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CNY woman nominated for Nurse of the Year

By: Katie Gibas

One Upstate New York Nurse is getting national recognition for her work with children. Dea Kuiper has been nominated by National Association for Home Care and Hospice for their Nurse of the Year. Our Katie Gibas spoke with Kuiper and one of the families she works with about her passion and profession.



ONONDAGA COUNTY, N.Y. -- Even though Davis Culhane's cerebral palsy prevents him from speaking, he always lights up when he sees his nurse, Dea Kuiper.

"It just always warms my heart and I know he thinks the world of Dea. He hears her voice and immediately reacts and has gotten to be very, very close because he knows she cares about it. He's not just another patient. They have a special relationship," said Anne Culhane, Davis's mother.

Dea Kuiper, a Registered Nurse for VNA Homecare, added, "I follow the family through the changes in his life as well from young boy to now a late teenager and help the family move through the transitions with this wonderful Davis."

Kuiper is a pediatric home care nurse, serving children with a variety of medical conditions.

"People might automatically think of home care as for the elderly. But pediatrics is very important. More and more children get discharged from the hospital earlier and just the belief of the special needs kids and to raise them in the home environment. But that requires a team to accomplish that," said Kuiper.

And now Kuiper is getting state and national recognition for her service. In June, the National Association for Home Care and Hospice named her as New York State's Nurse of the Year.

"I know locally, we haven't had anyone win the honor of New York State Homecare Nurse of the Year, so this is a great honor," said Kate Rolf, the VNA Homecare President and CEO.

Now Kuiper is one of ten finalists for the National Nurse of the Year.

"I was totally overwhelmed. It was humbling to know that so many fantastic nurses in the state of New York and to be able to represent them all is quite the honor," said Kuiper.

Kuiper will find out if she wins during a conference in Washington D.C., starting October 31st.

You can vote on your favorite of the ten Nurse of the Year finalists between now and August 13th at www.nahc.org.

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