

Meet Our National Heroes

1Q'14

Kenneth Gebhardt, RN

Downingtown, PA pediatrics office



Since 2009, RN **Kenneth Gebhardt** has cared for many pediatric clients from the Downingtown, PA pediatrics office. Ken's kind, pleasant, and calming demeanor,

combined with his clinical knowledge and competence, make him the one to call for our staffing needs, attests Client Services Manager **Kim Bennett**. "Ken has the qualities that our clients and their families admire most. When his clients receive a new diagnosis, medication, or procedure, Ken will always research and seek out the latest information to benefit them."

One mother shares, "I can't begin to express how impressed I am with the care Ken bestows to my almost 16-year-old son who suffers from uncontrolled seizures. He is absolutely amazing and understands how stressful it can be for me as a parent to be in such a difficult situation. I can go to sleep peacefully knowing that my son is under Ken's care."

For over three years, Ken has also cared for a 10-year-old girl who is medically fragile and dependent on a trach and vent. When initially placed on her ventilator five years ago, doctors believed this client was at the end stages of her life. Having a trained and reliable nurse like Ken has been a "tremendous relief" to the family and has been integral to this client "surpassing everyone's expectations."

The mother of this client expressed, "I am also thankful Ken recognizes that my daughter, while nonverbal, does understand. He always treats her with respect and has been known to bring movies and music he feels she might appreciate. He also shows strong concern for her comfort."

Director **Joni Coleman** adds, "I have had the privilege of working with Ken for over 12 years as a fellow field nurse, clinical manager, and now director. I know him very well and he surpasses all standards for nursing. He is a great asset to BAYADA."



Robin Laffey, LPN

King of Prussia, PA assistive care state programs office



In 2007, LPN **Robin Laffey** started working for the King of Prussia, PA assistive care state programs office. She cares for many clients and manages medication for seven.

Clinical Manager **Teresa Sassaman** indicates that medication management may sound rather simple, but challenges often arise that make it anything but. Recently, the psychiatrist of a client diagnosed with anxiety and bipolar disorder moved out of the area. The transfer of information about the client's medications to the new doctor's office did not occur as expected. Robin asserted herself and secured her client's much-needed medication without escalating the client's anxiety. She prevented serious, abrupt withdrawal symptoms. Teresa recalls, "Robin pressed onward until the new psychiatrist gave her a 14-day medication supply."

Robin's thorough communication skills are also reflected in her complete nursing assessments. Robin does not miss a thing, including one client's signs of a urinary tract infection. By scheduling a timely doctor's appointment, Robin is credited for preventing this client's hospitalization.

She has had perfect attendance for over four years and is known for her infectious smile and bounding energy. She even calls her clients on their birthdays. One client offers, "Robin has so many virtues! She is patient, cheerful, and kind. I look forward to her visits and feel grateful for her care."

The family of another client indicates, "Robin has been our son's "go to" nurse for a few years now. Not only has she exceeded his needs clinically, she makes his quality of life better." By reading stories and even a joke book, taking walks, and assisting with physical therapy, the family shares, "It doesn't feel like our son is a job to Robin, she takes care of him."



Rebecca "Becky" Mauney, LPN

Gastonia, NC pediatrics office



LPN **Rebecca "Becky" Mauney** has been caring for Gastonia, NC pediatrics clients since 2011. Becky routinely works with two clients. The mother of one client

shares, "From the first time she walked into our home, my son loved her." That was two years ago and now the client is four years old. In addition to providing excellent nursing care, Becky organizes and stocks his medical supplies and takes notes at his doctor appointments. The client's mother indicates, "Becky has a motherly instinct and everything she does is so nurturing."

Her second client is a 12-year-old boy who "would not be where he is today without the dedication and commitment of Becky," believes Clinical Manager Tricia Parizo. This client used a trach since infancy until the age of nine when he was successfully decanulated. In 2012, he was admitted to the hospital with an upper respiratory infection that required him to resume using a trach and ventilator. After several months, he returned home weak and no longer able to stand on his own.

Through the BAYADA ACE training program and completion of PEP hours, Becky was able to care for him. Tricia continues, "Each month I witnessed the progress Becky was making with him. I saw the spark in her eyes when she encouraged him to do more." An opportunity to go to Disney World presented itself to the boy. Client Services Manager Kristen Poarch says, "Thanks to Becky's dedication and encouragement, he was able to walk up to all of the Disney characters and take a picture with them. He even received a special kiss from Cinderella! Becky truly creates fairytale endings for her clients!"



Thomas Rabon, Jr., CNA

Shelby, NC assistive care state programs office



The Shelby, NC assistive care state programs office is proud to have named CNA **Thomas Rabon, Jr.** as its Hero because of his consistent, high quality care. Associate **Gabrielle**

Tubbs explains, "Tom understands he is meant to care and support the lives of his clients. Tom finds ways to make challenging

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situations work because he understands where his clients are coming from.”

