

ELDER CARE

OF DANE COUNTY

Partnering for Independence

WINTER 2002

We Treat You Like Family

Every Elder Care employee makes a contribution to the lives of our participants either directly or indirectly. We asked our staff—representing a variety of departments, programs and services—to share how he or she has made a difference for our participants. The following quotes offer a glimpse at how Elder Care employees think about the people they serve while on the job.

I don't just take care of participants. I am with them through their daily struggles, to validate their feelings and to share the end of their lives with them. I make a difference by giving each participant a voice in a world that has written them off as "old and confused" by helping them reflect on their lives. I offer them understanding and worth. -Lynn Gummelt, *Therapeutic Recreation Specialist, Memory Loss Day Center*



Cricket Hesselberg

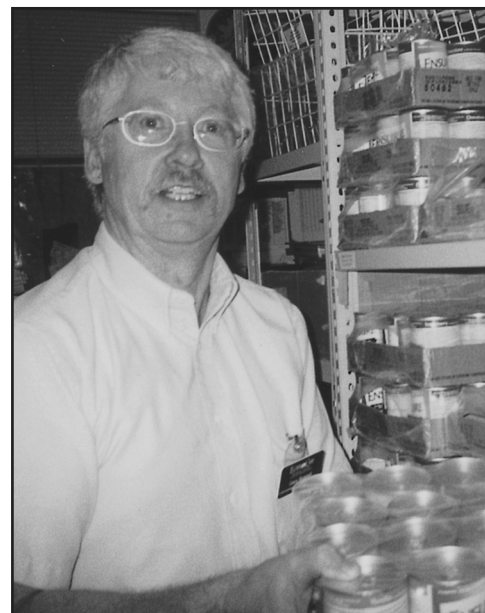
It is very rewarding to interview candidates for employment at Elder Care who embrace our mission. I truly enjoy matching the right person to the right position. -Amy Gourley, *Recruiter, Human Resources*

We have some participants who have not had dental care for a very long time. By improving their oral health, staff members are able to help with other aspects of their well being, like improving their nutrition, which really puts a smile on their face! -Aimee Will, *Dental Hygienist, Partnership Dental Clinic*

I work behind the scenes to simplify computing procedures so that nurses and social workers can spend more of their precious time fulfilling Elder Care's mission of supporting participants in their homes. -Mark Evans, *Computer Trainer*

Almost everyday someone in the Day Center asks me to play the piano. The music brings back a lot of memories. And it brings out their smiles and laughter, and they join in singing. -Cricket Hesselberg, *Therapeutic Recreation Specialist, East Day Center*

I interact with participants when I deliver durable medical equipment—among other things—to people's homes. We brought a window air conditioning unit to a lady living in extreme heat. We had to completely redo her window to make it fit properly. It was a lot of work, but it was gratifying to see how much she appreciated our efforts. -Gary Russell, *Purchasing & Inventory Specialist*



Gary Russell

I help participants assess what changes could be made in their living environment or daily activities so that they can maintain their independence and quality of life. -Mindy Wiseman, *Occupational Therapy Coordinator*

I have a picture on my desk of someone paralyzed from the neck down. He functions by using a sip tube and navigates his wheelchair by blowing into the tube. I took care of him—bathing, dressing, meal preparation, housekeeping, setting up his computer, stereo and VCR—a little bit of everything! That's quite often what our staff does, a little bit of everything! -Tammy Brewer, *In-Home Scheduler*

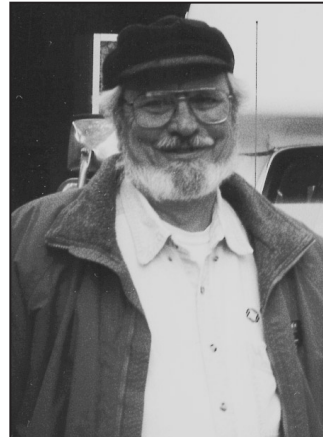
Although I do not have direct contact with participants, I am here because of them. With that in mind, I improve their quality of life to the extent that I am able. -Bob Matranga, *Senior Accountant, Finance Department*

One of my jobs is to work with the Day Center CNAs and coordinate medical services for special circumstances. A participant has an extremely severe ulcer on her foot—she could potentially lose her limb. She was being taken to the hospital everyday for a whirlpool, then home health nurses came in twice daily to dress her wound. Now she comes to the Day Center where we are providing the services she needs in one place! In addition, one of the CNAs is willing to provide in-home services every other weekend so she will have continuity of care. The fact that we can bring services to her in this way is really rewarding. -Brenda Christensen, RN, Educator, Support Services

We individualize each participant's medications to ensure medication compliance. One woman we worked with couldn't read. We made up envelopes for her labeled with a sun for her morning meds, another labeled with a bus for pills to be taken when she got home from day care on the bus, and a third labeled with a moon for her evening medications. The system worked so well that she was able to stay in her home for many years. -Diane Burling, Medication Specialist

I'm very proud of a graph I did on this year's flu immunization progress. It is used by Partnership teams to make sure enough doses are on hand and that each elderly participant is offered a flu shot, even while respecting the person's choice to decline. The data also gives teams the info they need to target their efforts so that no one is missed. -Paul Rock, Database Systems Analyst

