

At the tail end of the very first shift I worked with Gina Madrid as bedside nurse to the extremely sick Starnes BT shunt patient we cared for, I asked her if she would consider being My bedside nurse should I ever need ICU care. That's simply the type of nurse she is.

She has been a bedside nurse in the ICU for 16 years in the United States of America. She was a nurse in the Philippines prior to migrating here. She has been a Daisy award nominee several times over, with the last nomination she was the formal Honoree for the month for the whole hospital.

We in the Cardiovascular ICU live in a world of probability and whispers of chances. Where children with some hope and fragile physiologies enter and are given a chance of survival, perhaps normalcy, where none other exist. To bring those chances to fruition requires leaps of faith: by families, by patients, and by the teams that provide care to them. Gina exemplifies the type of nurse who makes these hopes come true. Always calm, with a half-smile on her face, the very epitome of efficiency, the one who you tell each other about: Oh Gina's here, now patient XYZ will get better.

I remember a meeting we had had division wide regarding a particularly difficult patient, rife with discussions about suffering and progress. I asked her what she thought. She said to me: This is my mandate: to show up to the bedside and do the very best I can do for this child, for my patient. To do all in my power to help this child. This is what I always do, and it is my duty and privilege to do so. So what about the losses then, I asked. What about when the patient does not make it. And she said: That's the only thing that makes it bearable, that I did the best I could.

The type of nurse who is not afraid to love her patients even when they seem to have no way out. The one who records her voice when she leaves on vacation, so that "her" baby doesn't miss her, and will know that he is always loved, no matter what. The one who sees the positive and takes each win, and celebrates these patients lives for the battles they have fought. The one who brings the unit cake for every month this patient survives, or that one meets another milestone. The stories are endless.

In short, Gina Madrid is the nurse you would want for every patient who ever needed a warrior of calm competence and everlasting optimism, sprinkled liberally with love, and that ever important elusive ingredient: hope.