage in front of thousands of attendees at our annual Awards Weekend in Philadelphia, where they accepted their well-deserved recognition from CEO **David Baiada**.

Established in 1999, the Hero Program recognizes care professionals who consistently demonstrate the BAYADA core values of *compassion, excellence, and reliability*. Each quarter, clients and peers nominate their local Heroes. From the local Heroes, division Heroes are selected, and ultimately, four National Heroes are chosen from the following disciplines: registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, therapist, home health aide, certified nursing assistant, social worker, behavioral health paraprofessional, habilitation technician, and spiritual counselor.

This year, two of the four National Heroes were nurses who share their compassion and expertise with our youngest clients.



Pictured during the Hero celebration (from l to r) are RN Hero Julie Pergolizzi, Pediatrics Director Matt Lewars, Hero Committee Chair Jackie Kirchhoff, and CEO David Baiada.

Registered Nurse Hero of the Year **Julie Pergolizzi**

At the age of 13, **Alina Stevens'** son Tryae received the devastating diagnosis of neuroblastoma, a cancer that forms in immature nerve tissue in the adrenal gland, neck, or spinal cord. That's when **Julie Pergolizzi**, RN from the BAYADA Pediatrics office in Paoli, PA entered their

lives. She cared for Tryae at home following the demanding auto-immunotherapy treatments that came after his bone marrow transplant.

"Tryae always looked forward to the days when he had Julie as his nurse. She didn't just care for Tryae, she cared for our entire family," said Alina. "She really helped us through a difficult time, and I love her."

As Julie accepted her honor as RN Hero of the Year, she gave credit to Tryae, who she considers the real hero. "All of the days I cared for him, as sick as he was, he never complained and he was always pleasant. He was more concerned about his family and how they were dealing with the situation," she said about Tryae, who is now cancer-free.

BAYADA Pediatrics Director **Matt Lewars** was thrilled to learn that Julie had received this national recognition. "Julie is naturally

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Champions Among Us | Clients Speak Out During State Lobby Days



Hearts for Home Care

In South Carolina, home care agencies attract only a small fraction of the state's nurses. What's more, even when agencies are able to hire nurses, they are leaving at an alarming rate in favor of jobs with higher pay.

These troubling statistics are a consequence of private duty nursing reimbursement rates that lag far behind neighboring North Carolina and Georgia.

For BAYADA client **LaMondre Pough**, 45, who has spinal muscular atrophy, this is unacceptable.

That's why on March 6, LaMondre made his way to the state capitol in Columbia, SC so he could tell legislators about the positive impact home care nurses have had on his life and on the lives of others who live with significant illness and disability.

It was all part of the SC Home Care Association's Lobby Day, which attracted dozens of home care employees and clients who joined together to advocate for a reimbursement rate increase.

"I spoke out on behalf of the people who

provide my care because they do the things that allow me to be independent and to live the life I am living now," said LaMondre, who receives 48 hours of nursing care a week. "If it weren't for my nurses, I wouldn't get out of bed in the morning. It is imperative that there is a real connection between the legislators and the people who benefit from home care services."

BAYADA Government Affairs Director for South Carolina and Georgia **Melissa Allman** couldn't agree more. She helped coordinate the SC Lobby Day, which included meetings with members of the House and Senate. "Our clients don't have enough nurses so we need to raise awareness among our legislators," said Melissa, who also serves on the SC Home Care Association Executive Board and as chair of their Government Affairs Committee. "Our Lobby Day brought home the challenges of why we do what we do."

Lobby Day in Rhode Island

A similar scene played out in Rhode

Island on April 9, when more than 65 home care advocates journeyed to the statehouse in Providence for a Lobby Day sponsored by the Rhode Island Partnership for Home Care.

"One of the most impactful ways to educate legislators is by taking them to a client's home to witness the high-tech care our nurses provide to their clients," said BAYADA Government Affairs Director for Rhode Island and New York **Ashley Sadlier**. "But legislators have busy schedules, and making time for a home visit is hard, so we have to bring our story to them."

Indeed, the halls of the statehouse were lined with exhibits promoting the benefits of nursing care at home. BAYADA's table featured the simulation training lab, which uses computerized manikins that mimic real-life medical emergencies. BAYADA Clinical Managers **Christina Gomes** and **Brittany Morgan** were on hand to demonstrate tracheostomy care and other high-tech procedures using the manikin.

The day proved most meaningful for **Sherry Stone**, who spoke about the eldest of her five children, Brandon, who has cerebral palsy, spastic quadriplegia, and other health issues. She expressed how difficult it is for others to understand what families of children with special needs go through. "We as parents need your support to help provide the best care possible for our loved ones," she told the legislators. "And I know from experience that the best possible care is at home."

Register for Hearts for Home Care

This emphasis on home care was a message repeated time and again at Lobby Days in Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. While these in-person Lobby Days were a huge success, BAYADA Manager of Client and Family Advocacy **Tara Montague** wants clients to know even a simple phone call or email can make a big difference. ■

You can register to become a "Hearts for Home Care" advocate at [heartsforhomecare.com](https://www.heartsforhomecare.com). You will then receive email updates about relevant issues and opportunities to get involved.



Photo 1: BAYADA client LaMondre Pough (front) is pictured with the BAYADA advocacy team during the SC Lobby Day. **Photo 2:** Ashley Sadlier, Brittany Morgan, and Christina Gomes are pictured with the simulation lab manikin during RI Lobby Day. **Photo 3:** RI Representative David Bennett, who is also a nurse, practiced his skills on the simulation manikin during RI Lobby Day.