After Tom started in 2009, SHE provided services to two clients who were unsatisfied with a series of other agencies. “With careful persistence and a truly rare work ethic, Tom won them over,” explains Gabrielle. Division Director Joe Seidel knows Tom as “unflappable” in the midst of those who are in critical condition. Tom’s client calls him “Johnny-on-the-spot” for not only taking care of his needs, but for anticipating them as well.

Even the client’s case manager from Care Solutions was impressed with Tom’s willingness to go above and beyond to secure supplies that his client. She says, “Tom does way more than is required and fills more than just the physical needs. I have not seen anyone who makes himself more available and more than just a physical support the way that Tom does.”

Michael “Greg” Nolan, PT *Wilmington, DE senior living office*



Michael “Greg” Nolan began working for BAYADA in 2012 and has been the lead physical therapist at the first preferred partner community—Rockland Place Assisted Living—for the Wilmington, DE senior living office since 2013. Associate Director **Kimberly Roman** proclaims, “Greg has successfully built relationships with the residents, families, and staff in the community. He has demonstrated his ability to lead an interdisciplinary team of BAYADA clinicians and prove that working together is critical to our success.”

The executive director of the facility, Rita Doherty, labels Greg’s contributions as “extraordinary.” With Greg as the senior living clinical lead, he and his team go above and beyond to ensure the programs at the facility are a success. This included getting residents down three flights of stairs during a fire drill—even when it was not necessary for them to do so. Greg is credited for providing Rockland Place with solid marketing leads and has contributed to its reputation as more than just a “regular” Assisted Living community.

Greg’s confidence is an asset, as well. Rita indicates, “During a recent family meeting,

Greg eloquently and completely answered questions regarding therapy services provided by BAYADA. He patiently answers and explains the benefits and impacts of the comprehensive therapy services BAYADA offers.” Rita continues, “Greg is the first person to say yes or I would love to help with that project. We are very fortunate that he advocates for our residents and chooses to spend his time improving Rockland each day.”

2Q’14

Kathryn Whalen, RN

Willow Grove, PA pediatrics office



RN Kathryn Whalen of Willow Grove, PA pediatrics has provided nearly 10,000 hours of BAYADA nursing care over the past nine years. Her clients include those

who are trach and ventilator dependent, and have more complex medical needs. The high quality of Kathy’s care, and the positive feedback generated from her peers, make her “the go-to” nurse for orienting staff. Client Services Manager Victoria Kendrick comments, “I know I can count on Kathy to handle any situation with ease and she is irreplaceable wherever she goes.” Clinical Educator Eleanor Roberto adds, “Kathy handles her clients’ daily care and the out-of-the-ordinary issues.”

Kathy manages emergencies with a calmness and grace that is extraordinary. She is able to broach difficult situations with such compassion and calmness that the clients and their families are calm as well. Kathy’s demeanor helps families think more clearly when making difficult decisions. Pediatric Clinical Operations Manager Ann Marie Walter says that for the past several years, “Kathy has cared for a very fragile client whose plan of treatment is constantly changing. She has been very open to trying new treatments to improve her client’s quality of life. She has also assisted the clinical manager and client’s family in developing a care plan that includes both the physician’s orders and the parents’ desires.”

One of her client’s mothers maintains that in 13 years of home health services, Kathy’s care stands out among the rest. She recounts one day during an ice storm early in the morning that knocked out

power in her home. “When Kathy arrived for her shift at 12:15 pm, I was ready to have a total meltdown. Kathy assessed my daughter’s temperature to make sure she was okay. Meanwhile, I was trying to figure out what we were going to do. We ended up transporting my daughter to my sister’s house in Philadelphia and Kathy made sure we had everything we needed. She was organized and a calming force—like always. Kathy went with us and immediately set up everything. The next morning, she stopped at our house to get other items we may have missed. When the power was back on that afternoon, Kathy packed up all of our things and helped transport me and my daughter back home, and stayed until we were settled. Being on the verge of tears all day, Kathy not only made sure my daughter received the care she needed, but also made sure I was okay!”

Sun Kim, RN

Willow Grove, PA assistive care office



RN Sun Kim joined the Willow Grove, PA assistive care office in spring 2012. She was assigned to work with a boy who had Down syndrome and Type 1 diabetes. His impulsiveness resulted in safety concerns and a need for constant supervision. Clinical Manager **Carolyn Meyers** stated, “With her quiet ways and calmness, she was a great addition to the WG team.”

