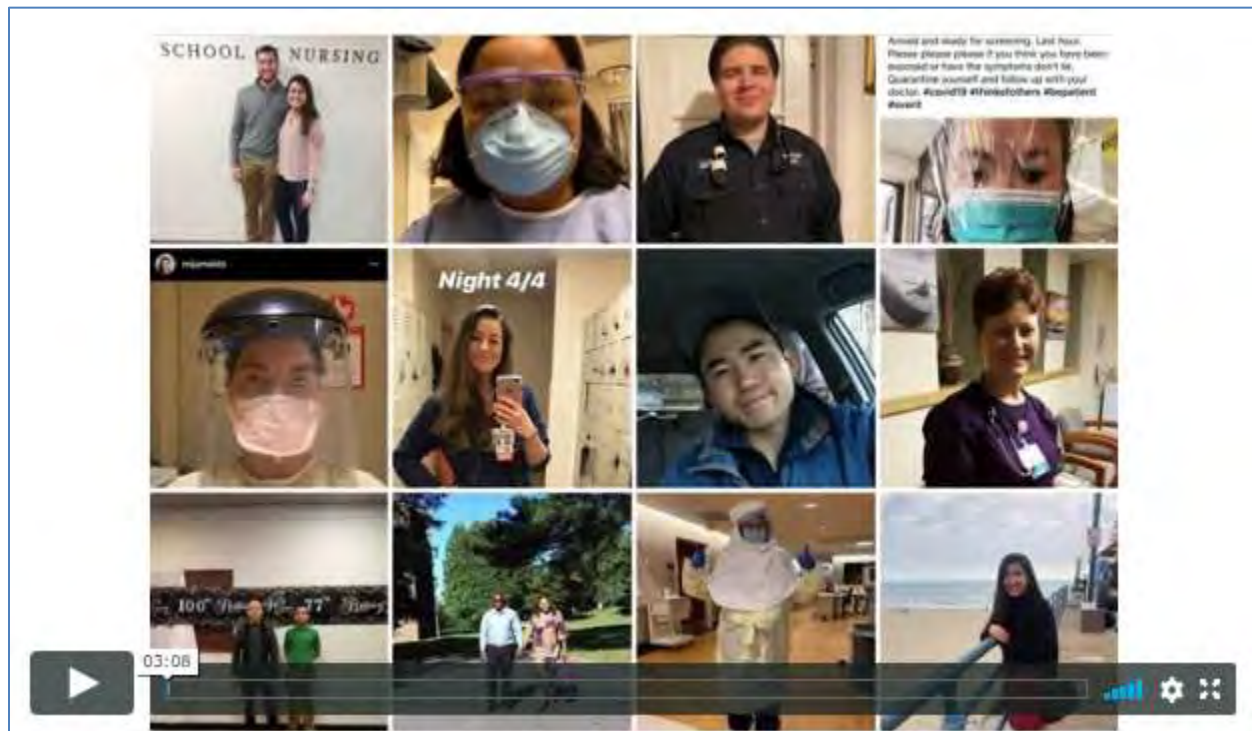


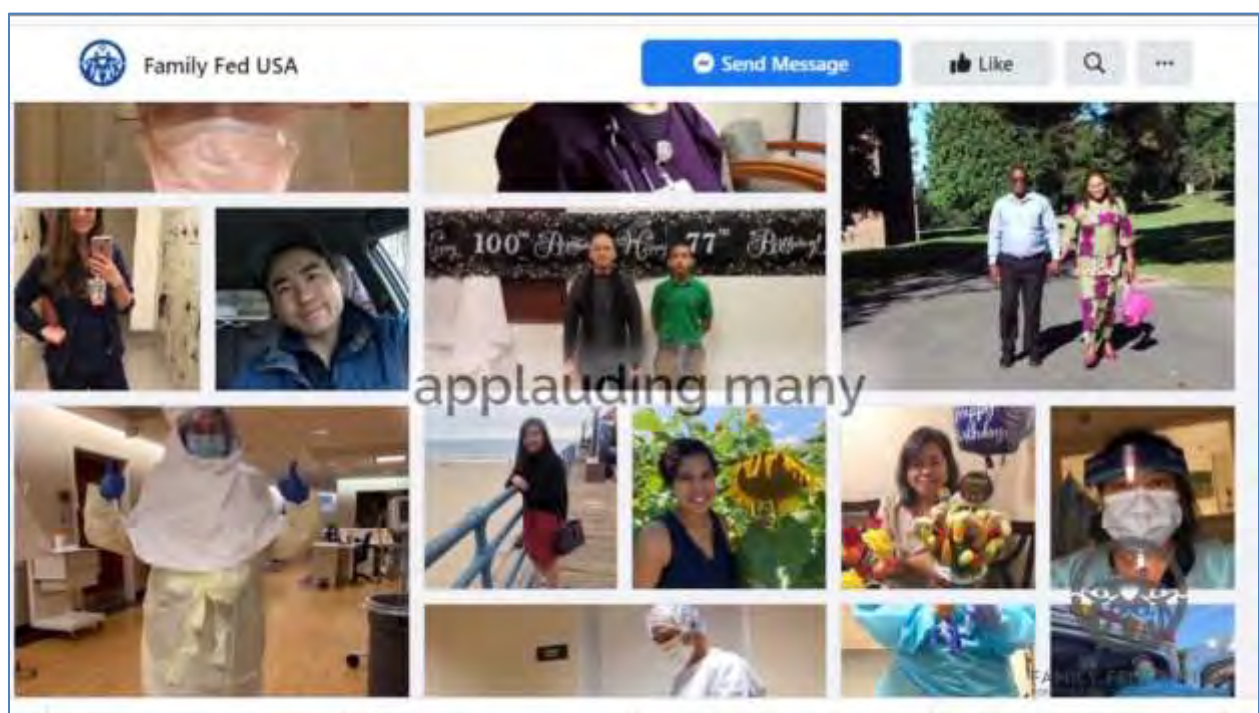
## Unificationist Covid Responders Honored During USA's National Nurses Week

