



Interview With Bonnie Barnes, FAAN

Roxane Spitzer, PhD, RN, MBA, MA, FAAN

Bonnie Barnes, FAAN, is the cofounder and chief executive officer of The DAISY Foundation.

RS: Bonnie, you and your husband Mark have founded a well-renowned organization that honors nurses internationally. What year and what is the background behind the generosity you and your husband have displayed in offering the DAISY Award?

BB: In 1999, Mark's son Patrick died of complications of the autoimmune disease ITP (idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura). He was in the hospital for 8 weeks, and Mark and I had the gift of spending that time with him. During his hospitalization, we got to see, probably for the first time in our lives, what nurses really do every day. We were really touched. As we expected they would be, Patrick's nurses were extremely competent clinically, as they dealt with what became a very complex medical condition. What we didn't expect—and what really took our hearts—was the way his nurses delivered their care. Their compassion and sensitivity, not only to Patrick, but to all of us in his family, made a great difference to us throughout those 8 worst weeks of our lives. When Patrick died, we needed to find something positive that would keep his wonderful spirit alive. The 1 positive thing we could think of about the last weeks of his life were his nurses. We simply had to say thank you to nurses, believing that Patrick's nurses were not unique. What we experienced is who nurses are. So, we created the DAISY Foundation (an acronym for diseases attacking the immune system) and our program of ongoing recognition of above-and-beyond compassionate care, the DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses.

RS: What a blessing for our nurses who excel in caring and achieve the honor of receiving the DAISY Award. Thank you for that on behalf of our profession. What are the attributes you look for in honoring the recipients of the DAISY Award?

BB: We at DAISY don't choose any of the honorees. We decided from the beginning that we would partner with health care organizations that would collect nominations from patients, families, and coworkers that described with gratitude the care a nurse provided a patient or family. Then a committee of nurses in the

organization—not the DAISY Foundation—would select the honorees each month, quarter, etc., based on criteria that fit their organization's mission, culture, and way of describing nursing excellence. DAISY Award criteria are written by participating organizations, focusing on extraordinary compassionate care, consistent with our mission. DAISY nurses are outstanding patient advocates, great team members, and they go out of their way to do the little things that make a difference for patients and their families when they are at their most vulnerable. Our honorees are the kind of nurses any of us would want to have care for our family member.

RS: —and any of us in management are honored to have serving our patients.

In terms of your commitment to excellence in nursing, what would you like to see professional nursing accomplish within the next decade?

BB: Mark and I are great advocates for the nursing profession. We know you all are well aware of the tremendous work ahead, given the tough financial, social, and political environment we all live in. But there is 1 thing we hope professional nursing will keep front and center in the coming years: *compassionate* delivery of care. technology, data, and tasks cannot compromise the human touch nurses provide so beautifully. The most common response we hear from nurses who are honored with the DAISY Award is “Thank you for reminding me why I became a nurse.” We hope the profession will do whatever it takes to ensure nurses always remember there is a human being in that bed or in that chair and to treat them as they would want to be treated.

RS: For those who are interested, how would you suggest they proceed in developing a foundation or how can they contribute to the DAISY Foundation to assure its longevity?

BB: In our experience, there are 2 fundamentals to building a successful foundation: passion for its mission and focus. Mark and I are full-time volunteers for DAISY because we fervently believe that nurses need to be recognized and celebrated for their extraordinary compassionate care—and the evidence demonstrates that patient care benefits from this recognition. We stay

focused on that concept and on our gratitude to nurses for all they did for Patrick and for us 20 years ago. We have been asked repeatedly to broaden our mission, for example, by including other members of the care team in our recognition program. While we believe in recognition for all who care for patients, we dedicate DAISY to the profession of nurses as that's where our hearts are.

How can one contribute to our longevity? Nurse leaders are the key to any successful initiative for their staff. So, if you have adopted the DAISY Award, please keep it important and valued within your organization. Stay engaged, and provide the resources and time needed to sustain a structured recognition program like DAISY. For those who have not yet adopted DAISY as a meaningful recognition of nurses, please do!

RS: On behalf of all nurses everywhere, we cannot thank you enough for your support and recognition for those professionals who give their all to assure outstanding patient care. Thank you, Bonnie and Mark, you are true role models that recognize the commitment and devotion that nurses have towards their patients and their profession.

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