



Excellence in LTC
Awards Program
2021



Welcome & Congratulations!

Welcome to the **2021 Excellence in Long Term Care Awards**. The Maine Long Term Care Ombudsman Program and the Maine Health Care Association are pleased to collaborate on this year's program. Today, we celebrate the best and brightest in Maine's long term care community. We honor caregiver dedication, performance, and all that you do to provide quality of care and life across the long term care continuum. From home care to assisted living to nursing facility care, we know that caregivers are the backbone and lifeline for Maine's elderly and disabled citizens. It is our pleasure to honor you.

We thank this year's judges for their time and expertise. They are:

Trinity Baker, LPN, Regional Ombudsman
Maine LTC Ombudsman Program

Leo Delicata, Esq.
Legal Services for the Elderly

Agenda

11:00 a.m. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Brenda Gallant, RN
Maine Long Term Care Ombudsman

The Honorable Jessica Fay
State Representative (District 66)

Nadine Grosso, Vice President & Director of Communications
Maine Health Care Association

11:30 a.m. Awards Presentations

Awards will be presented by nominators and speakers jointly.



Emily Abbott, CNA

Activity Coordinator

Cove's Edge Damariscotta



Emily has been a CNA at Cove's Edge since 2019. Recently, Emily has transitioned to our activity department which in her words, "is a dream come true". Emily has provided care throughout the pandemic and tries to make each resident interaction, one of care and meaning. She individualizes her interactions but is consistent in how she meets everyone's needs before moving on. Her use of music and singing with residents has brought them joy and made days during the pandemic just a bit easier.

Emily is always cheerful and flexible when communicating with her colleagues. She is willing to work on any assignment and is happy to get to know her residents. She has great relationships with her supervisors and peers and is well liked. She demonstrates respect and compassion for everyone. Cove's Edge employees share the following about Emily:

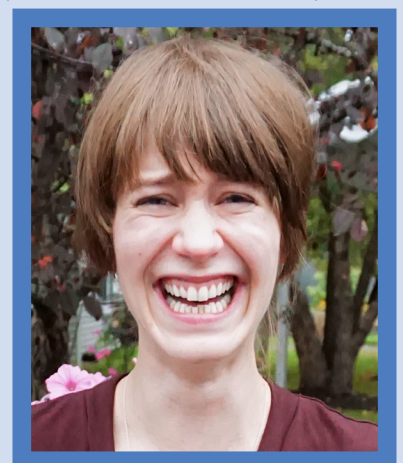
"I was very close to a resident that recently passed. After she died, Emily sought me out to see if I was okay and gave me a hug."

"I was speaking with a resident when Emily came in to bring her coffee. When Emily asked if she would like sugar, she did so in the resident's heritage language and it was evident this made the resident so happy. She continued speaking in this language for a bit and the resident clearly looked thrilled to be speaking in a language dear to her heart."

A recent example (but not the only one) was the relationship she formed with one of our residents. She found out he liked a particular type of music and made sure she found it and played it for him. She also practiced his favorite song on her clarinet so she could play it for him. The resident recently passed and the family called her an angel and actually asked us to put in a Moment to Shine employee recognition award for her.

One resident said, "I was touched by the musical presentation she did in the courtyard. She passed out copies of the music she was going to perform. I really loved a couple of the songs, so I saved the copy of the music. When I saw her again, I showed her the copy of the music and it was a special moment for us. Another time, Emily and a fellow employee Abbey did a bus trip - Emily's first. And that couldn't be easy with all of us. The teamwork - they worked beautifully together."

According to a family of a resident who recently passed, "Emily is amazing. Our whole family loves her. She was the only person my father would let bathe him. She found out he liked jazz and would pipe it in through her phone while he was in the whirlpool - it made a huge difference for him. She also learned two of his favorite songs on the saxophone and played them for him. She had her friends in another state learn his favorite song and video themselves playing it and she showed him the video. He would tell the family she was his adopted granddaughter and he has never said that about anyone. When my father was dying, she came in frequently to check on him - as well as us. She also came to his funeral. She was a tremendous support to our family. We cannot say enough about Emily!"





Amy Adams, LPN

Barron Center Portland

Amy Adams is an LPN that has committed her entire career to the Barron Center in Portland. Amy excels in every area of the building, to include staff scheduling, patient care and technology within the center. Amy is always willing to lend a hand to others in need. She has recognized organizational challenges that come with working for a municipality and has adjusted so that patient care always come first. Her peers always look to her for guidance, and she consistently sees the best in each and every situation and is always the first to pitch in when needed, including picking up additional shifts on the floor.

A veteran caregiver, Amy has been a nurse for 38 years, 34 of them for the Barron Center. Amy is a role model to both direct care staff and managers in the building. She is excellent at showing new employees what the culture of the Barron Center looks like and offering assistance when needed.

Amy always takes nurses under her wing when orienting them. She is quick to lend a hand or a show of support to employees. She consistently helps out when needed and offers to curtail the orientation needs of certain staff.

According to the Administrator, "Amy has also entrusted the Barron Center to care for her two parents before their ultimate passing. Amy states that she was indebted to the care and compassionate work that all of her fellow caregivers gave during this especially trying time in her life. In all sense of the word, Amy has truly been a family member to many here at the Barron Center.

Amy has gone above and beyond during COVID-19. She was always one employee to go above and beyond in the assisting of residents and staff. She would consistently help out when completing testing of employees and residents and also was first to lend a hand when contacting all family members to inform them of a positive test. In Amy's words:

"When Covid hit, it was so clear to me and my coworkers that this would be the most frightening and challenging time that we may ever have to face but we faced it...together. With amazing leadership, we prepared for the unknown and faced it head on...scared as heck, exhausted, confused, lots of tears for our residents and their families, as well as our own families but always pushing forward, never giving up. When it comes to true compassionate care, there's no safety nets, no bonuses, no perks, that keep us going. We do it because that's what we do, this is who we are! We continue to show up, together, because that's what works, and this much we know is true!"



She concludes, "I'm so thankful for all the wonderful people that I have the pleasure to work with and equally thankful and humbled by all the kind words, and recognition but all I've ever really strived to be is a good listener. I believe when we really listen to each other, to our residents, that's when we learn how to be true caregivers and better people. Honestly, all the rest just follows!"



Scott Babb

Housekeeper

St. Andre Health Care Facility

Biddeford



Scott came to St. Andre after working years at the local animal shelter. With no experience in LTC, Scott entered St. Andre fully committed and ready to throw himself into the most frightening time in LTC history. Scott's attention to detail, kind and empathetic approach with his peers, and tireless work ethic demonstrated the kind of exemplary employee we all dream of seeing in our communities.

Scott always arrives timely, stays as long as needed to get the job done and more as needed. He never hesitates volunteering to help his peers with their needs, lending a hand on their units, or working to cover their shifts as needed. He has received repeated commendations from staff for his hard work and warm spirit and was one of our first VIP Winners of 2021.

Scott's impact on his team and his commitment to St. Andre elevates the work of all in his department. Simply put, Scott shines with all he does for his team and for St. Andre.

Scott's connection with our residents is unmatched. He considers them peers as much as he does 'residents'. We have heard multiple comments from co-workers - such as:

"Scott is always pleasant and, in spite of being extremely busy, takes the time to talk with residents on the 3rd floor (Memory Care). He often 'takes assistance' from residents who want to help even through this may slow him down. He speaks to each resident as a person, not a 'dementia patient'."

Scott has gone above and beyond innumerable times to be sure residents have everything they want/need, even if that is simply being in his company and sharing with him. He is open and always fully attentive - regardless of how many things he is responsible for. He has gone out of his way after work to ensure a resident's belongings were dropped at a family member's home. He has also paused his own work many a time to transport a resident unexpectedly to an appointment. His fluidity and flexibility have brought our residents such joy and stability during a time that has been anything but.

Upon hire, Scott took the lead on ensuring the building was clean and stocked. He began his tenure at St. Andre just before we had our first COVID positive case and led us thoughtfully through the next few months of uncertainty, fear and loss. Our COVID unit saw its peak in January and Scott was a pivotal reason it remained as contained as it did. Scott's attention to detail and cleanliness kept the building as safe as possible as we met the challenges of COVID head-on. He worked unafraid and ensured he was educated and up-to-date on everchanging information to keep himself and his family safe, while keeping his commitment to St. Andre and his team. When he was unsure, he would ask, always with humility and grace.

During this time, he became 'family' to our residents when their real families weren't able to visit, acting in their best interest and supporting them in ways that ensured they knew he cared.





Jessica Berker

Certified Nursing Assistant

Freeport Place

Freeport

Jessi orders and manages all supplies needed for residents and the center. Her dedication has led to her continued education and she will become our new infection control preventionist under the leadership of Tiffany Coutemanche, LPN, RCD starting in September.

Jessi loves chocolate, especially chocolate milk with Hershey's chocolate syrup. All of the staff knows that when we need perk-ing up, it is time to break out the chocolate!!

Jessi has been at Freeport Place for 21 years. She cares deeply for all of the residents, as well as the staff. No task is too small for Jessi! She can be seen helping residents with their daily care, doing laundry, ordering supplies, serving lunch, and walking briskly to answer bells. She anticipates what each resident needs before they have to ask and Jessi pays close attention to each resident to make sure that they are all receiving fantastic and individualized care. Our 30 residents certainly keep her busy!

Jessi is so dedicated, that during the winter months she frequently stays over night to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our residents. She rarely misses work and frequently picks up extra shifts. She is always on time and ready to start each day with a smile. Jessi greets each resident that she comes in contact with and gives them the special attention each one needs. She remembers every resident's preferences and is always on the move attending to their requests. Whether it is making a bed or doing the laundry, Jessi does everything with the utmost importance and precision.

During COVID-19, Jessi was always prepared with her mask, shield, gloves, gown, or whatever else was needed. When staff was scarce, she worked almost two weeks straight! She has a very positive personality and is always smiling. Her level of ethics is very high and she does everything with a big heart. At Freeport Place, we all love Jessi.