Demian Dunkley  
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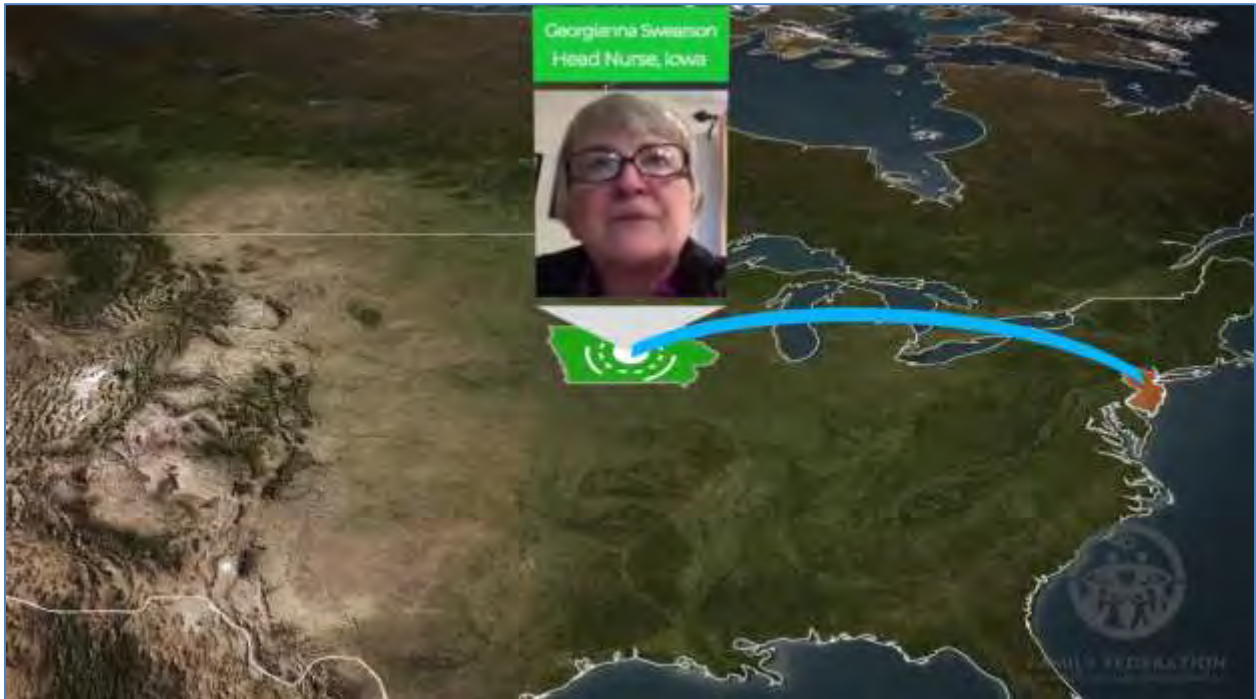
Nurses across the country are being honored this week in celebration of National Nurses Week from May 6 to 12. As nearly three million registered nurses in the U.S. provide a range of life-saving care, countless communities have shown immense gratitude for their ongoing efforts. A special album on the [Family Fed USA Facebook](#) page now pays tribute to more than 70 Unificationist nurses, doctors, and other front-line workers fighting the Covid-19 pandemic.

"My unit is usually a post-cardiac surgery care unit, but it was converted to a Covid unit because the hospitals in this area have been overrun with Covid patients," said Mija Maldonado, a Unificationist nurse in New Jersey. "At one point my hospital was 80 percent Covid patients." A wave of cases quickly hit most of the state -- a ripple effect of a major outbreak in nearby New York City. "There were a lot of days where I just didn't know how to process everything and it was very difficult," said Maldonado, who has been a nurse for 10 years. "As a healthcare worker, the biggest stress for me was not knowing if I could hug my kids and be close to my family."

