

September/October Issue
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Facilities

CommuniCare Health Services
4700 Ashwood Drive, Suite 200
Cincinnati, Ohio 45241
(800) 989-7337

CommuniCator Article Submissions to:
pbrueneman@chs-corp.com

From The Desk of Steve Rosedale...

As the blackness crept over the land. As the people streamed over the bridges, slept on the streets or in parks. As normal life ground to a halt, as the energy ceased—the lights were still on at our Cleveland facilities. Life still went on, residents were cared for, meals were served and families could rest content that we were on the job. That's because we have a very special team. At the facilities, at the regional level and the home office, we were there supporting each other, staying up all night, guarding the doors, working in shifts, making sure each facility had what it needed to survive. *The CommuniCare team is very special.* There were lights on in Cleveland—it was us! Congratulations, and my thanks for the extra effort that without a murmur or complaint, without waiting to be told, rolled out like a military drill. *You're something special CommuniCare. World Class!*

Training Toolbox

Don't Be Shy

By Mike Andrews, RNC, St. Louis Regional Trainer

Dying, like birth, often requires medical intervention for comfort and support of residents and their families. Although death and dying is never an easy subject to talk about or experience in the workplace, death and dying may be however the most important aspect of the care we give.

Families need our support during this difficult time probably more so than at any other time during their loved one's stay with us. It may be during this time that the most favorable memories of the care we give will be reflected upon for years to come by most families. The place of death, according to Keay & Lynn (Care of the Dying Patient, 1999), in the early 1990's, approximately 60% of Americans died in hospitals, 20% in Nursing Homes and 20% at home or elsewhere.

While the trend in the early part of the century was from home to the hospital, the trend now is out of the hospital into the home or long-term care setting. It is this trend that we must ensure that we create better end of life care.

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Focus On...

“Walking A Mile In The Families’ Shoes”

By Kena Minnick, Executive Vice President and COO

My “favorite” aunt, Noni is a 79 year old vivacious *redhead* full of spunk, pride and independence. She hit the wall of life when she suffered a stroke around August 5, 2003. She was discovered unconscious in her Dayton home. She lives alone, so we are not sure how long she laid there before a neighbor discovered her. Her only son, Bruce, flew in from California and he, and the rest of our family has been thrown into the world of “long term care.”

Aunt Noni, is my 74 year old father’s sister. There are also two other sisters, ages 85 and 72, and a 70 year old brother. There are also many nephews and nieces who love her as much as I do. A Minnick has never lived in a nursing home. The family takes care of each other at home, but Aunt Noni needs therapy, wound care, and so much more than her siblings can provide.

My family doesn’t really understand what I do for Communicare, but they do know that I’ve been in healthcare for 20 years. (My dad likes to brag about me, so they listen). I wanted Aunt Noni in one of our facilities because I trust our Communicare team. This is not business. This is very personal and we arranged to transport Aunt Noni to Regency Manor in Columbus, Ohio. I have been spending a lot of time with her on evenings, weekends and I am experiencing long term care as a family member would, not as the COO. For example, I was told by the staff that so many family members showed up for the initial care conference, that they could barely fit into the conference room. My dad called me after his sister called him and he was concerned that “they were calling in the family something” and thought that it meant bad news. They also don’t understand why Aunt Noni asked her 85 year old sister, Louise, if she was black. They don’t know anything about specialty beds or wound care or that nursing homes are no longer called “rest homes”, but places that people are treated and hopefully improve enough to go home. My 85 year old Aunt Louise fell and broke her hip a few months ago. Although she refused to go to a nursing home for rehabilitation services, she is ambulating with a walker and exercising at home, so that she can take care of Aunt Noni.

Now, I am a family member first and Communicare’s COO second. I do see that we give great and loving care not only to my Aunt, but also to Julia, her roommate, and to so many others. I see that my aunt needs help feeding herself at dinner time and that this would be the best time for occupational therapy and I also see how “slammed” our staff is when they run out of linens and must get the cart filled but it means they have to leave the floor and resident’s needs don’t stop.. Then there is an immediate search for Julia’s leather boots, because “damn it, it just might snow”. All of these things are important and our STNAs, nurses and caregivers are heroes because you show how much you care when you patiently teach Aunt Noni what a spoon is and you stop what you are doing to help Julia find her boots on a hot August day because it just might snow.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart from the Minnick family and for all of the families that you help sleep better at night.

Calendar of Events

SEPTEMBER

- 1st – Labor Day
- 7th – National Grandparents Day
- 11th – Patriot Day
In tribute to those who lost their lives.
- 7-13th – National Assisted Living Week www.ncal.org
- 17th – Citizenship Day
- 14-19th – National Case Management Week www.acamweb.org
- 10-16th – National Healthcare Housekeeping Week www.ashes.org
- 15-21st – National Rehabilitation Awareness Celebration Week www.nraf-rehabnet.org
- 23rd – First Day of Autumn
- 27th – Rosh Hashanah
- National Healthy Aging Month* www.healthyaging.net
- National Cholesterol Month* www.nhlbi.nih.gov
- National Prostate Health Month* www.prostatehealth.com
- National Sickle Cell Awareness Month* www.sicklecelldisease.com