In spring 2013, Sun started caring for her client with developmental delays and epilepsy, who uses a gastrostomy tube (G-tube) for nutrition and medication. Despite initial concerns about having to cover multiple two-hour shifts per day, Client Services Manager **Jennifer Osmanaj** proclaims, “The client and Sun have been together for more than a year now and it is the perfect match.” There was an immediate bond when Sun revealed her ability to play piano, an interest the client also shares. Sun’s demeanor only strengthened this bond. The client’s sister says, “Sun talks to my sister, not at her. She interacts with her as a person, not a person with a disability. She realizes my sister can comprehend a great deal, despite her lack of speech.” Sun has never let her client go without care, and this dedication means the world to the family.

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Last winter's inclement weather unveiled day-after-day of uncertainty relating to school cancellations and travel difficulties. "Sun's dedication was incredible, and she found a way to get there every day, even if that meant having her husband drive and wait outside in his truck for the hours she was there," recalls the client's sister. Sun even rearranged her schedule to accommodate the family's additional need for care when the client's father passed. Two days after the funeral, on the client's mother's birthday, Sun brought a little cake to offer a bit of joy and kindness during what was a very difficult time. "This over-the-top care and devotion means more to our family than words can describe," comments the client's sister. "Sun has brightened not only my sister's life, but that of our entire family."

Miatta Kamara, LPN

Main Line, PA adult assistive care office



LPN **Miatta Kamara** began working for the Main Line, PA adult assistive care office in 2012 and most recently cared for a client with esophageal cancer.

Despite conflicted beliefs among family members about how to medicate their loved one, Miatta was a "terrific advocate for her client, providing coordinated care in his best interest, and always suggesting the option that was going to make him more comfortable and happy," says Clinical Manager **Carole Kreissman**. The care that Miatta's client required was complicated and rapidly changing. Miatta remained attentive to detail, always double-checking doctors' orders and family requests. Good communication was key to keeping all parties involved and up-to-date.

Miatta even accommodated the family's request to provide faxed updates after every shift. She coordinated care with family members—including one who was frequently out of the country, living facility staff, and the client's hospice agency. The hospice nurse commented, "I could not have done this case without Miatta." The family felt Miatta's care warranted special recognition. "Her attentiveness to our father's comfort and his limitations was moving to see. She performed her technical duties at a highly professional level while providing affection and supportive care," says a family member. Despite the client's

progressive decline, his children remained impressed that a bedsore, developed during a hospital stay, was still healing when he died, and no additional sores developed. A family friend was similarly impressed by Miatta, sharing, "Like me, she developed a genuine affection for this kind and gentle man and exercised the best care imaginable at all times." Clearly, Miatta's contributions were at the root of the family's statement, "We realize that BAYADA stands for quality."

Shumoo-Ah Jack Sanford-Benevides, Habilitation Technician

Hilo, HI behavioral health habilitation office



Habilitation Technician **Shumoo-Ah Jack Sanford-Benevides** joined the Hilo, HI Behavioral Health habilitation office in January 2013 and

has been caring for a client with autism and limited verbal skills ever since. The family's primary language is Korean, so communications with the parents are also difficult. As a result, Associate Director **Jennie Immanuel** says, "Jack takes the time to communicate every single detail about the client's care in simple terms so that the family could understand." In every conceivable way, Jack knows what needs to be addressed and he follows through with it. He brings up issues that need to be heard so that his client gets the care he deserves, and the needs of both the client and family are met.

For example, Jack was able to decrease the family's cell phone costs by securing a line through a state program. In another instance, Jack learned that the client was exhibiting behavioral issues at home and a lack of sleep. He followed up with the habilitation manager and together they determined that a psychiatric evaluation was needed. The psychiatrist ultimately prescribed medication that "drastically helped decrease the behaviors at home and also allowed the client to get the sleep he deserved," Jennie shares.

Due to communication barriers, the client's parents were uncomfortable taking their son to the dentist and were relieved when Jack agreed to be his escort. The first dentist visit proved unsuccessful due to the client's uncooperativeness. He was referred to a dentist on another island, who used sedation. After many negotiations

with the client's parents and many medical professionals, Jack's client finally made it to a new dentist. Jennie sums, "The entire process of flying from the Big Island to Oahu, going to the appointment, and completing the procedure went better than expected. As a result of the dental procedure, the client's entire demeanor seemed to be more positive. Office staff noticed that the client is smiling more, greeting people in a more upbeat tone, and just an overall increase in comfort and happiness. Jack has a huge heart when it comes to helping people and it comes out naturally."