Jody Brackett, CRMA

Housekeeping & Laundry Director

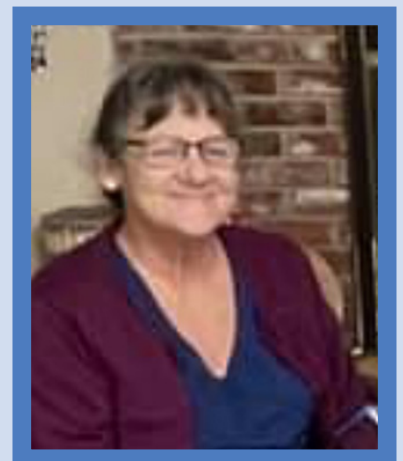
Norway Center for Health & Rehabilitation, Norway



Jody Brackett has a heart made of pure gold and has worked here since January 27, 1992. She first started here working in housekeeping and then became the Director of the department. Jody continued on her quest and obtained her CRMA in 2014 and has become an essential part of the Norway Center for Health and Rehabilitation Residential Care Team. Jody is very passionate about her role here and goes above and beyond for her residents and is a strong advocate for them as well as keeping their best interest at heart. She has a great rapport with the residents as well as their families and friends and takes time to do the “little” things that can really make the resident’s day, for example, taking home someone’s pants to hem them.

During our COVID outbreak she selflessly cancelled her vacation without any hesitation to see us through the uncertain times and easily acquiesced to the unpredictable ever-changing direction the CDC has provided us for this unprecedented pandemic. Jody is the epitome of a dedicated employee and her attendance record is exemplary.

Jody works tirelessly and is always willing to lend a hand to coworkers, often being their preceptor. Jody not only impresses me at work, she also cares for her aging parents at home. For almost 30 years we have been blessed with her never ending compassion and care that continues to amaze me to this day.





Diane Brophy

Certified Nursing Assistant

Island Nursing Home & Care Facility

Deer Isle

Diane has been a lead CNA for much of her nearly 20-year tenure with Island Nursing Home. She is hard working, reliable, caring, efficient, kind, empathetic and gets along well with everyone in the facility. She is a resource that all staff ask questions too and she is always willing to help in any way she can. When Diane shows up for work, she is always on time and ready for her day. She approaches leadership with valid concerns. As a leader you know when Diane comes to you with a problem or concern, it's a real issue. She is consistent with her care and her residents LOVE her! She is often found zooming around the facility, laughing with her peers, or enjoying her time with the residents.

Diane is meticulous with the care she provides her residents. She brings all concerns to her charge nurses and addresses them immediately. Diane knows the special preferences of her residents. Whether it's when they like their favorite treats, which activities they prefer, or if they like to have their nails painted.

Diane recently had a resident on hospice, and she would request to have him on her assignment. She took phenomenal care of this resident, she provided him with as much one on one time as possible and always took the time say hello or goodbye to the resident at the start or end of her shift. The resident's family all knew her by name and couldn't thank her enough for the end-of-life care she provided to their loved one with dignity. Diane provides all her care to residents with dignity. Diane deserves this award because she truly cares about her residents. She has devoted her heart and experience in health care to others since 1994.

One resident asked to give a statement about Diane stated, "She deserves this because she knows what I want before I even know I want it! I know her schedule by heart and I look forward to seeing her everyday she is here!"

Our facility was hit with a devastating covid outbreak in November 2020 and lasted throughout most of December. Diane caught Covid herself early on in this devastating time. As soon as Diane could, she came back to work, ready to assist in any way. We had volunteers from the VA, emergency doctors and nurses, med school students, national guard, and locals who worked at different entities came and volunteered. Diane was instrumental in creating assignments and tasks for others to do. She was able to choreograph assignments, so they were straight forward and people knew what was expected of them. She



would hold resident's hands and comfort them. She comforted other staff members that were struggling from the loss of control over an uncontrollable situation. Diane never missed a day once cleared to return. Diane's demeanor was always calm. She was a great steward of her resources as well at a time when we were not sure where our next delivery of supplies was coming from. Employees were proud to work beside Diane throughout this horrible pandemic.



Emily Curry

Certified Residential Medication Aide

Foreside Harbor Falmouth

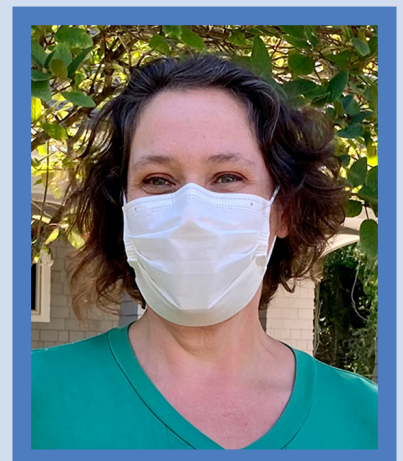


Emily's knowledge, sense of humor and compassion is contagious and she models a lesson to her peers and her supervisors about keeping things light. Her ease in lifting stress from others and helping them take a breather from their burdens is an asset to residents, families and the team and they hardly know what hit them. She helps to effortlessly guide people from a place of discontent or stress into a place of joy and laughter through her professionalism and redirection.

During the darkest days of the pandemic when residents were largely isolated, Emily found so many ways to connect with residents and their families. She wears a different type of hat everyday as she passes out the breakfast trays, so residents have something fun to look forward to in the mornings. She takes time out of her busy day to share special moments with residents and grace them with her beautiful singing voice. She makes them laugh with her silly dad jokes and provides meaningful entertainment. She earns their trust and ensures safety and quality of care in all she does. She encourages independence, yet is there to support.

From family member Marian Baker, "Emily helps mom feel like she is home, not just living in a facility. She knows each resident enough to share the kinds of things that would resonate with them. My mom recognizes Emily's deep faith and love for people, and feels well cared for, loved, and can rely on people like Emily in her life now when her own daughter (me) cannot always be nearby. Friendly and helpful, Emily every day wears some kind of wonderful hat. I loved that idea, which really does bring joy and laughs from my mom whenever she sees Emily, even after five years. From day one she has been positive and caring and clearly goes the extra mile to help care for the residents. To top it off, she often treats me and my mom to a new simple and usually corny joke or a song on the ukulele with her lovely singing voice. She is full of positive, kind energy and sincere affection."

Emily's consistent attendance, adaptability and willingness to step in whenever needed to prioritize residents, despite her own personal and family situations is something to behold. She is always the first to check on a resident, hold their hand, tell them a joke, laugh or sing with them. She has a way about her since she has been doing this for so long, that she can recognize what someone needs before they even know for themselves. Her fearless confidence in the face of COVID inspired the team and provided security and reassurance to residents and families during uncertain times. Without her, I have no doubt that several outcomes would have been different. She gave residents and families hope, sacrificed her own safety to be here to protect residents who are the most important people in the world to her. Everyone needs a pandemic friend like Emily.





Jennie Edwards

Certified Nursing Assistant-M3

Maine Veterans' Home

South Paris

Jennie is a CNA-M 3 on our clinical ladder program. This means she “leads the way.” She takes on extra responsibilities and trains new CNAs, as well as Med Techs. She is continuously a liaison between nursing management and the direct care staff. She advocates for her residents as well as her peers. Jennie brings issues to management, but always comes with possible solutions. She is a professional and loved by staff, residents, and resident families. When newly hired employees tour the home, they stop to see Jennie, as she has 20 years of longevity and passionately loves what she does while demanding excellence out of herself and her peers.

Jennie knows EVERY residents' middle names and nicknames. She doesn't stop there as she also knows all the families by their chosen names. She speaks to our dementia residents about their families and their past jobs. She also knows their pets' names and their favorite foods. She reminds staff which residents want their white undershirt while others like two buttons left undone. Jennie prides herself in getting to know all her residents likes and dislikes.

Some of the residents have end stage dementia and struggle with making their needs known. Jennie advocates and trains new employees to understand their needs and the best way to communicate with them. Jennie watched as some employees struggled to pass medications to our dementia residents. She stepped up and took a Med Tech class and now supports the residents in this role, as well as noting on all resident files how they like taking their pills and the best time of day to approach them with their medications. This helped all staff increase the residents' quality of life while showing her peers that there are always ways to grow.

Jennie is the employee that doesn't leave until her residents have no more wants or desires. During Covid-19 she would reach out to the management team and offer to come in on her days off or stay late to help on the Covid unit. She kept in contact throughout the day with their families knowing that they too needed supports as they couldn't visit in person. She encouraged the residents to get up and out of bed to prevent any further complications. You would see her taking the extra time to hydrate and feed her residents. Jennie could catch any behavior or symptom early as she knows all her residents so well. She declined days off and supported her teammates through one of the hardest things they had ever been through. The residents saw her familiar face almost every day and you could see the comfort that they had when she was around. When the Maine Veterans' Home team thinks of Jennie, they think of EXCELLENCE!



Rachel Gamache

Program Director

The Landing at Saco Bay

Saco



Rachel's professional character goes beyond learned skills, it is an innate part of her being. She approaches every day with a sense of joy and is uplifting to her team. Her positive energy is always well received and has helped motivate others during challenging times. She is always the first to offer her assistance no matter what the task. She is not afraid to cross the department lines when help is needed.

Rachel leads her department every day with integrity and dedication. She values the opportunity to mentor her assistants in hopes that they will experience growth and fulfillment in long-term care as she does.

Rachel's commitment to our residents is genuine. She has such depth when planning and organizing activities/events. She truly knows the life stories of each of her residents and has carefully created opportunities for engagement. Some examples are: her taking some of the men fishing, all came back laughing and telling fish tales, or helping a woman make her favorite cake, which was pineapple, or getting messy with splatter painting and many more. What Rachel does best is capture who the whole person is and helps tailor each day to their abilities giving them joy and fulfillment. And on those tough days that they may be having, she lends her ear, offers her shoulder, or gives a hug.

