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PHILLIPS BETH ISRAEL SCHOOL OF NURSING GRADUATES 14 IN EVENING PROGRAM'S FIRST CLASS

September 2, 2009 -- The melody of Pomp and Circumstance filled the air. Eleven women and three men, led by the faculty of Phillips Beth Israel School of Nursing, solemnly marched into Beth Israel Medical Center's Podell Auditorium on Monday, August 31st, as family and friends gathered to celebrate the first graduating class from the School's evening program.

"The evening program came to be as a response to the tremendous need expressed by many who wanted to switch careers but needed to hold on to a job while getting their nursing degree," said Janet Mackin, RN, EdD, Dean of Phillips Beth Israel. "It is an innovative program, but it took a lot of effort to develop the curriculum and juggle schedules. We are very pleased to see the fruits of the hard work and sacrifices of our staff and students."

Phillips Beth Israel Co-Chairs Janet Green and Ruth Nerken presided over the ceremony and awarded an Associate in Applied Science in Nursing degree to the graduates. Rebecca Conigliaro, cum laude, received the Seymour J. Phillips Award for highest scholastic achievement. Venus Rodriguez, who produced a special slide presentation about the graduates, received the Dr. Eileen Melnick Award for team spirit. The Rose M. Hauer Award of the Alumni Association was presented to Kathryn Aiken for outstanding contribution to the class.

Speakers and graduates recognized that the ceremony signified not an end but the beginning of an exciting career in nursing. Offering words of encouragement were Beth Israel Interim President Harris Nagler, MD, Chief Nursing Officer Mary Walsh, RN, MSN, and guest speaker Ann M. Frisch, RN, BSN, MBA, Executive Director, HHC Health & Home Care.

"We are very proud of all our graduates, and we are confident that they will flourish as nursing professionals," said Dean Mackin.

After a touching pinning ceremony in which loved ones participated, the graduates recited the International Pledge, then the new nurses, one by one, lit a ceremonial candle as each exited to the tune of the School song, "One Little Candle."

For more information about the Phillips Beth Israel School of Nurse visit www.futurenursebi.org.