



AMH Nurses Skype Family Wedding for ICU Patient

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ALTON, IL -- Alton Memorial Hospital employees are known for going the extra mile for their patients. Allowing a patient to view her daughter's wedding from 20 miles away is just the latest example.

That was the case April 9 when Rebecca Anderson's daughter, Rachelle Gatton, was married in Edwardsville to Taylor O'Bryan. Rebecca was stuck in Alton Memorial's Intensive Care Unit, but that didn't deter the ICU staff led by nurse Andrea Hill.

"When patients are with us for very long, you can't help but get close to them," Andrea says. "Rebecca obviously wanted to get out of the hospital for the wedding. She had been here since Valentine's Day and seemed to be getting better. I asked her doctor if she would be able to go to the wedding and he said yes. But then she had a relapse and it wasn't possible for her to go."

But the combination of modern technology and compassion on the part of Andrea Hill and her ICU co-workers was not to be denied. One of Rachelle Gatton's friends provided the computer and the wedding was 'Skyped' to Rebecca's ICU room.

"She had a dress and everything, so it was obviously disappointing for her not to be able to attend her daughter's wedding," Hill said. "But we had Skype set up in her room by 1:45 and she got to see the whole thing."

But that's not all. Instead of heading over to St. Louis as planned for the official wedding photos, the wedding party instead brought the party to Alton Memorial. Fortunately, it was a nice enough day for the photos to be taken in the Healing Garden.

"We told them if they were willing to do that, we would get Rebecca dressed up for the pictures," Hill says. "So we helped her get dressed, got her made up, then pulled the oxygen tank down to the Healing Garden."

"It was wonderful," Rebecca Anderson says. "I can't say enough about what Andrea and everyone at Alton Memorial did for me. We'll never forget it."

While the bride is almost always the focus on her wedding day, Rachelle had some stiff competition from her mother on April 9.

"Everybody just cheered and clapped the whole time," Hill says. "It was just fantastic."

Cindy Igo, supervisor of ICU, wasn't surprised by the extra effort put in by her staff.

"I'm always so proud of what they do, usually quietly and without anyone knowing about it," she said. "That's what we mean about our employees exceeding expectations."

PHOTO BY DAVE WHALEY

Andrea Hill, a nurse in Alton Memorial Hospital's ICU, with Rebecca Anderson, who was able to watch her daughter's wedding via Skype from her hospital room thanks to the work of Hill and the ICU staff.

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Rachelle Gatton O'Bryan bends down to kiss her mother, Rebecca Anderson, during a post-wedding photography session in Alton Memorial Hospital's Healing Garden.