Rachel is one of the vital reasons we made it through some of the worse months of COVID-19. When staffing hit an all-time low and we were in crisis she did not shy away or crumble. She asked, "Where do you need me?" "Where can I be the most helpful?"

During those months Rachel traded her always fashionable clothes for a pair of scrubs. She had never done personal care before this time. She covered direct care shifts alongside the Resident Care Director, Food Service Director and Executive Director when there were no aides to come in. Rachel's unwavering dedication and compassion helped keep all of our residents safe, well cared for, and loved.





Jessica Gray, CNA-M

Staffing Specialist

MaineGeneral Rehabilitation & Long Term Care - Glenridge Augusta

Jessica is passionate about recruitment, onboarding, and retention of new staff. She shares her personal on boarding experience, which was less than desirable. It is this experience that fuels and drives her energies to ensure all new hires starting at Glenridge are greeted, feel welcome and understand their orientation schedule.

One supervisor states, “Jessica Gray goes above and beyond my expectations as a Staffing Coordinator. She gives over 100% each and every day. Jessica does not just post the clinical staffing schedule for the nursing department, fill holes in the schedule and manage the staffing, instead she is an integral part of our nursing team at Glenridge. During the COVID-19 pandemic Jessica continued to prove that our facility could not run without her expertise, care for the residents and attention to the staff. I cannot imagine a Glenridge that does not include Jessica Gray.”

As the staffing coordinator, Jessica knows each staff member. She typically knows staff family members, children’s names, and tidbits about them personally. Jessica genuinely cares about the nursing staff and makes every effort to connect with them and develop a positive relationship.

Jessica can tell who is going to college, who is celebrating an anniversary, what schedule staff prefer, and how often they pick up additional shifts. Jessica is involved with the Fun Committee at Glenridge, helping to engage the team and plan fun events. Jessica always participates in the events, dressing up to make staff and residents laugh, or going out of her way to keep candy and chocolate stocked for the staff. In regards to planning events, Jessica is the front runner in planning baby showers, fundraisers, and other special events for staff.

Jessica is also a CNA-M. This gives Jessica a unique position, as she enjoys picking up extra shifts and caring for the residents at Glenridge. Jessica has been known to come in at 3 am to help the night shift, or pick up a weekend day. Jessica does this to support her nursing team, but also because she truly cares for the residents. Because of her CNA-M experience, Jessica knows each and every resident in the building. She completes the med pass with a smile, and is able to recognize every resident as if she were in charge of the medication pass every day. When walking through the halls to talk to employees, Jessica stops and engages with the residents as she goes. She treats every person with respect, enjoys caring for the residents, getting to know them, and interacting with them on a daily basis. Jessica has made her job so much more than just staffing; it fills her cup to go out onto the neighborhoods and into the resident care areas to see and intermingle with the residents.



At a time when staffing is so difficult, Jessica maintains an excellent attitude. She has made it a priority to make every new hire feel welcome. She is a friendly voice and a welcome smile. During COVID-19, Jessica has not wavered. She has been a Rock Star as our facility has gone through three Covid outbreaks. When staff needed to be out for quarantine, she did her best to ensure that the residents would still have the staff they needed to provide them the excellent care that is our standard. Despite it all, Jessica has continued to excel in her position. She is competent, confident, and has a phenomenal report with the staff.



Cathy Honey

Dietary Professional

Independence Advocates of Maine/ Treats Falls, Orono

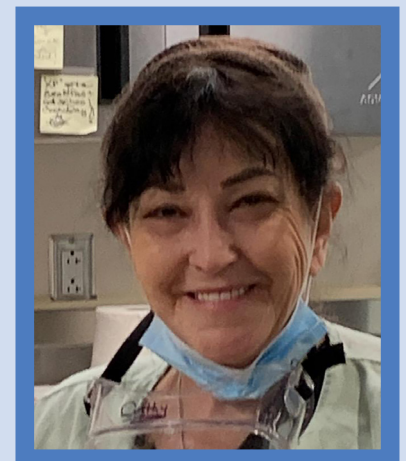


Cathy comes to work with her “best game” even if she is not having a good day, no one would know. Cathy treats all equally with kindness and respect. She easily can provide constructive criticism and direction in a kind and considerate way. She is ready to step in to help if her team needs it. She works extra hours and shifts as needed and is ready to come in if there is a last-minute event with the schedule. Employees in dietary work at the pace of Cathy, as she has trained most of them and is an excellent resource, having been with the company for 19 years.

Cathy doesn't let grass grow under her feet. She is always multitasking and taking care of everyone's needs. At times, a resident may not like what is served to them on a particular day. One CNA said, “I called her multiple times while I tried to get a protein substitution my resident would eat. Cathy was patient and worked with me. She wanted to make the resident happy. She reviewed her dislikes list with me and came up with a winner!” Another CNA remarks, “If we need help serving residents, we call Cathy and she always says, “I'm on my way!”

When asked their thoughts about Cathy, one resident answered with a big smile, “Cathy knows what I like and don't. If something is on the menu I don't like, she automatically puts my other choice in and I never have to ask.”

While all the food at the facility can be delivered, Cathy shops weekly to get foods that aren't available to be delivered. The pandemic did not stop Cathy in keeping the tasty foods the residents wanted available. She potentially put herself in harm's way in terms of COVID-19 exposure in the community to continue this practice for the residents so they could have the special foods they wanted during the pandemic.





Barbara Hooper

Dietary & Nutritional Services Manager Maine Veterans' Home South Paris

With a 23-year tenure, Barbara is a member of both the Maine Veterans' Home Senior Leadership and Incident Command Teams and the Manager of the Dietary and Nutritional Services Department. Barbara has had an extensive history mentoring young adults from the Oxford Hills Comprehensive High School who start their careers in culinary arts as food service workers in her department. Barbara is an excellent mentor who sets clear expectations and provides hands on support to see such individuals succeed.

Barbara has worked collectively with family members during facility events as well as participated in community related emergency drills. She is always well spoken, willing to hear others' feedback and works in support of others.

Barbara participates in a Dining Committee that facilitates resident input into their dietary choices for meals and snacks. If she cannot find an item from a vendor to meet a particular resident's needs or wants, she personally goes out to shop for it. One particular resident stated, "That Barbara always finds a way to make meals extra special for me and find things I truly enjoy!"

In particular, Barbara had a resident struggling with weight loss due to a particular medical condition. Barbara consistently met with this resident, her family, therapy staff and nursing to try and find ways to support the resident to assist her to gain weight. This included multiple dietary adjustments and incorporating the dietician. Barbara tried extensively to meet the resident's unique needs, offering a variety of food items and beverages to boost weight gain. Both the resident and the resident's family members noted how much they appreciated the time and effort Barbara afforded her. Barbara is known for going above and beyond to meet resident requests and address resident needs, which is what makes her so special.

This past year, with the pandemic impacting supply and service delivery, Barbara thought outside of the box to meet an increased demand on her department. Normally, Barbara and her dietary team are tasked with supplying nutritional and appetizing meals to the residents; however, with the arrival of Covid-19, she supplied breakfast, lunch and dinner to over 100 staff for a period of six months. During this extremely challenging and taxing situation, she led with professionalism and grace.

At one point during the pandemic the Maine Veterans' Home of South Paris faced a Covid-19 outbreak on its memory care unit. This situation required Barbara to think and act quickly to ensure meals were delivered timely and safely to residents. Barbara designated staff to the Covid-19 impacted unit and delivered food safely. In addition, Barbara quickly obtained special heating storage units to allow the residents to consistently have warm meals. She educated her team on processes and guided them with professionalism. At no time did any resident's nutritional needs go unmet.



Michele Hutchins, BSN

Director of Nurses

Pinnacle Health & Rehab

Canton



Michele is not a typical Director of Nursing. She is very often found working alongside the floor staff caring for and treating residents. When staffing reached a critical low, she made sure the floor was staffed and the residents needs were met, even if that meant she changed hats to work as a charge nurse or a CNA. With all the added struggles and pressures from the pandemic, she has continued to prevail and keep our facility functioning. This is not just a job to her, the residents are her passion and she is truly the glue that holds Pinnacle Health & Rehab together.

Through her stewardship, the home has maintained a CMS Four to Five-Star rating and is an AHCA/NCAL National Quality Award Program Bronze award recipient. Her responsibility at our facility is staggering, a weight most people could never hold. Her compassion and commitment can be seen through her interactions with residents.

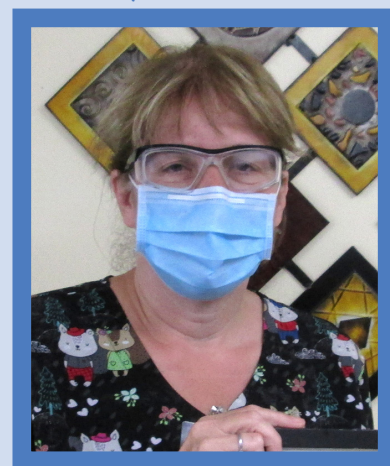
Michele has made nursing her life's work since she started as a Certified Nurse's Assistant over 27 years ago. In 2000, she joined the facility as a charge nurse and has since worked in a variety of roles including Admissions Coordinator, RN Supervisor and Assistant Director of Nursing prior to assuming her current role as Director of Nursing in 2006. Michele graduated from the University of Maine in Augusta with an Associate's degree in nursing in 1999 and received a Bachelor's degree in Nursing in 2016.

An effective Director of Nursing must be a good communicator, have strong clinical abilities and leadership skills, and be professional and flexible. Michele possesses all of these characteristics and more. She is able to maintain Federal and State compliance while at the same time consider each individual resident's wishes and preferences and allow staff flexibility. She is a great role model for all staff, young and old. Michele runs a tight ship and we are a better facility because of her.

According to one resident, "Michele is always there when you need her. She is honest, direct, and kind. If you ask her a question, she will answer it honestly or will tell you she doesn't know and will come back with an answer later."

