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**Vanier College Nursing's Rivka Guttman,  
wins the 2008-2009 Academic Coordinator Award**

Being the coordinator of a Cegep program is a challenge - a mix of coach, quarterback and team player, all rolled into one. And there's no doubt that any teacher who takes on the position has to be committed, dedicated, devoted and energetic. Rivka Guttman, Coordinator of the Nursing Program, and recipient of the 2008-2009 Academic Coordinator Employee Recognition Award, has demonstrated all of these qualities in her six-year leadership of the Vanier College Nursing Program. Rivka has systematically tackled challenges facing the Nursing Program and through unflagging persistence, imagination and innovation, has found lasting and novel solutions. "Rivka is an unbelievable problem-solver," says colleague Melodie Hicks. "She has an excellent perspective on each part of the nursing curriculum and a gift to see the whole picture. She's a great idea person with vision."

Rivka's support extends to all who fall under her purview: she treats teachers and students with dignity and respect, encourages and fosters teacher creativity, constantly seeks out and promotes new and up-to-date nursing resources such as *Infirressources* – a bilingual resource for Quebec Nursing teachers, and encourages faculty members to expand their interests outside teaching through workshops, conferences or participation in events they care for. Taking a proactive approach, Rivka has made it a pleasure to be a "new teacher" in the Nursing Department, and has helped new arrivals with a detailed orientation manual of curriculum and practices, and provided them with a team-supported mentor.



Thanks to Rivka, Vanier Nursing has become known not only in city hospitals, but also in Montreal high schools, in Le Centre Hospitalier Ste-Agathe-des-Monts, and even in Makupo, Malawi. Rivka sought out participation in the McGill University Training and Human Resources Development Project which aims to improve access to English language health and social services in communities where healthcare institutions provide services mostly in French. As a result Nursing students have brought healthcare information to teenagers in east end English high schools. "Rivka also encouraged a faculty member and a student to pursue their interest in HIV/AIDS and join the Vanier Aids Action in Africa trip to Malawi," says department colleague, Mechelina Thissen.

Always looking for ways to motivate students, Rivka inspired reflection amongst faculty and students when she collected personal nursing stories in *From the Heart*, a booklet published in 2007 that has been useful in recruiting new students, informing people about Vanier Nursing, and instilling pride in Vanier Nursing students and faculty. She has also encouraged students to participate in workshops on international nursing opportunities and expand their horizons.

Rivka Guttman's influence extends beyond Vanier. When the short-staffed Montreal Children's Hospital could not provide enough adequate supervision to accept nursing students in training, Rivka stepped in to find solutions that eventually allowed Vanier nursing students back in the hospital. Similarly, when nursing students reported difficulty understanding the poorly translated OIIQ examinations, Rivka wrote a strongly worded letter to the Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec where she asserted the need for better translations, and offered suggestions to ensure accuracy and readability in the exams.

"I think Rivka is very proud to be a nurse, and she's committed not only to Nursing, but to Vanier College as a whole," concludes Melodie Hicks. "She really has gone beyond what's expected of most coordinators, even taking on the teaching duties of faculty members at one point in order to lighten the workload of others. She is just amazingly creative and supportive."