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Calendar of Events

OCTOBER

6th – Yom Kippur

1-8th -- National Gerontological Nursing Week 800-723-0560

6-12th – National Healthcare Food Service Week
www.ashfsa.org

6-12th – National Mental Illness Awareness Week www.nami.org

9th – National Depression Screening Day
www.mentalhealthscreening.org

12th – National Children’s Day

13th – Columbus Day

13-19th – National Healthcare Quality Week www.nahq.org

16th – National Boss’ Day

17th – National Mammography Day www.acr.org

18th – Sweetest Day

19-25th – National Infection Control Week www.APIC.org

19-25th – National Respiratory Care Week www.aarc.org

24th – United Nations Day

25th – Diwali

26th – Daylight Savings Ends

31st -- Halloween

Breast Cancer Awareness Month www.nbcam.org

National Dental Hygiene Month www.ppsinc.org

National Liver Awareness Month www.liverfoundation.org

National Brain Injury Awareness Month www.biausa.org

National Physical Therapy Month www.apta.org

Training Toolbox (cont.)

A troubling incident occurred recently, one that is all too familiar in this industry. A woman returned to a facility to collect the belongings of her husband who recently passed while in the hospital. The clothing and personal belongings had been stuffed into a garbage bag and placed on the floor in the corner of the laundry room. The staff returned her husband's belongings to her in this manner. Although the woman did not seem to mind, I was embarrassed and saddened at the treatment of the gentleman's possessions.

We promote and deliver quality care to our residents during their stay. Quality-care and support for our families is equally important during and after the passing of our residents.

Our Hospice programs offer wonderful, professional care and support for the resident, their families and for our staff. However, we must take the lead and continue to provide the ongoing support our families need. *Don't be shy*; see to the families needs as they spend those final moments with their loved one. Families need emotional, nutritional and physical support during this time. Listen to concerns, offer refreshments, provide privacy, and assist with personal

belongings and provide staff condolences.

Much more can be done to assist our families than providing a garbage bag to pack-up personal clothing. We all can go that extra mile, but sometimes we must go further. Remember, it's not necessarily what you say, but that you are there. Together, we all can provide not just a long-term care setting, but rather a home setting for the end of life needs of our families and residents.

Just Being

By Donna D. Bettes

Just Being

The art of “just being” is the only must for the caring profession.

It is complete involvement with the patient without the need to impose any of your own words or advice; trivia or observations.

The art of “just being” involves your head and your heart.

Wisdom and love of men are intertwined so that the patient can respond as he wishes with the knowledge that someone cares enough to give of their time and self and expects nothing in return.

While you make no demands of the patient, you do derive the satisfaction that you met this patient according to his needs and, for that brief period, all that existed between you was love and understanding.

Share Corner *from Our Facilities*

A Day of Caring at Wyant Woods

By Christine Boon, Wyant Woods Marketing

On June 27th, 2003, employees at Wyant Woods participated in "A Day of Caring" in conjunction with the United Way of Summit County. Wyant Woods was assigned to the Summit County Historical Society to perform various tasks on and around the grounds of the property in an effort to maintain the integrity of our city's history. These tasks included cleaning up the wooded area behind the property's mansion, repairing a wooden porch, painting a white fence surrounding the property and cleaning up leaves and other debris on sidewalks.

In recognition of serving the community, the Summit County Historical Society wrote a special article about Wyant Woods in their quarterly newsletter that is mailed to over 3,000 people in the community. In addition, a local newspaper recognized Wyant Woods in a publication for the hard work and time taken to help beautify the property. Despite a tired group at the end of the day, everyone felt a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction for having served the community.

Stongsville Community Days

*By Nancy Pehanic, Administrator,
Falling Water*

Each year, Falling Water Healthcare Center has entered a float in the parade for Strongsville's Community Days. This year, however, we decided to try something new. So, we contacted the Strongsville Chamber of Commerce and asked if we could host a food

booth during this year's fair. Once permits were obtained and fees paid, we hosted a Kabob booth and offered chicken, shrimp or beef kabobs. The Dietary Manager, Chuck Barrett, was really the mastermind behind the whole operation. He and his staff spent many hours behind the scenes skewing shrimp and chicken and beef.

Many of the staff members at Falling Water volunteered to "man" the booth during the fair. Chuck and his assistant, Greg

Figelist spent countless hours over the 4 days to make sure things were going well. We even convinced Karl Weninger to work and he looked like he was having a great time! We all had jobs to do and whether it was cooking, basting or managing the cash, we all had a lot of fun! We only broke even this year, however, we had one of the most successful food booths at the fair. We impressed not only the Chamber Director but the Director of Health as well.

Laughter at Pine Valley

By Claudia Ledenican

We have repeatedly mentioned the numerous benefits of laughter. Now with the introduction of our Laughter Club program, we are able to observe and report the positive feedback as well. We would like to share one of our success stories with you.

One of our residents attended a recent laughter session. He shows minimal interaction and is, for the most part aphasic. During our session he was awake, alert and probably wondering what was going on. The staff assisted him to bring his arms to the clapping position when he took over and completed the movement. He not only clapped to our repetition of Ho, Ho, Ha, Ha, Ha, but to everyone's surprise he repeated the words as well. For that brief moment he was an **active participant** as opposed to a passive observer. Imagine the wonderful feeling we all shared at the moment.