Michele has "gone above and beyond" throughout the pandemic. We went through a very traumatic outbreak where more than 90% of our residents and a little over 50% of our staff testing positive for COVID-19. With so many residents sick and many staff out of work due to their illness, Michele and her team worked many long and daunting hours to ensure quality resident care.

Michele still spends many hours working on the floor providing care and treatment to the residents at Pinnacle. She also writes and rewrites new policies and procedures around COVID-19 including testing, visitation, etc. as regulatory guidance changes, which is often! Throughout the entire outbreak, Michele maintained her professional nature and worked diligently to pull the facility through one of the most difficult times we have ever faced.





Kasey Iwaniszek, CNA Laundry/Housekeeping Supervisor Ross Manor Continuing Care Community, Bangor

Kasey began her employment at Ross Manor five years ago in the Dietary Department as an Aid. She progressed to become a cook and learned about special diets, textures, and how important it is to pay attention to all the details in a menu. With a detour to nursing, Kasey became a Certified Nurses Aid. Today, she is the Housekeeping/Laundry Supervisor who is always smiling, always willing to help, and has a heart of gold.

As a cook, Kasey's patience was tested! There is much multitasking during meal prep for over 100 people! She often gives credit to others for her hard work and success. For example, she will tell you, if it wasn't for the strong leadership from supervisors and staff, she would have not advanced in the Dietary Department. The staff and employees had more faith in her than she did herself.

Looking for new challenges and career advancement, she took a Certified Nurses Aid education program. She worked hard to overcome challenges with learning and taking exams. She passed the CNA class and again gave credit to her teacher who supported her through the class. Completing the course and passing the written exam gave her confidence and taught her that you can do whatever you put your mind to! She transferred to the nursing department and worked as a CNA. While the dietary manager was sad to see her leave the kitchen, the nursing leadership was grateful to have Kasey on their team.

Eventually, Kasey went back to her roots to become the Housekeeping/Laundry Manager where she is a team player. Kasey faces the same challenges felt all over the state with hiring qualified individuals, a process that has been exacerbated by the pandemic. She frequently stops to help residents who need assistance and has a keen eye for seeing things that need tending to for the residents. During the pandemic, Kasey volunteered to work as a CNA at our sister home in Dexter during a serious COVID-19 outbreak that created staff shortages due to illness. With a smile, Kasey hopped on the band wagon and offered her services. She volunteered immediately, without hesitation.

At Ross Manor, Kasey frequently works as a CNA to help with the serious CNA shortage by picking up shifts on weekends. Not only is Kasey exemplary in the long term care field, she provided care for her niece and nephew after losing her sister. They have grown into beautiful young adults with her love and care.



One resident shares, "Kasey always has time for a visit, a laugh and will take the time to listen to me. Thanks for all you do."

Kasey gives 150 percent of herself at all times. She is always willing to help, no matter how busy she is or what she is in the middle of doing at that time. She is a caring individual who can dance circles around others as well as she is incredibly energetic and strong. She is very helpful on the floor and you'll never hear her say, "that's not my job." She is a great asset to the Ross team.



Heather Jackson

Dietary Director

Norway Center for Health & Rehabilitation, Norway



Heather is the Dietary Director at Norway Center but does much, much more each and every day.

She is always eager to assist the Activity Director at special luncheons, parties and theme days. She is an excellent cook and residents and staff are always excited to sample her new creations along with her all-time favorite cakes, cookies and entrees.

Heather has also assumed caring for the perennial Memory Garden at the Center. She plants, waters and weeds the Garden, which is a beautiful tribute to residents who have passed away. Our staff and residents often take in the beauty of the Garden and comment how fortunate we are to have it. We consider ourselves fortunate to have Heather maintain it with such love and care.

Heather does these things in addition to working in and managing the Dietary Department. She frequently works seven days a week and does whatever needs to be done to make sure our residents have fresh, appealing and nutritious meals and snacks.

Heather spearheads the home's annual "Drive Through Movie Night" one evening each summer. She not only volunteers her time/equipment, she sets up the projector and screen, participates the entire evening with concessions and enjoys talking and laughing with the residents and staff. Residents and staff alike refer to Heather as a "superstar" and Norway's "go to girl" as she is always doing something extra special for others, both staff and residents. She truly personifies "excellence in caring" each and every day and is most deserving of this award.





Shelly Katula-Blais

Director, Therapeutic Recreation Saint Mary's d'Youville Pavilion Lewiston

Shelly is an integral member of the St. Mary's interdisciplinary team. She is dedicated to her profession with the interest of her residents, patients and families at the forefront. Shelly works closely with residents, patients, families, and staff. She started out as a CNA and then completed her degree in Therapeutic Recreation. Shelly continues her CNA work, assisting in that role as needed.

Shelly has a strong work ethic. During the Covid-19 pandemic, as with all other departments, she found ways to adapt with Covid changes. One of Shelly's main focuses was for residents, patients and families to be able to maintain contact with one another. Shelly played an important role in arranging Zoom visits and window visits. This took up the majority of her time while still ensuring there were sufficient activities scheduled in-house. As the Covid months moved on, Shelly was the contact for the indoor visits once this was allowed. Again, this took up the majority of her time but she was committed to see that the visits continued in an effort to improve the quality of life for residents and patients. She made a lot of people happy with her efforts.

Shelly promoted resident quality of life by dedicating herself to family visits. It brought great joy to all those involved just to see the faces of residents, patients and families light up during the visits. There often was not a dry eye from anyone witnessing the heartfelt visits. Shelly received countless thank-you's from residents, patients and families. All were grateful for her efforts.

Because of the time commitment that was involved with the scheduling/coordinating family visits this was Shelly's main focus for several months. She continued to run her department smoothly. As the Director of the department, she and her team did not skip a beat in scheduling activities on the units as permitted under the Covid restrictions. We are very fortunate to have Shelly on our team!



Susan Kenny

Activity Assistant

Westgate Center for Rehabilitation & Alzheimer's Care, Bangor



Sue Kenny's relationship with Westgate began as a volunteer and blossomed into a career with the Activity Department in 2017. She has demonstrated care, concern and respect for the residents every day since she started. Sue knows them all, not just on her unit but building wide. She has always spent the time to get to know everyone to a degree where she can talk to them and is able to meet them where they are in cognition. She has an acute awareness of the "under dog," making sure they get time and attention to feel successful in social and emotional areas. Residents describe her as "the fun one."

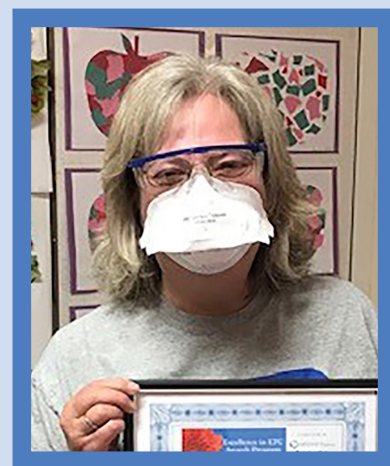
The development of a men's group to address the recreation and social needs of the male population was solely Sue's project. The group blossomed from an idea to an active group with eight to ten fellows at each meeting. There is one particular resident who used to work as a mechanic and also built his own home and a roller rink. Sue designed a project around him, and men like him, to address the need to be productive. She came up with a product, figured costs and a sales plan. This ensured that we could purchase materials for the next men's group project. It was a wonderful success, meeting the needs of those used to "working" for a living.

With larger group events, Sue spends her time with those that need extra attention to ensure that they feel a part of the event and are involved to the greatest extent possible. She plays individual games with several people who may not be able to tolerate larger activities.

During our very difficult time with Covid-19, Sue worked tirelessly assuring individual's needs were met. She not only provided one-to-one visits, but did so in full PPE (and never got the virus during the outbreak). Sue attended to people by playing individual games, visits and reading to residents.

As staff were unable to work, Sue stepped up. She worked in laundry, delivered meals, provided personal care and packed rooms as people were moved around the facility for Covid precautions. Sue received so many compliments from families. They were happy that their loved ones were attended to by a staff familiar to them. Sue comforted residents who were scared in this new situation, sick, and at times, lonely. One particular family reached out with their appreciation of how lovingly their father's belongings had been packed up in the midst of this awful pandemic. The family of a resident lost to Covid-19 called to express their appreciation that Sue had sat with him in his final days, comforting him as well as lovingly packing his belongings in boxes. The family was touched by the care given to their father and his possessions.

Sue displayed strength and calm in a situation none of us had ever experienced before. Her compassion for the residents, her coworkers and our residents' families was exemplary.





Aurele Laferriere

Activities/Transporter

Forest Hill Fort Kent

Aurele, or J.R., as he is affectionately known, has completely changed his role since the start of the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, he was solely responsible for transporting residents to outings and medical appointments. As the public health emergency evolved, J.R. began working in the Activity Department doing necessary activities with residents to keep them stimulated and engaged. J.R.'s interactions with his supervisor shows he has always been willing to adapt and do whatever is needed with residents. J.R. will always check in with his supervisor before and after each shift to provide details of his day. J.R. easily adapts to what is required of him on each day.

J.R. began a daily coffee and donut social group with several residents. J.R. began this initiative individually. The residents enjoy time spent with J.R., discussing daily comings and goings of the facility. J.R. always places the resident first, with safety a priority during his interactions with residents. One specific resident has attached to J.R. as a brother. This gentleman always looks for him and never misses a chance to spend time with J.R..

According to staff, "J.R. is fully deserving of this award as everything he does is first and foremost for the resident." One recent activity completed by residents was to share items they are thankful for. J. R. was specifically mentioned numerous times, as the residents are thankful for the "van man."

J.R.'s role at the facility was completely upended when the pandemic began, but he took it all in stride. He pivoted from transportation to activities at the start and has excelled in this transition. He has led groups, provided 1:1 activities, and continued group outings with residents as allowed. He is humble and very deserving of this award.



