



FISHER~NIGHTINGALE HOUSES



The Broxson Award was created to recognize the individual on the Wright-Patterson Medical Center staff who most significantly touched the lives of families residing at the Fisher and Nightingale Houses with compassion and support.

The award is named after Dr. Emmet Broxson, Director of the Pediatrics Specialty Clinic, Wright-Patterson AFB Medical Center from 1988 to 1996 and was established by the founder of the Nightingale House, Capt. Gretchen Lizza.

2016 BROXSON AWARD RECIPIENT

Medical Professional Recognized for Compassion, Humor

An annual award meant to honor an individual who has significantly touched the lives of patients and families the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base's Fisher Houses with outstanding compassion and support has gone to a clinical nurse.

First Lt. Brittney Rufus, a clinical nurse in the inpatient medical/surgical department at the Wright-Patterson Medical Center, received the award December 9th during the holiday party for the Fisher Houses. The award was presented by Colonel Shari Silverman, 88th Medical Group commander. She was assisted by Karen Healea, Wright-Patterson Fisher House manager. Several senior members of the wing were present, including Colonel Bradley McDonald, 88th Air Base Wing and installation commander, and retired colonels and generals.

Rufus' father flew in from Brookhaven, Mississippi, to be with his daughter, and her boyfriend was elated to get on base for the first time so he could see a bit of military culture. She has been a nurse for five years and stationed at Wright-Patterson AFB for three. The Emmett Broxson Award is named after Dr. Emmett Broxson who served as the director of the Pediatric Specialty Clinic at WPMC from 1988 to 1996. The award honoring Broxson is the most prestigious recognition given by the houses in honor of the families served.

"The Broxson Award recognizes an individual, selected by the Fisher House guests, who epitomize caring and compassion," Silverman said. "This year's winner is no exception. Lt. Brittney Rufus, a clinical nurse on the medical center's inpatient medical/surgical unit, was nominated not only for her excellent nursing skills but for her compassion and sense of humor. Lt. Rufus' interactions with Fisher House guests is typical of the care provided by our nursing staff as a whole. We, indeed, are fortunate to have a nurse of Lt. Rufus' caliber taking care of our patients."



First Lt. Brittney Rufus, clinical nurse, inpatient medical-surgical unit, Wright-Patterson Medical Center, prepares IV fluids for a patient. Rufus is the 2016 winner of the Emmett Broxson Award, nominated by patients and their families at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base's Fisher-Nightingale Houses. (Skywrighter photo/Amy Rollins)

"I am the daughter of a nurse and the sister of a nurse," Rufus said. "Being a nurse is my life, and I love it. I've worked in the medical/surgical unit as well as a few days in the emergency room and intensive care unit. I enjoy doing anything that will help broaden my horizon."

Her older sister is a psychiatric nurse practitioner, and her younger sister is just starting her master's degree in nursing. Rufus noted that she grew up spending a lot of time in hospitals while her mother worked and is very comfortable in that environment.

"My father would bring us before a shift change and we would sit at the nurses' station. Before I could really write, I could read nursing shorthand. My mom used to leave all her notes about our chores in nursing shorthand for us to read," she said.

Rufus' family places an emphasis on serving others with compassion. With their small town only an hour and 10 minutes from New Orleans, they jumped to help clear trees and debris after Hurricane Katrina hit. Rufus recalls that she and her father even split wood to leave with elderly people so they would have something to burn and keep warm.

Rufus' small-town upbringing exposed her to rich food prepared in non-healthy ways and showed her the need for more resources and health information in the community. Her philosophy is to help one person at a time, then one city, then one state and then the nation so people are taking better care of themselves.

"When I go back home, I talk to young women about their health and then elderly folks to explain their medications to them, to ensure they have what they need to remain healthy," she said.

She borrows from her father's sense of humor to entertain patients.

"Sometimes laughter is the best medicine. It makes you feel good when you can laugh," Rufus noted.

It feels good to win the Broxson Award and be recognized for her work, Rufus said, but "seeing someone feel better is the best reward. I look forward to coming to work because I know the patients will make me happy. I've learned everybody has a story to tell."

First Lt. Walter Donoghue, inpatient/surgical unit charge nurse, said, "Lt. Rufus is a superior nurse who can handle anything you throw at her. She has a take-charge attitude and is very willing to work hard."

– Amy Rollins, *Skywriter*

About the Fisher Houses

The Wright-Patterson Fisher Houses are compassionate care facilities for servicemen and servicewomen, and their families, location on Wright-Patterson AFB within walking distance of the hospital. The houses provide a comfortable place to stay, serving patients and families from all branches of the military receiving active medical treatment at the medical center. The Houses provide a home-away-from-home for families in need. Twenty-one rooms are available.