I had a participant whose 20-year old cat needed to be put to sleep. She lived in an apartment building and had no place to bury her beloved friend. The social worker found a vet who performed his services free, and we ceremoniously buried Atlas the cat under a tree in my back yard. Over the years, I have developed a level of trust with participants where opportunities arise to go the extra mile. -Meg Wiltse, RN, Partnership Nurse



Dave Schwingel

Our drivers provide transportation to participants during the week when their families and friends are working. We provide that vital link so participants have the independence to get about. -Dave Schwingel, Transportation Driver

I think making breakfast, lunch and dinner all day long is a very direct way of making a difference for our frail folks—and I've been told I'm a good cook. It's not just about the mechanics of preparing the meal, though. It's about making a personal connection. -Erika Rurup, CNA, Certified Nursing Assistant, Support Services 🏠

Close and Caring Relationships



When older adults join an Elder Care program, they along with their spouses, adult children, and other family develop close, trusting relationships with those who work

with them on a daily basis—nurses, social workers, nurse practitioners, personal caregivers, van drivers, day center staff, community outreach specialists, and service coordinators.

In our Partnership program, for instance, an entire Care Team really gets to know the individual—not only their medical concerns, but also their personal side. When all members of the “extended family” are focused on the same goals— independence, quality of life, dignity—it's very difficult to separate the “health” care from the “person” care.

Also in Partnership, the teams are involved in such a critical period, from the time an elder with serious health issues joins the program until, usually, the end of life. We realize, when we receive letters like the one from Mr. Dahler's daughter (reprinted in this issue), how the staff, the elders and their family feel about each other.

This close, family-like relationship is very evident at our day centers, too. At our East and West day centers, older adults who started last month and those who have attended over 10 years all embrace day center staff as their welcoming “home-away-from-home” in a changing world. The same can be said for our Memory Loss Day Center where both participants and their family caregivers rely on the staff for support—and for just listening—during the ups and downs of the dementia experience.

We have many staff whose jobs do not bring them face to face with our participants, but they provide critical “behind the scenes” support. As you'll read in their messages, they too see a direct route from their efforts—as an accountant, a purchasing specialist, a computer trainer, an administrative assistant—to a better life for Elder Care participants.

Really, no matter where we work in Elder Care, we share a common value: respect for each other and for the relationships we develop—either directly or indirectly—with those we serve. 🏠

Respectfully,

Karen Musser
Chief Executive Officer

Special Thanks to Donors July 1st–September 30th, 2002

Memorials and Honorariums

Heartfelt and ever-present tributes to loved ones.

Katherine Foster Memorial

Kathleen Agnew

Margaret Johnson Memorial

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Debbi Swenson

Pete Pederson Memorial

Ruth Terrill

*Sandra Stricker Memorial**

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Kenneth & Beverly Watson
Margaret Yates Zeitz

** Sandra Stricker, a nurse in our Partnership program, passed away from cancer last summer. In keeping with our theme of staff dedication in this issue, we wanted to share this tribute from Partnership manager Sue Rosenbek:*

"Sandy was a role model for us all—high integrity, very skilled, unending compassion and a sense of humor. We will miss her forever."

Individual, Foundation, and Corporate Gifts

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Elder Care Wish List

Your in-kind donations are so helpful to us!
Please call Linda Wells at (608) 245-3025 to make a donation.

Air conditioner
Bath towels and washcloths
Bingo prizes
Brooms
Buttons
CDs
Cleaning supplies
Crochet hooks
Dartboard-velcro
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Digital camera with software
Dresser
Duster for blinds
Dustpans
Fans
Foam balls-11 and 9 inch
Karaoke machine
Kitchen towels
Ladder-8-step rolling
Large canning jars
Microphones
Mops
Overhead projector
Patio benches
Picture frames
Smocks
Socks
Tennis balls
Twin bed mattresses
Vacuum cleaners
Wicker baskets
Wood drill

Yes! I want to help older adults live independently at home and in the community.

Enclosed is my check made payable to Elder Care of Dane County Foundation for:

\$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 \$25 other \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone _____

My employer will match my gift (company name) _____

(optional) My gift is: _____ In memory of _____ In honor of _____

(optional) Please send an acknowledgement of my gift to _____ Address _____

Thank you. Your gift is tax deductible to the fullest extent provided by law. An acknowledgement of your contribution will be sent to you. Please return to: Elder Care of Dane County Foundation, 2802 International Lane, Madison, WI 53704.



Dear Elder Care,

I would like to express to you what working with Partnership Team #6 has meant to me and how grateful my family and I are to have three special people who were sent to help my dad, John Dahler, and his family through the heart-wrenching ordeal of Alzheimer's. I wish I were a poet, but since I'm not this is the best way I could think of to sum up what their care, concern, understanding, knowledge, and support have meant.

RACHEL, MARY BETH & LAURA are:

A accessible
N nonstop
G go-getters
E extraordinarily efficient
L lifesavers
S (but most of all) sanity savers !!

There are not enough thank-yous in me to express what their kindness and helpfulness have meant to me. The world should have more people like them! May all the good work they have done some day return to them tenfold.

Sincerely,
Sue Barsness

MISSION STATEMENT

Elder Care of Dane County provides health care and support services to help older adults live independently at home and in the community.

Elder Care of Dane County
2802 International Lane
Madison, WI 53704

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Volunteers: 245-3037

Web site: www.elderc.org

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