Stacey Leland

Certified Nursing Assistant

Independence Advocates of Maine/ Treats Falls, Orono



Stacey is an inspiration to our team. She takes great pride in her job. She is always courteous and respectful of her peers and supervisors. She is an advocate for those she cares for. Stacey seeks and suggests positive change.

Stacey is a strong role model and mentor who recently become a Lead CNA. Very organized, Stacey knows the residents' care plans and is a good problem solver and listener. The nurses are always happy to see Stacey on the assignment sheet for the day. They feel reassured that resident needs will be well met. Her peers likewise feel reassured they have a strong resource person to go to.

Stacey comes to work to build relationships with the residents she cares for and the peers she works with. She takes the time to go beyond the day-to-day necessities that need to be done. One of her peers says, "It brings tears to my eyes when I hear her talk with one of the residents who is her approximate age. The woman's diagnosis and life situation have made her immobilized in a wheelchair with an intact mind. Her only independence are two fingers of a contracted hand that move just a fraction of an inch moving the joystick on her wheelchair so she can go where she wants in the facility."

During this resident's morning care, Stacey is often overheard asking her what is going on in her life, sharing little stories with her and asking her if there is anything she wants to talk about. This woman trusts Stacey and at times shares her thoughts and feelings of loneliness, her recent losses of her mother and her friend. The impact that this kindness has on the resident's quality of life can not be overstated.

One resident had this to say about Stacey, "She is nice, kind to me, even when I'm not nice to her."

Frequently providing tips and reminders to those needing to remember to wash their hands, social distance and keep their masks on when at appointments can get old after six months, let alone more than 12 months and soon become forgotten. Not for Stacey. Our residents all have intellectual disabilities and taking the fear out of COVID-19 for them is on the top of Stacey's priority list while on shift. All residents are fully vaccinated which allows them to be in the common area together at a distance. But as an advocate for infection control, Stacey keeps hygiene practices and environmental cleaning in her forethoughts. When not providing care, Stacey can be seen with a sanitizing wipe in her hand wiping down surfaces.

A consummate professional with a kind heart is the best way to describe Stacey.





Sandra Maines

Store Clerk
75 State Street
Portland

Sandy is the glue that holds everyone together! Sandy runs our store located on our Main Street. The store sells basic items as well as provides affordable breakfast and lunches to our staff. Sandy sets the tone for the day by providing breakfast to staff who want it. Along with the food order, always made with love and tailored to your preferences, Sandy will install a dose of humor, advice, or positive mantra to get your day doing.

Sandy makes sure that the residents who visit her store have what they are looking for, and if for some reason she doesn't have an item she will make it her mission to get the item quickly. Sandy has a gift, and that is she sees each person completely. She takes the time and energy to know everyone that comes to the store, including contractors that are in our community or the mail person. As one resident said, "She remembers everyone's individual likes and dislikes; she makes me feel special."

Over a year ago, I went into the store looking for a lemon. She didn't have any lemons but offered to go to the kitchen and get me one and cut it up... I told her it wasn't necessary. Every day since then that I have gone into the store, there is a container with fresh cut lemons! Sandy remembering my lemons makes me feel special, however, Sandy remembers about 50 such one off requests on a regular basis. The result is she makes us all feel special.

One thing that practically stands out is that Sandy started bringing in a little stuffed animal and every weekend she would send it home with a resident who needed a little extra love for the weekend. This shows her insight to be able to have residents see their self-worth and value in life by turning the resident into a caregiver. One resident said, as she returned the stuffed animal to the store on Monday, after having it for the weekend, "Thank you that really helped me."

A family member of a resident said, "I am so grateful for Sandy. I know my mom will have access to go into the store and pick out her own items. Something as simple as selecting a birthday card for her granddaughter by herself makes her feel connected and engaged with her family, even though, due to her age and condition, she can't get out on her own anymore."

During the pandemic, Sandy has certainly risen to the occasion, providing care, comfort and peace of mind to residents, staff and family members by making sure we have what we need. She kept the store open with protocols so staff could shop for residents during quarantine days, which was literally a lifeline for all. We offered free lunches to all staff with a daily credit at the store. Although this increased Sandy's work significantly, she provided service with a smile and a sense of humor. During Covid-19, what we took for granted was suddenly a luxury, being able to go to our onsite store, even one at a time when we had capacity limits, was the highlight of the day for many and provided a sense of normalcy.



When residents could not get to the store, Sandy brought it to them. She created a store on wheels, a cart delivered by various staff members. This took innovative thinking and team collaboration. Sandy also helped in other areas during Covid-19- supporting room services delivery with the dining team and providing reassurance, in her presence and positive attitude, that things would return to normal, and she would be there for all her residents, and couldn't wait to delight them during their visits to "her" store.



Peter Masterman

Maintenance Technician

Market Square Health Care Center

South Paris



Pete has universal respect amongst all residents, families and staff. This is not a common occurrence. It starts with Pete's down-to-earth demeanor and attitude. He treats every person in every encounter with respect. He does not judge you by title, tax return, dress etc. Pete is the model employee in areas that are the utmost of importance. He greets and acknowledges everyone whom he meets and is upbeat in tone with a smile or laugh.

As challenges come his way, he never sulks or turns moody. It is always about how he can accomplish what is being asked. How can I meet residents' needs to improve their day? He never calls out sick and he stays off social media. He moves from one chore to the next, never stopping to complain, but often stopping to cheer up a resident or employee whom he thinks is a little down. Pete requires zero supervision. Ask once and one can move on knowing it was completed.

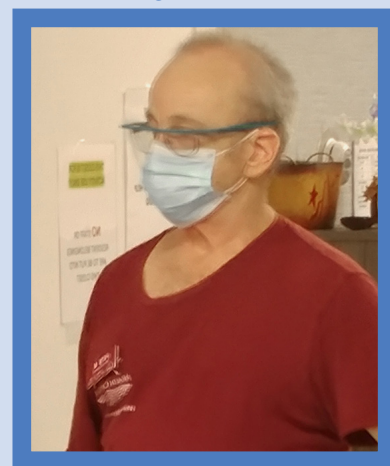
Pete is the "floor guy". He takes such pride in ensuring our common areas, hallways, rooms, etc. are free of sand, salt and debris. During room changes he will always ask for 20 minutes to wash and clean the floor, completely. During winter months, Pete stays on top of his floors, so residents and staff are not tracking dirt and salt everywhere they go.

For a room change or new admission, Pete drops everything to make sure they know how the TV remote works, what all the functions are on the bed and help hang or display family pictures, items or furniture. Each room has a standard Market Square TV. However, residents often have an enhanced TV from home or that family purchased. During a week of many moves as census climbed and those rehabbing became permanent residents, Pete was called on to move beds, TV's, personal items etc. In one particular situation he went out and purchased a wall mount for this particular resident. It was mounted so the resident could watch from his chair. Unfortunately, within days the resident took a turn for the worse. Pete went into his room, talked to the resident to get a take on the situation and moved and rehung the bracket so the resident continued to have his shows to watch from bed. The family noted that Pete "did not wait to be asked, but just took the time to care". As word got around, the Resident Council convened and nominated Pete for Employee of the Month, something no one could recall ever happening.

On December 5, 2019, we had our first confirmed positive case for Covid-19. The next three days went 13, 38, 64 and up from there. Since we had a designated Covid Community, every day had multiple moves. Pete worked hand in glove with house-keeping to make sure the moves were as stress free as possible to the residents and nursing staff. He helped with moveable wall barriers that had to be relocated daily. He never blinked an eye while putting on full PPE and remained upbeat and calm.

The CNAs who nominated Pete say it best, "Pete is always great at rolling with the punches. He can change game plans at the drop of a hat. Yet he never gets flustered or bothered."

Pete put off his foot surgery for seven months during the worst of Covid so he would not leave Market Square struggling to keep the facility clean and safe. Thank goodness the surgery was successful and Pete returned ahead of schedule in time for the re-opening challenges.





Sheila McAlister

Certified Nursing Assistant

Market Square Health Care Center

South Paris

With 20 years of dedication to Market Square, Sheila is the consummate “old school” employee. She dresses and carries herself as a professional in this noble profession. She avoids texts, Facebook etc. and, instead, has personal conversations to talk through resident needs, assignments, change in condition, family questions and topics of the day. This was extremely critical during the Center’s Covid outbreak as questions, calls and meetings were running together as we worked diligently to keep residents, their families, staff, and the community up to date on our Covid situation. Sheila attended daily or weekly updates, asking pertinent questions and relying on factual answers, not speculation.

Sheila never gets caught up in rumors and gossip that can be so detrimental to workplace morale and day to day operations. Not only was Sheila one of our most loyal employees during Covid, today, she will come in early, stay late or work extra so residents remain in good care and upbeat in their mood. To help keep morale high, Sheila arrives with doughnuts, coffee, ice cream, pizza, cookies, etc. to share with all those who work, live, or wander onto her community during work. Split shift? Sheila makes sure you have a fresh coffee waiting for your arrival and one to take on the way out.

Sheila never shortchanges a resident’s care on her watch. With Covid we had exponential callouts and positive results for residents. The gowning, gloving, shields and masks hindered productivity. Yet Sheila made sure her residents never missed their shower days and would facilitate extra showers to give comfort. With a beautiful voice, Sheila sang to residents to alleviate anxiousness and fear of the unknown.

Sheila never goes through the motions in providing care. She excels at knowing each resident’s mannerisms, likes/dislikes, family history and their personal history. By assembling this knowledge, Sheila has earned the authorship of these words from the entire Resident Council: “Sheila makes Market Square our home, not a place where we live. Sheila is family when many of us have little or no family. During Covid, Sheila was the one constant that got us through those dark days of outbreak.”

