Catawba Regional Hospice Nurtures the Rewards in Exemplary Service  
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The impulse for Catawba Regional Hospice’s newly implemented Service Before Self Award was born of heartbreak.

In 2015, within a 6-month time frame, our organization lost two beloved staff members to unexpected health issues. Prominent in their communities, tireless advocates for hospice, and boasting larger-than-life personalities, they were irreverent in their approaches but powerhouses in their successes. One was a second-career hospice nurse; the other, a marketing professional and former nurse.

Spurred by the loss of these two forces of nature, the organization established an annual tribute to recognize any staff member who far exceeds the duties of their role. Happily, the award also became an organic extension of our company service standards, which were created to formalize and communicate our best practices. The standards are both aspirational and reflective of our daily work, so an award highlighting their practical aspects seemed only natural.

As the ultimate showcase of a CRH employee’s commitment to hospice care, the Service Before Self Award is high praise indeed. It invites colleagues to shift from seeing themselves as workers with assignments to crank out to people with a difference to make. Additionally, it grants exemplary staff members an acknowledgement of their years of selflessness and dedication. As such, it provides a constant focus for personal excellence.

It also offers a brass ring of encouragement. In the face of a changing regulatory landscape, fluctuating censuses, EMR challenges, industry competitors, family dynamics, and more, employees can feel as if they’re under fire on a daily basis. They wonder if their efforts are worthwhile and whether their compassion and care are appreciated.

While most hospice employees consider their work a calling and are able to soldier on in the face of everyday trials, they deserve to be lifted up along the way. It’s our hope that gestures like the Service Before Self Award stand as beacons for devotion to the cause. Doing what’s right comes through training and experience, and this award is intended to underscore the good habits and learned techniques that, along with an inborn empathy, bring comfort to patients and families.

A single, prominent award, however, doesn’t take the place of other, regular displays of thanks. Notably, Catawba Regional Hospice doesn’t neglect these opportunities. Our employees are praised by colleagues and managers at staff meetings, and they’re presented with handwritten birthday cards and notes of appreciation. They receive longevity pay and bonuses, and they’re rewarded with cookouts, pizza parties, and visits by ice cream trucks. They’re fed at in-service programs, on holidays, and during hospice month. They’re offered wellness sessions and health and fitness opportunities. They’re touted on social media, in press releases, and on the company intranet. And they’re gifted with a Christmas party in a year-end demonstration of gratitude.

Job satisfaction surveys perennially confirm that employees are happiest and most content at companies that actively appreciate them and value their efforts. In the face of heavy workloads or hectic schedules, being acknowledged for your personal and professional worth and being given a sense of belonging go a long way toward driving motivation and investment.
We believe that we strike a balance in addressing the individual and applauding the corporate. Pats on the back and Service Before Self awards emphasize the good work we consistently do and keep our mission top-of-mind. They also empower us to pour ourselves out in humility as the comfort and care that our patients and families so richly deserve.