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I have had the utmost honor of knowing and working beside Cathy Scholtens, RN for the past 23 years. There is not enough room on this page to describe all the reasons why Cathy is the best candidate to receive the Mercy Award. Cathy is compassionate in every aspect of her life and it is never ending. The number of people who have benefited from her altruism is unlimited in all walks of life.

Cathy's love for people and the community is endless. About 10 years ago, Cathy thought the community in Ravalli and Missoula needed more love, so she started disseminating random notes of kindness. Cathy makes colorful cards and simple notes and leaves them in random places around her local bookstores, restaurants, or on the sidewalk telling strangers they are "awesome," are "loved," "have a great smile," etc. Cathy continues to do this today. At Christmas, Cathy and her family anonymously decorate the street corners with garland, lights, and ornaments to bring cheer and joy to her community over the holiday. Cathy is also very artistic. She is a crafter, painter, and photographer. She paints custom orderable online caricature outlet covers and donates all the proceeds to the Missoula Youth Homes. Another example of her compassion and mercy happened a few years ago. Hundreds of dogs had been mistreated/abused and abandoned in Ravalli county. These dogs needed care and homes to recover from their trauma before being adopted as family pets. Cathy and her family took in two of these dogs and gave them the love, support, and confidence they needed to be adopted.

If you happen to be Cathy's neighbor, you have won the lottery. One of her neighbor's, Ralph, was elderly and needed help in getting to his doctor appointments, with his medication administration, with cooked meals, and sometimes just needed someone to talk with and Cathy was always there to do all those things and more. Another example is her friend and neighbor Myrl, who passed away from cancer a few years back. Cathy made Meryl's needs a priority and was there every step of the way with and for her. Cathy took Meryl to all of her doctor's appointments, gave her medication injections, changed her dressings, kept her company, and was at her side until her passing. One of the biggest gifts Cathy gives to her friends and neighbors is her ability to make anyone laugh and put everyone at ease with her down to earth manner and her positive outlook on life. Cathy never feels sorry for herself and sees life as a gift. We have all benefited from Cathy's giving, humor, and compassion when we have needed it most.

Cathy continually gives to her coworkers and everyone she can at Community Medical Center. She recently worked with an organization and got thousands of N95 masks to our hospital when the COVID-19 pandemic began. Cathy will seek out ways to enhance her coworker's lives. Some examples include stocking her locker with silly string so others can have a good laugh, to making custom magnets to give to her coworkers when they are having a bad day, to creating the best "roast" send-off you have ever heard when any employee tries to retire!

It goes without saying that all these attributes extend to all of the children and families that she cares for at Community Children's as an RN. Her 30+ years of dedication to helping and caring for families and children in meaningful and profound ways have helped them heal and move forward past illness and back into living life to the fullest. Time after time, past families she has cared for stop her in various community settings to express their gratitude for all she has done for them.

Cathy is such an amazing and positive light. The Montana and Missoula community are lucky to have a shining star with so much compassion and mercy. There is no one more deserving of this award.

*With deep respect,*

Maria Gurreri, RNC