Market Square maintained a dining room experience during Covid for residents who needed assistance to partake and consume their meals. With Sheila leading by example, Market Square managed to maintain weights at pre-Covid levels for most residents. This was primarily due to Sheila maintaining her professional standards of care, personal connections during meals and moments of humor and jokes to keep spirits up as visitation had come to a grinding halt. This surely helped Market Square residents avoid those tough swoons into depression and assured them we will get to the other side soon and enjoy each other like normal again.



Nine hospice residents passed during our Covid outbreak. The community where Sheila worked had four residents pass. Many centers did not allow in-person visits during the pandemic. Market Square put a system in place that allowed families to be with their loved ones during their last hours. Sheila was the lead advocate for her residents, notifying families of the process to see their loved ones. Sheila helped transition residents into private rooms to have visitors, met families, walked them to the room and ensured they had what they needed for a comforting visit. Sheila did not have one special moment, she had months of just getting it done, somehow, somehow so that no one passed alone at Market Square. In our minds, that is the legacy of her career.



Lori Morey

Human Resources Manager

Island Nursing Home & Care Facility

Deer Isle



Lori Morey is an exemplary individual, employee and Director at Island Nursing Home. Lori's character is demonstrated through her professionalism, excellent follow through, support, wisdom and encouragement.

Lori is a constant; she's the one that all staff can rely upon, feel secure and comfortable approaching for work (and at times nonwork related) issues. Lori provides our small community a sense of support through staff advocacy, humor, and creative, uplifting periodic staff participation activities. Through almost daily education of staff, Lori demonstrates how seriously and knowledgably she understands and appreciates her HR position's impact on others.

On a weekly basis, Lori works tirelessly going above and beyond by making herself available to staff regardless of the time of day or night, flexing her hours to accommodate all shifts, making herself available on her scheduled days off, weekends and EVEN during a recent COVID facility outbreak. During this time, she mustered energy while fighting her own COVID illness and still working long, challenging hours attempting to replace direct care staff who had fallen to their COVID illness. She didn't complain or allude to her long hours, her demanding position as HR Director and the weight of responsibility she has! By supporting staff, Lori ultimately knows this can have a positive impact on our greatest facility asset – our residents!

Lori is continuously staff advocating and counseling by conveying a high-quality persona filled with integrity, great care and affection for others. Her mature perspective has indeed been an instrumental mentoring and source of respect among all employees. Perhaps some of that comes from the fact that Lori began working at INH in 1983 as a certified nurse assistant. With little doubt, Lori fully embodies a love for the wellbeing of Island Nursing Home, for the Deer Isle community and for each staff member and resident who resides here.

One particular resident, Rose, would visit Lori in her office daily. Though Rose was able to speak but a few words, she and Lori had a wonderful, loving relationship. Both Rose and Lori took great pride in their clothing attire, and they would do a daily 'comparison' of each other. If Rose didn't approve of Lori's attire selection on a given day, Rose would make her thoughts known. It became a source of positive connection with much joking and laughter between them. Rose felt an extra affinity being near Lori because Lori's dog, Dallas, often accompanies her to work. Dallas would get much attention from Rose who clearly felt Lori's office was a safe haven.

After Rose died during our COVID outbreak, Lori wrote a letter to Rose's daughter after hearing about the difficult time the daughter was having adjusting to Rose's sudden and unexpected death. In this letter, Lori shared some different moments and memories that she and Rose had shared through the years while being a resident at INH; Rose's daughter's response to this letter was one that was not only most appreciative but that it had provided some necessary solace and peace about the loss she had sustained from Rose's passing. This is but one situation where Lori will take the time and effort to provide support to others and share genuine care for others.





Reggie Murray

Infection Preventionist

Forest Hill Fort Kent

A 40-year veteran employee of Forest Hill, Reggie is always willing to go above and beyond for her much loved profession and organization. As the Infection Preventionist, Reggie is always willing to provide education to staff to best explain the reasoning behind the material to assist staff in understanding why we are implementing this policy or that guidance. Her hard work and dedication during the pandemic has been second to none as she created policies and procedures for the facility. Reggie has spent many hours researching best practices and implementing them with all staff to be prepared if they were needed. Reggie has never backed away from hard work and has shined since assuming this role at the facility.

Reggie will never walk past a resident who asks for help regardless of the request. Reggie has also spent many hours educating our residents on the risks of COVID and the reasoning behind the guidance being followed. One example is when she sat with a group of residents explaining the benefits of receiving vaccination and why it is important to receive the vaccine for their health, as well as the health of the other residents and staff.

According to one resident, “Reggie’s soft-spoken approach and explanation removed all fear from our minds.”

Indeed, Reggie’s calm demeanor and approach have allowed staff to feel at ease when learning new procedures and policies to better understand. She does not induce anxiety when providing education to staff and residents alike. She always takes the time to explain the “why” behind the new approach.

She has gone above and beyond by doing anything that has presented itself to her. She will never turn away from a difficult challenge. She has altered her schedule to be here when the staff are here to audit donning/doffing, or even provide education to the staff who work “off” shifts. She has risen to the challenge time and time again and has not turned away from it at any point. She is more than an unsung hero. She has worked tirelessly to prepare our staff in the event of an outbreak, as well as worked hard to prevent an outbreak from occurring.



Anne “Denise” Parker

LPN/Charge Nurse

St. Andre Health Care Facility

Biddeford



Denise's influence on the team around her is easily noticed. Her positive, kind demeanor with staff and empathic approach makes her one of the most sought out team members at St. Andre. She has been nominated three times this year alone for our Value In Practice Awards (VIP) by her peers.

These are some clear examples of all she brings to her team:

“Denise strives to give excellent care to all her residents. She is always willing to help her coworkers. She made my transition to the 2nd floor a lot easier.”

“Repeated positive feedback by new staff on Denise's knowledge, patience and kindness when training. Thank you, Denise for taking such good care of our new staff!”

Denise is our ‘go-to’ training nurse who balances her extensive knowledge of residents and positive attitude to make her a joy to learn from. If her team members need her, Denise is there, whether it's to answer a quick question or staying extra hours. Reliability and responsibility are key components to her personality.

Family members frequently speak of Denise's approach. Her willingness to sit bedside with residents and families during the most challenging of times speaks to her dedication and spirit.

“We relied on Denise and her calm demeanor while we stayed with our mom during her last days. She always met us with a smile and gentle touch and knew to give us a simple update. She never missed an opportunity to provide us with the security we needed,” says a family member.

Ask any manager in a facility what kind of employee is a ‘dream employee’ and you would find Denise to be that person. She embraces all of her families and residents without hesitancy and always with support and kindness.

When considering COVID and its impact on our building, we would be neglectful if we didn't mention Denise's leadership. As a Charge Nurse, Denise set the example for her team as residents were moved to our COVID unit. The shock and fear we felt was mitigated by her presence and leadership. She demonstrated healthy, appropriate grieving to those around her when COVID impacted so many of us - residents and staff alike.

Denise's willingness to be flexible and change direction on a moment's notice helped all of us to focus and stay present for our residents and coworkers. During a time when most of us were at a loss - Denise reminded us of what was most important - our ability to stay strong for each other and our residents. Denise worked tirelessly over the course of COVID to maintain stability for our residents - and being a voice of reason amid the chaos. We are all incredibly grateful to have her here as a nurse - and as a true leader.





Laura Phillips

Activities Supervisor

MaineGeneral Rehabilitation & Long Term Care - Glenridge Augusta

Laura's interactions with supervisors and peers are consistently polite, respectful, energetic, kind, empathetic, and compassionate. She renewed her CNA/Med tech status and works per diem (along with her 40-hour activities supervisor position) picking up multiple shifts to help the nursing department. She has been seen mowing the lawn, weed whacking, serving meals to residents, escorting residents to and from meals, and setting up awnings for outdoor activities. She volunteered to be trained as a fit tester for N95 masks and learned to perform COVID antigen testing for employees.

Person centered care is foremost in Laura's mind. She has created and implemented structured personalized activities daily for residents. She provides socials, music, games and spiritual activities and she will even make a trip to the library to get a book that a resident requested. The music and memory program is a part of the admission process. Because of our dementia clientele, Laura will meet with both the resident and family member to find out what kind of music the residents enjoy. Laura will download the music on an iPod and provide the resident with their own personalized music. The residents' reaction is priceless and always brings tears of joy to Laura knowing she has made the residents' day, seeing the resident happy, singing and even sometimes dancing. Her motto is to enhance the residents' lives every day!

Here's what some have to say about Laura:

"Super nice respectful person to everyone! Always has a smile on her face no matter what is going on."

"Through COVID, Laura had the ability to adapt to constant change. She was a lifeline to families."

"Laura is probably the most patient centered hard-working person I know. The pandemic has been so hard on nursing homes across the nation. But with Laura, you wouldn't even know it. Laura steps up to fill in CNA slots, is always willing to contribute her time, ideas and help in any way she can. She does it with a smile, no complaints. I wouldn't even know that she sacrificed weekends and nights to fill in slots if others hadn't told me. I wouldn't have known that she takes hundreds of calls to and from families to keep them updated. Some of those calls have been very challenging, and heartbreaking. There was a particular situation where a grandson of one of our residents was leaving for the military and the patient likely wouldn't live long enough to see his return. Because of Covid, he couldn't see him to say goodbye, so Laura came in on her time off to set up a virtual way for him to be a part of the family's goodbye gathering. That's just one of hundreds of examples of what she has done to keep families connected through this pandemic. Laura represents the best of humanity."



During the pandemic, Laura created good rapport with families and took the lead in assuring that residents were able to connect with family via zoom, facetime, window visits. She organized, scheduled and monitored inside/outside visitation. This was a huge challenge due to the ever-changing visitation status. She planned and implemented a parade at the hospital parking lot last fall for the residents. Staff and family members were able to wave and welcome the residents as they drove by. See was a lifeline connection for residents and families!