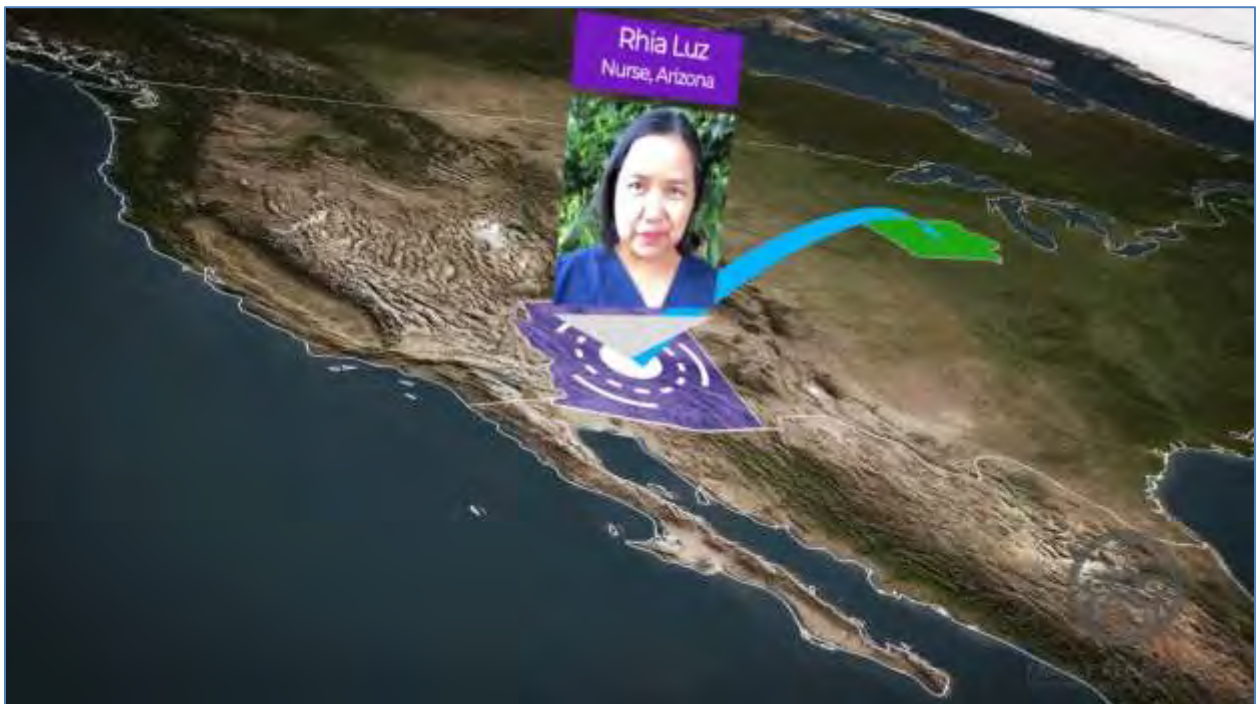


Though most of the U.S. quickly underwent heavy social restrictions to ease the spread of the coronavirus, hot spots continued to thrive. "Here in Iowa, 50 percent of the [coronavirus] deaths have been the elderly in nursing homes," said Georgianna Swearson, a Unificationist and head nurse of a residential care facility. "I think the greatest thing that people are struggling with right now is fear." But Swearson, who has been a nurse for 45 years, said her community has banded together like never before to support one another as much as possible. "I have seen incredible outreach of people wanting to deliver groceries at my facility," said Swearson. "People have also cut out big paper hearts and put them all over

the windows to show their love and appreciation."



Throughout the pandemic, healthcare workers have been the only people at the bedsides of Covid-19 patients, who are isolated from their families and friends during an extremely vulnerable time. "One day I finished my 12-hour shift and realized the pain and suffering that we see every day with this pandemic has actually enabled me to better understand God's heart through this situation," said Unificationist Rhia Luz, an emergency room mental health nurse in Arizona. "This pandemic is giving me an even deeper sense of gratitude and faith in God, True Parents, and humanity as well, because despite the negative things that are happening, there are still many good people out there who are encouraging each and every one of us every day." True Parents is an affectionate term for Rev. Sun Myung Moon and his wife Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, co-founders of the Unificationist movement.



"Every day is a battle," added Juvy Montes, a Unificationist nurse at a nursing home in Northern California. "About two weeks ago, we had our first coronavirus case. Quite a few patients and staff have tested positive for Covid-19, so I'm lucky I tested negative. But it's really a life or death situation, and when you're in that situation you always want to cling to God with your prayers. I'm just grateful to my church community because everyone has been so supportive."

As many nations continue to tackle the global pandemic, society has looked to our heroes who wear scrubs and face masks, thankful for their continuous support, courage, and selfless care. Many terminally ill Covid-19 patients have spent their final moments with nurses and other healthcare workers. "It's scary when there are a lot more people passing away at the hospital than usual," said Maldonado. "But I think it helps to have belief in a higher power and know that patients are not completely alone. Luckily, a lot of nurses have some level of faith and I think all of us are probably saying silent prayers; I know I am."