A Gift Of Scrubs For Philippine Nurses

(PRNewswire-USNewswire) Uniforms and scrubs no longer used by Adena Health System nurses have found a new use in the Philippines, inside the San Juan Medical Hospital, which serves some of the poorest people in that country. Christina Cain, a registered nurse on the Adena Medical Center's 3A Medical-Surgical Unit conducted a "scrubs drive" earlier this year and last month hand-delivered more than 100 scrubs and uniforms to the hospital staff in Manila.

"Nice nursing uniforms are considered a luxury that too few can afford," said Cain, who also volunteered for a week inside the bustling metropolitan hospital. "The average wage of a Philippine RN, with a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing degree, is close to the minimum wage in the U.S.," she said, which prevents most nurses from purchasing new uniforms or scrubs. Cain was invited to participate in "Operation We Care," which is part of the Philippines Medical Mission, by Dr. Mel Simon, the Medical Director of Health Services at the University of Rio Grande where she is a BSN student.

She learned that many of those who volunteer for the mission also take used uniforms with them as a gift for the nurses in Philippines. Cain decided to take the gesture a step further, especially since Adena adopted a nursing uniform policy this year that restricts the color and style of uniforms. With the support of her supervisor, Robin Berno, an all-staff e-mail invited nurses throughout the health system to donate their gently used uniforms and scrubs.

"The response was overwhelming," Cain said. "There was not one day in a month's time that I did not pick up donated uniforms." More than 100 uniforms and scrubs were shared by Adena staff. "I work with a terrific, compassionate group of people and the staff at the San Juan Medical Hospital benefited from that generosity. The bags of uniforms were snatched up within minutes, with oohs and aahs."

Cain also had an opportunity to work in a health care environment far different from what she is accustomed. Volunteer physicians and nurses serving with "Operation We Care" performed more than 300 surgeries in a week, and at times between two and three surgeries were performed at once in a single surgical suite. "It was amazing to see what a group of volunteer physicians, surgeons and nurses could do with so little resources in such unfavorable working conditions."

The hospital, with the help of volunteers, serves some of the poorest people in the Manila. "I saw homeless mothers with small children sleeping on the streets every day on my ride to the hospital." Medical services are provided free of charge by missionaries, with support from Rotary International, which has been involved with the mission for more than 25 years.

Many of the Philippine nurses also serve as volunteers because of lack of compensated positions, Cain said. They typically volunteer until a full-time position becomes available, and that sometimes takes up to two years. The uniforms provided by Adena were especially appreciated by these people, Cain said.

"This was my first medical mission trip and will not be my last," said Cain, who is celebrating her first anniversary at Adena this month, which is based in Chillicothe, Ohio.

Source URL (retrieved on *12/09/2013 - 2:39pm*):
http://www.surgicalproductsmag.com/news/2012/03/gift-scrubs-philippine-nurses