Melissa Phillips, RN

Nurse Manager Hibbard Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation Center, Inc. Dover-Foxcroft



Melissa Phillips is a beautiful example of kindness and caring when it comes to her residents and peers, as well as the nurses and CNAs she supervises. She leads by example, even when she has had the most difficult day. She always has a smile for her residents. Residents are her priority, not only their health and safety, but also their psychosocial well-being. She is rarely just in her office. It is normal to see her out on the floor, working with, teaching and guiding CNAs and nurses or simply taking a resident outside to enjoy some fresh air. When help is needed with any event, she is the first to volunteer. If you need advice, she is ready to help. She always gives helpful ideas and feedback and knows and loves her residents inside and out. If a peer is having a difficult day, she is always willing to listen and help with kindness and love. She is a great example of an exemplary RN who exceeds expectations and has earned an exceptional reputation, not only at Hibbard, but also in our community.

COVID has been a very difficult time for residents, families and staff in long term care. Melissa always shares her heart with families and residents. One example that comes to mind is a resident who was very close to her family that visited often when they could no longer visit due to COVID. Her health worsened and she made the decision not to treat the change in condition and said she was “ready”. Melissa was in her room helping staff by providing care for this resident who shared with her that she had talked to the doctors and her family and made the decision to not get treatment and knew she would die. Melissa showed her such love and care. She cried with her and her family and helped them all come together and be there for her at the end of her life. Melissa is the example of what everyone wants and deserves in a nurse when caring for you or your loved one, especially at a time when they can’t be there for so long. This resident’s family thanked Melissa for showing “how much she cared for our mom and us. It comforted us to know that she was well cared for even when we couldn’t be there. A+++ thank you for everything”.

During COVID, we have found ourselves short staffed, like all of healthcare. Melissa has stepped up and stepped in to fill in for charge nurses, CNAs and weekend staffing positions. When we had positive staff cases, she was one of the first to volunteer to come in on a weekend evening to call families and begin testing staff and residents. She is a leader who has taken on tasks, led the charge and helped keep our facility safe for our residents and staff. She has comforted residents who miss their families and are scared about what will happen next. She has filled in for families when they can’t hug their mom or dad or sing happy birthday. She has led “Friday dance parties” where staff and residents dance (some in wheelchairs) conga style down the hallway, producing lots of much needed, smiles from staff and residents!





Margaret Quinn, RN

Hospice Case Manager

Androscoggin Home Healthcare & Hospice, Lewiston

Margaret has been Androscoggin Home Health Care and Hospice's primary hospice RN case manager in Clover Manor. Margaret is responsible for coordinating the hospice inter-disciplinary team with the facility's inter-disciplinary team to ensure the patient gets the best end of life care possible. With 35 years of clinical experience, Margaret treats all her co-workers with respect and openness. She values input from all team members and encourages involvement from the entire inter-disciplinary team understanding the unique perspective they each bring. Margaret's dedication to the art of nursing and her ability to collaborate for the good of the patient is admired by her peers as well as her supervisors. She is respectful of everyone regardless of their position. Margaret is open to feedback from her supervisor and is never defensive.

Margaret leads by example; it is in this way she is a role model for others. She shows up each day and puts the needs of the patient first. Recently a newer nursing colleague was asked how Margaret has provided mentorship to her. The nurse responded: "Margaret is the most thorough and dedicated nurse I've worked with. She knows what's going on with all of her patients and cares deeply for their well-being. Working together at Clover has been a great partnership. She leads with poise and determination and is gentle in her approach. She is well known and respected, and I very much enjoy her company. She sets the bar high and in doing so is an example of the Androscoggin mission. She is funny, kind, tireless and happy to answer my questions or give me tips from her experience."

Everything Margaret does centers around the resident/patient/consumer's quality of life. Some of the things she does on a daily basis include: arranging her schedule to ensure that she visits when family is present in order to update and support patients and families together, rounding each day to prioritize patient needs based on the report received from the staff at Clover, advocating for patient needs and communicating timely with staff and family, and she will stop whatever she is doing to be completely present if they are crying or express distress of any kind. A family member recently shared this experience: "Once the decline started, it happened rapidly, so we went from being exhausted from trying to find appropriate care to being exhausted with grief that we were losing her. Because her end-of-life experience was brought on by a fall and head trauma, she literally went from being aware of her surroundings to being out of touch with reality overnight. My mom was in rough shape in the end and so were we. Margaret helped to ease so much of the guilt that we all felt because we couldn't be with my mom 24/7. She spent time with her when we couldn't be there and that was a HUGE relief. The care that Margaret provided was basic. She kept my mom comfortable. She talked to her. She held her hand. It made all the difference to my mom and the rest of my family in ways that I still can't quite find the words for."



Margaret's commitment to resident/patient/consumer's quality of life has never more evident than during COVID, especially during the initial days. To ensure patient's needs were met, Margaret worked an average of 6 days per week for several months, at times not taking a full day off for several weeks in a row. She understood the impact that separation due to COVID from family would have on patient's quality of life and the family's grief. She made it part of her personal mission to minimize the impact. Margaret was one of the first nurses to utilize technology to connect patients in the facility with their family outside. No matter how many patients Margaret had to care for or how busy she was she always took the time to ensure that patients and family could connect if they wanted. Margaret truly was a light in the darkness during uncertain times.



Danielle Rand, RN

Charge Nurse

Maine Veterans' Home

Bangor



Danielle maintains a professional attitude when working with management and peers. She consistently upholds the core values of Maine Veterans' Home. As a role model, Danielle sets herself apart by always including peers and management in critical decisions and provides key information when asked about ways the home can improve quality of care. Danielle has a true passion for taking care of our aging military population and always treats them with the respect and dignity they so very much deserve. She routinely goes above and beyond and attends resident functions on her days off to help with families during difficult times. Danielle works as part of an integrated style of management and works towards a common goal. She can routinely be found doing little extras. Danielle is a perfect candidate for a long-term role at Maine Veterans' Home.

Danielle shows growth in her career by seeking out new opportunities to learn, and helps others learn as needed. She does not shy away from difficult items and instead faces them head on and brings the CNA team along with her. She is an exceptional leader to CNAs. She treats them with empathy and understanding when they need a person to talk with.

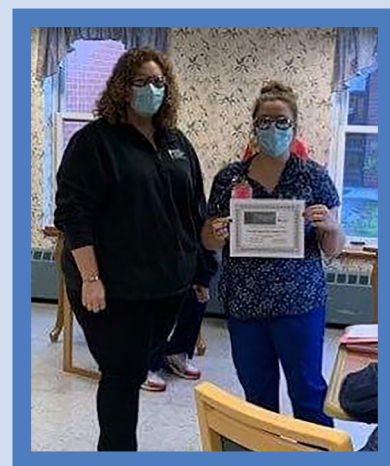
Danielle went above and beyond for a resident by leaving notes and posters in the resident's room, saying things such as, "it's a great day", or "the sun is out" or "have a good weekend". These small interactions made one single man feel that much better about his situation and provided a degree of friendship, knowing that someone cares.

Danielle is a mentor for new nurses. She takes the time to teach and show them the correct ways to carry out tasks within our systems. She is without a doubt a leader in this facility. She recently went out of her way to help a family of a gentleman that had passed in the hospital to coordinate a flag draping procession from the hospital and comforted this gentleman in his remaining days. She is a true professional that goes above and beyond for her residents.

In addition to this she takes this same approach to her co-workers and subordinates. She can routinely be seen helping CNAs and other staff within the facility when needed. She truly is an inspiration for CNAs that are considering a nursing career as she has come from CNA to R.N. while working in this home. She is a model R.N. that many staff and management look up to and is in succession planning to be the next Nurse Manager on Long Term Care.

During COVID-19, Danielle was an advocate for all staff and residents despite the difficulty of the situation. She was a positive voice for being diligent with the masking restriction and took extra time to help staff and residents understand the current situation. During this time, Danielle's husband was away, and she was unable to see him in person due to COVID-19 restrictions. Her positive attitude despite this added hardship is an exemplary example of perseverance through tough times.

Danielle is an example of the kind of Nurse every manager, DON, and Administrator wants to employ. Her attendance through COVID-19 was exemplary, her commitment to keeping residents safe is exemplary, and her attitude above all is one that shines in the face of adversity when many others turn to complaining and criticizing. Danielle stands up to support the global efforts to contain this virus. She is a rare gift to long term care nursing as she understands and has utmost respect for our clients and staff.





Tarsha Rodrigue

Associate Director of Skilled & LTC MaineGeneral Rehabilitation & Nursing Care - Gray Birch Augusta

Tarsha is our driving force, our supporter, our cheerleader, and our mentor. She has been a nurse since 2004 and has worked at Maine General for the past 17 years. Tarsha has been instrumental in bringing quality initiatives forward in the nursing departments at both Gray Birch and Glenridge, helping to bring Glenridge to a 5-star rating. In 2020, Tarsha was promoted to Associate Director (AD) of Skilled and LTC due to her hard work and perseverance.

Staff describe Tarsha as knowledgeable, kind, smart, steadfast, approachable, and with forward thinking/innovative ideas to improve healthcare across the LTC continuum. Prior to her current position, Tarsha worked as a Nurse Manager and Clinical Nursing Supervisor. One of the things we love about her is that she never forgets her time as a nursing student and a floor nurse. Tarsha is humble and provides guidance to the staff without bias or judgment. Her senior leadership peers also look to her for support, guidance, and know that they can always count on her.

To quote some of her peers: “she is a wonderful person inside and out”, “she is always willing to pass her knowledge on to those around her”, “she is compassionate”, “she is a gem”, and “we are honored to work with her.” “Tarsha is my supervisor, and I am very lucky to have her in my corner. She is a wonderful listener, is not quick to agree for the sake of agreeing, is respectful if she has a difference of opinion, and always asks us how we are doing.” Tarsha is a role model because she embodies all the qualities it defines, to include setting a good example/commitment to mutual goals/efforts to achieve success/perseverance.

