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## **Bayada Nurses Honors East Brunswick Resident With Licensed Practical Nurse “Hero of the Year” Award**

June 12, 2009 – Bayada Nurses, a leader in home health care, has named East Brunswick resident George Kracke, LPN, as its Licensed Practical Nurse “Hero of the Year.” As part of the company’s *Heroes on the Home Front* program, Kracke was recognized for his dedication to excellence and commitment to caring for children with profound physical and developmental disabilities. The award was presented during Bayada Nurses’ annual Awards Weekend, held in Washington, D.C., from June 5-7.

Bayada Nurses presents the “Hero of the Year” awards to recognize its nurses, aides, and therapists who unselfishly exceed the organization’s expectations for excellence. To qualify, a nominee must embody the fundamental values of compassion, excellence, and reliability, which comprise *The Bayada Way* and define the organization’s mission. Heroes are chosen from among Bayada’s 12,000 employees who work in 140 offices in 18 states and the United Kingdom.

Kracke, who expressed a deep sense of pride upon learning of his recognition, has helped improve the quality of life for dozens of special needs children by caring for them in the comfort and safety of their home environment. “I try my best to be a good nurse,” said Kracke, who has been with Bayada for 13 years. “Each day there are the small moments, a smile, a laugh or even a hug, that make me realize that pediatric home care is what I was meant to do.”

Meredith Shaw, whose daughter, Devon, suffers from a neurological disorder that has left her dependent on a wheelchair, unable to speak, or do most of the day to day activities often taken for granted, could not agree more. “My daughter has significant challenges,” said Shaw. “But having George with us makes them seem smaller. His clinical excellence is matched by his genuine caring. He’s always looking out for her.”

Indeed, Kracke has become much more than a nurse for Devon, he has become part of the family. “On Halloween he made matching biker costumes and decorated Devon’s wheelchair to look like a motorcycle!” exclaimed Shaw. “He even put on fancy clothes and took Devon to her school prom.”

Rebecca Kahane, director of the Bayada Nurses office in North Brunswick, expressed excitement, but certainly not surprise upon learning of Kracke’s prestigious honor. “George is a nurse that puts 110 percent into everything he does,” she said. “I have known him for many years and have grown to respect and care for him. When I needed a nurse for my own daughter, I chose George, because I knew she would be getting the best care Bayada Nurses could offer.”

According to Kahane, the pediatric home care program of Bayada Nurses provides a broad range of services for special needs children from newborn through adolescence. The team includes nurses who specialize in care for children who require a tracheostomy and ventilator to breathe, as well as home health aides who assist with grooming, feeding, and light housekeeping.

“Without home care, many of our special needs children would be forced to enter facility-based care,” said Kahane. “Because of our nurses and home health aides, children like Devon get to stay at home, where, despite their significant disabilities, they can thrive.”

Kracke, who felt overwhelmed by his sudden 15 minutes of fame brought his 14-year old daughter with him to the awards ceremony in Washington, D.C. “For the first time in her life, my daughter told me she was proud of me!” shared Kracke. “This honor is something I will treasure forever.”

For more information about pediatric home care services, call the North Brunswick pediatric office at 732-418-9546.

*Founded in 1975 by J. Mark Baiada, Bayada Nurses is an independently owned home health care agency that provides skilled, rehabilitative, therapeutic, and personal care services to children, adults, and seniors at home. Bayada Nurses employs over 12,000 nurses, home health aides, and therapists working from more than 140 offices in 18 states. For more information on Bayada Nurses, call (602) 870-6364 or visit [www.bayada.com](http://www.bayada.com).*

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