CopingSpace:

A resource for families coping with a child's life-changing illness or injury

The story of Ryan's Case for Smiles

Gavin* and Cindy Kerr are the proud parents of three beautiful children: daughters Ashley and Katie and son Ryan. At the age of 12, Ryan was diagnosed with osteosarcoma, a form of bone cancer—and it was a life-changing experience no family ever wants to endure.

In the children's hospital, Ryan felt shy and terrified. Wanting to relieve their son's discomfort, Cindy—an accomplished quilter—made him a pillowcase he could hug to feel safe. The happy print became a conversation piece in the hospital, and soon, Cindy had made a pillowcase for every child in the oncology unit.

Cindy recruited volunteers who began making pillowcases for other pediatric hospitals and for Ronald McDonald House locations in the area. And they turned their passion into a movement—Ryan's Case for Smiles, or CFS—a volunteer organization dedicated to *helping kids feel better to heal better*. Now with 120 chapters, CFS has delivered 2 million pillowcases to pediatric patients.

How CopingSpace was born

Sadly, after an arduous medical battle, the Kerr family lost their beloved Ryan in 2008. Each family member picked up the pieces and persevered on his or her own journey of healing—still feeling the effects of their traumatic experience, in some ways they didn't fully understand.

"We were grappling with our own pain and wondering how we could do more to help others," recalled Cindy. "As we learned more, we started to realize that we were suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD."

PTSD is commonly associated with military service, but the Kerrs were introduced to another form of stress: medical traumatic stress, or MTS.

"According to the Center for Pediatric Medical Stress, about 80 percent of family members who have experienced the serious illness of a child exhibit moderate to severe MTS," Cindy explained. "We realized we could help translate this research into family-friendly resources for people like us and distribute the information through our CFS network."

And that's exactly what they're doing. CopingSpace.org launched in January 2018 as an online resource and support site for families coping with a child's life-changing illness or injury.

What can you find on CopingSpace.org?

CopingSpace has two goals: to build awareness about PTSD and to build resilience. To begin, they're developing resources that parents can use to help their children and themselves.

*Gavin Kerr is a member of the Board of Trustees of BAYADA Home Health Care.

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Studies show that siblings age 11 to 16 are at greatest risk for medical traumatic stress, and sometimes the effects aren't seen right away.

Katie (Kerr) Holcomb is Ryan's sister and currently leads the development of CopingSpace programs and resources on traumatic stress. "I experienced symptoms of anxiety throughout and following Ryan's treatment, as well as the unique challenges of being the sibling of someone facing a life-threatening illness," Katie shares. "Now I want to help bring understanding and support to all those struggling."

Know the symptoms of medical traumatic stress

Are you or a loved one experiencing any of the following symptoms? If so, you aren't alone, and professional help is available.

- Flashbacks or ruminations
- Overwhelming stress that interferes with activities of daily living
- Anxiety or anxiety attacks
- Irrational fear or feeling out of control
- Hyper-fear of health issues or medical testing
- Sleeplessness
- Agitation, such as being easily startled

CopingSpace is designed to help you and your family cope during this challenging time. To learn more, visit bit.ly/CopingSpace. ■



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BAYADA specialty practices include Home Health Care, Pediatrics, Hospice, Behavioral Health, and Habilitation. Services may vary by location.
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able to connect with others and easily forms meaningful relationships," he said. "Her warm smile and compassionate personality make it easy for the families of our clients to feel comfortable with Julie caring for their child."

Pediatric home health care is the perfect choice for Julie, who loves that she gets to see the same children week after week. "It is such a blessing for me to be recognized for what I do every day, for what's in my heart," she said.

Watch what makes Julie a Hero by visiting bit.ly/RNhero.

Licensed Practical Nurse Hero of the Year **Edward Cole**

"The foundation of Ed's ability to impart such amazing care for his pediatric clients is love," said BAYADA Pediatrics Director **Lindsey Sykes**. "His goal, in addition to keeping his clients healthy and safe, is to bring light, joy, and ease to every home he enters."



Pictured during the Hero celebration (from l to r) are LPN Hero of the Year Edward Cole, CEO David Baiada, Pediatrics Director Lindsey Sykes, and Hero Committee Chair Jackie Kirchoff.

Susan Anderson couldn't agree more. Her son, Griffin, 15, has mild autism features and chronic autoimmune neutropenia, which leaves the body without an immune system to effectively fight infections. "A hero is a nurse who shows up like clockwork every time they are on the schedule. That quiet, unsung hero you can truly count on. Someone who comes in and gives your child care that is more valuable than you could ever imagine," said Susan. "That hero is Ed."

Ed understands what families of children with special needs are shouldering and does what he can to make their days a bit easier, such as working the night shift so that parents can step away, decompress, and get some sleep.

"Ed was like an angel to us. He came in and everything calmed down. It was a huge weight off our shoulders," said **Jessica Cicali**, whose daughter Abbie, 9, lights up when Ed walks in the door. Abbie suffers from Angelman syndrome, which can cause developmental and intellectual disabilities, seizures, and speaking, balance, movement, and sleep problems.

The attention proved quite overwhelming for Ed, who shared his deep appreciation for the recognition. "It calms my soul to know that I am helping these kids, and that's just everything," he said. "That means the world to me." ■

Watch what makes Edward a Hero by visiting bit.ly/LPNhero.