When one of the facilities that Tarsha oversees went in to COVID-19 outbreak status in 2020, it was all-hands-on-deck with Tarsha at the helm. She was, and is, a natural when it comes to navigating an Incident Command situation. The staff immediately felt at ease with her presence in the building and the calm, steadfast nature in which she got the job done. She ensured that the facility was adequately staffed, calling upon staff from other departments at Maine General. She ensured that the staff had adequate, appropriate, and a full supply of PPE - which many of us know was challenging at best. Tarsha rounded the neighborhoods multiple times per day, checked in with staff in every department, and had their best interest at heart.



Even more so, Tarsha ensured that the residents and patients had what they needed. She personally called families to update them, worked closely with the CDC, Licensing, and many other entities in an effort to come together in a time of crisis. Staff felt comfortable going to her with questions and ideas regarding the pandemic all the while knowing she would listen and provide support. There is not one staff member that worked during the outbreak who does not reference how supportive Tarsha was. “Rock star” is the theme of those conversations. Since the outbreak status cleared, Tarsha has led several debriefing efforts in an attempt to continue to improve upon the processes she helped to create. To say that she can lead a successful meeting is an understatement! She made sure that the staff were recognized for their hard work during the outbreak to include celebrations with thanks, food, and AHCA/NCAL Healthcare Hero pins. The families are beyond grateful that her leadership allowed for the best possible outcomes during the outbreak and the residents are better for having her there. We could not have done it without her!



Jane Small, CNA

Medical Technician

Ross Manor Continuing Care Community, Bangor



Jane Small has worked at Ross Manor for 30 years as a CNA and Certified Medical Technician. Throughout her decades of service, Jane has attended to residents quietly, kindly, respectfully, independently, reliably and without fanfare. Her tenure is amazing, being employed for three decades by the same company! Jane was one of the individuals who helped close James Taylor hospital in Bangor, bringing their long term care residents to the brand-new facility of Ross Manor and provided care for them in their new home. During her years of employment, she has worked on numerous units and has seen many changes.

During Jane's tenure she has assisted employees who were sick. She pitches in when her unit is short-handed. Without being asked, she is an ambassador. She helps orient traveling nurses who are unfamiliar with the staff, patients and company guidelines. Jane frequently covers open shifts to help out at the last minute. She does not complain, and she treats residents with dignity and respect. Her work ethic speaks for itself, as she rarely misses work.

During the Pandemic, Jane agreeably worked on many units. She used her own vacation time at the peak of the Pandemic, so others would be able to work in her place! She was flexible and changed from an eight-hour shift to twelve hours per day to cover open areas, especially when the facility experienced a shortage of workers. She diligently cared for residents on a COVID-19 positive unit. Wearing all the required PPE was tiring and challenging to endure. This was a risk she was willing to take and stay true to her commitment to being a caregiver. She is a dedicated employee who is compassionate about her work.

Jane is the type of person who has a quiet demeanor and can go unnoticed. She quietly gets her work done efficiently. If a call bell needs answering, she will go out of her way to help any resident. Her co-workers love working with her due to her strong knowledge of the facility, the computer system, and general information that is unfamiliar to new employees. She often sits and chats with patients to cheer them up, never rushing a patient. Her attention to detail is impeccable and she has a keen sense of keeping medical errors to a minimum. During a time in long term care of call outs, quick quits, nursing turnover, labor shortages and more, we truly appreciate Jane's dedication to Ross Manor over the years!

Nancy, a retired RN, received excellent care by Jane. She stated, "She is personable, and she cares about her patients. Jane is very efficient, and she remembers what I like for food or snacks and/or how I like things set up. She is able to call everyone by name. She is a person who cares about the pride she takes in her work ethic and takes the time to talk to me during her breaks. She dresses professionally and I have a great deal of respect for her. She did an excellent job when I was her patient!"

Jane has been a key team player and worked long hours during the Pandemic. She gives excellent care even when the day may be tough, even when there is a shortage of workers. She does not get upset or try to hurry a patient that may need longer times to process a thought or respond to what a patient's needs are at that time. She is patient safety driven and is truly an asset to the nursing profession.





Katherine Tredeau, CRMA

Activity Assistant Alzheimer's Care Center Gardiner

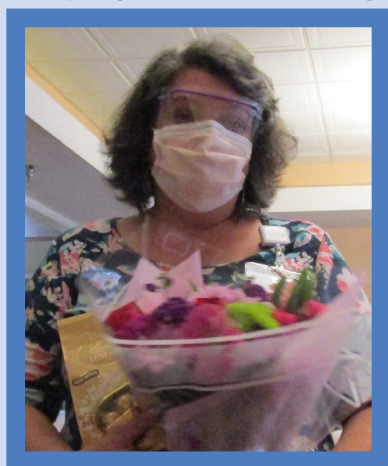
Katie is a “people” person. She is outgoing, friendly and she can strike up a conversation with anyone! Her interactions are personable and professional. When involved in meetings and trainings, Katie listens attentively, adds to discussions and comes up with thoughtful and creative ideas. Katie came up with some great ideas during planning for our employee appreciation week- making a purchase of a chair back massager and a fun basketball game. Both items were a hit during the week, and we’ve been able to use them at other times with both staff and residents.

Katie is a team player who collaborates with others when organizing an activity. For instance, she plans wonderful picnics for our residents. She first checks in with the kitchen to chat and plan the picnic food options. She then discusses with other staff which residents would be good to bring and if there is anything we should know about their needs that day. Katie then packs everything that we’ll need for the picnic and away we go! Because of her organization, intelligence and team focus, Katie has been chosen to attend a more advanced training through MaineGeneral this fall.

Here is what some of her coworkers say about Katie: “Katie has a heart of GOLD! She shows up every day with a smile on her face. Katie is always willing to help out. She is amazing with the residents, and we are so lucky to have her here at the Alzheimer’s Care Center!”

“She shows so much excitement when talking with us about a new idea. It shows how much she truly loves the work she does with residents and club members.”

Katie knows our residents very well and she designs 1:1 activities with individuals in mind. A few residents enjoy watching the birds. Katie engages them by having them make the hummingbird nectar for the feeders and keeping them filled. She fashions bird crafts, listens to bird songs and looks at pictures of birds and takes those residents outdoor to enjoy watching them. One male resident, who is restless at times and doesn’t participate in group activities much, had a wonderful interaction with Katie. Knowing that he loves being outside, she had him help get out the garden hose and water the plants. Then she had him help wash a couple of windows that were dusty. That resident knew right what he was doing when he grabbed the squeegee and started wiping down the window. He was so pleased and proud to do something purposeful.



Katie can often be found providing comfort to a resident who is having a hard time, cracking a joke with our pranksters, or just listening to someone’s story. Katie is proactive, diffusing potential problems between residents, easily redirecting them before a real issue starts.

It’s been difficult for residents and staff during this pandemic. As everything shut down, Katie has had a huge role in keeping up the morale of our residents who couldn’t always see their family members. She jumped in with both feet in reassuring residents that we were safe in our facility, helping with Zoom calls between residents and their families, and helping residents make cards to send to their families and friends. She engineered pandemic-friendly ways to celebrate the holidays, working with other departments to create an outdoor festival of lights, tree decorating and directing a holiday play that was cast with residents.



Bobbie Jo Welch

Activities Department Supervisor MaineGeneral Rehabilitation & Nursing Care - Gray Birch Augusta



Bobbie Jo is part of the fabric that represents all that is Gray Birch. She has dedicated every workday of her 24-year tenure to improving the quality of resident lives and experiences. She lives and works by the Maine General Values & Standards, which represent: Respect, Excellence, Safety, Professionalism, Empathy, Communication, and Teamwork. Always willing to go the extra mile, Bobbie Jo consistently helps in other departments and is a valued team member. Her interactions with her peers are consistently based on mutual respect, understanding, and the ability to see other points of view. Bobbie Jo seeks out the opinions of her peers as it relates to her department. Although her knowledge of resident life and activities is vast, she still seeks input as to how she can improve and for new, innovative ideas. Bobbie Jo loves to smile, will always stop to chat, and is sought out by her peers for support. It is a privilege to not only supervise her but to work alongside her. Bobbie Jo is fun, dedicated, and tuned in to the resident's needs. It is a wonderful thing to witness!

Bobbie Jo runs a very busy activities department and has a robust, unique daily calendar of events. In addition to offering what some would call "traditional" activities such as Bingo, Bible Study, and music programs, she also incorporates unique activities such as resident musical performances, softball games, and fishing trips. What sets Bobbie Jo apart as an outstanding Activities Department Supervisor is her attention to detail surrounding person-centered care. She personally meets with every resident to go over their preferences for activities, likes, dislikes and ensures this is reflected on their care plan. She then works closely with the nursing staff to ensure residents are prepared with any necessary support to participate in activities. When the residents were asked to describe Bobbie Jo, their responses included "energizer bunny", caring, fun, charismatic, and dedicated. One particular resident stated, "she makes our life better" and yet another "we have fun outings, even going out for lobster rolls!"

During what was supposed to be a scheduled outdoor music activity, the person(s) slated to perform did not show up, so Bobbie Jo had to pinch-hit. She brought the karaoke machine outside and jumped in singing the residents favorite songs. She also encouraged at least a half dozen residents to come up and sing with her that otherwise would not have done so, but they trust and adore her. We were able to witness one resident get up to sing in front of a group for the first time in his life. It was his favorite Elvis song, and we could all tell he was so happy to be up there!

What prompted the Gray Birch team to nominate Bobbie Jo, now more than ever, was her dedication to the residents and their needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. As many of us have experienced, life as we knew it changed, to include a long pause on normal activities, visitation, and all that brings joy to our residents. Bobbie Jo made certain that residents continued to have support, fun, and contact with their families. She thought outside of the box and ensured residents had contact with their loved ones be it via a window visit, an iPad video chat, or a phone call. She created a whole list of virtual activities, focused on her staff providing 1:1 visits, and rallied the entire team to support residents in any way possible. Bobbie Jo has always been a shining star; however, it has not shined as bright as it did during the pandemic. We would be lost without her.



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