Denitra Hedgepeth, HHA

King of Prussia, PA assistive care state programs office



HHA **Denitra**

Hedgepeth began working at the King of Prussia, PA assistive care state programs office in 2009. She has provided nearly 5,000 hours of

care for many different clients since she began. She had a client with Alzheimer's disease who lived with her son. Clinical Manager **Denise Garvey** shares, "For four years, seven days a week, Denitra arrived at the client's home at 6:00 am and gently assisted her with activities of daily living, including bathing, dressing, grooming, medication reminders, and breakfast. Denitra then assisted the client onto the bus to day care by 8:00 am. Later, she returned to the client's home at 4:00 pm to meet the bus and proceeded to assist the client with her evening care, including dinner and getting ready for bed." The client's son felt Denitra had a quiet and gentle demeanor and a kind smile that made his mother very comfortable because she was able to administer care that the family was often unable to provide. "Over the four years she cared for Mom, Denitra was extremely reliable and always on time," the son shared. Everyone's complete confidence in Denitra's abilities "took the pressure off the family."

Denitra also cared for a hospice client who lived in an independent living facility with her husband. Denitra maintained close contact with the office about her client, and also provided frequent updates to the client's daughter. "I think the main reason why my mom continues to progress is because she is receiving such excellent care," commented

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the client's daughter. The daughter was especially grateful to Denitra for her actions during a crisis last March. "While Denitra was tending to my mother in the bedroom, she heard a thud in the kitchen. She looked and found my dad slumped over the kitchen sink with an apparent stroke. Her fast actions saved his life, and kept this situation from being much worse."

Client Services Manager **Cat Kennedy** explains, "The client's husband received treatment at the hospital quick enough that there was no lasting damage to his brain or body functions. Denitra kept her client calm and stayed later until her daughter arrived from Florida." In all, Cat says, "I never have to worry when Denitra is on one of my cases. I know her clients are receiving the best care when she is there."

David Hill, PT

Cabarrus, NC home health office



PT **David Hill** has provided care to clients at the Cabarrus, NC home health office since 2012. Despite days busied by a full-time caseload, Associate Director **Laura**

Sabatino asserts, "David puts his clients first and will go the extra step to provide exceptional care to both his clients and the office staff. He always has a smile on his face. He is always respectful and shows kindness to others." David's work is also driven by results. Laura continues, "He has great clinical outcomes, never gives up on a client, and keeps families informed on progress and how they can help the client."

David had been providing therapy for weeks to a client who had a stroke. "He came into the office so excited because the client had been able to finally take a few steps," Laura recalls. The client's husband even called the office stating, "I'm sure my wife would never have walked if it wasn't for David! He even got her a brace."

Coworkers have also noted David's remarkable impact on his clients. PT **Tracy Robbins** states, "David is working on boosting the confidence of another client to help him walk again. This is common for David, he has an ability to make his clients feel positive, teach at various levels, and still make them feel important. He takes his time with visits, not making them cookie-cutter or rushed. He is very good about getting

my input and always willing to work with a team." David's client agrees, indicating he is a "great motivator." Clinical Manager **Deb Wilson** noticed David's ability to connect with clients during an evaluation. "Even though the client had advanced Alzheimer's disease and screamed during most of the session, David was able to establish a good rapport and do a thorough evaluation." Clinical Manager **Lisa Buck** notes, "David is a hard worker and will go the extra mile for his clients. He advocates for them to get the help and equipment they need to be successful."

3Q'14

Shirley Asafo-Boakye, RN

Morris Plains, NJ pediatrics office



RN **Shirley Asafo-Boakye** from the Morris Plains, NJ pediatrics office has built a positive reputation with her clients over the past 10 years. Client Services

Manager **Deborah Sharp** asserts, "Shirley is always smiling. We look forward to her visits to the office. She exudes positivity, warmth, and love." Shirley's current client is an active and ambulatory, nonverbal boy who has Pierre-Robin and DiGeorge syndromes. She provides a calming force in his home, where the client's young mother of six admits that many times, she's overwhelmed.

Shirley showcased her skills when her client exhibited severe respiratory difficulties that warranted a tracheostomy. G-tube care and chest treatments are now combined with her regular nursing responsibilities—scheduling appointments, confirming medication changes, engaging in sign language tutorials to help her client feel more connected to the family, and providing arts and crafts lessons for fun and to stimulate group interaction.

Deborah believes, "Shirley instinctively knows what her client and the family need, and jumps in without need for instruction and tackles the task at hand. She identifies potential problems and acts proactively, offering suggestions and solutions."

The client's family was having serious financial difficulties and had to move several times. Shirley was flexible with her hours and went wherever her client was to provide nursing care. She made sure they had all of the necessary equipment and supplies so that the

mother had one less thing to worry about. Shirley documented all the changes needed with the client's care during this time with appropriate addendums and assessments.

Recently, Shirley helped the family when her client's mother was rushed to the hospital. When the father and other support systems could not be reached, Shirley immediately jumped in to help. When everything at home was back under control, she went to the hospital to check in on the mother who shared, "Shirley is so much more than my son's nurse. Shirley makes everything better!"

David Birnbaum, LPN

East Stroudsburg, PA pediatrics office



LPN **David Birnbaum** has been a valued member of the East Stroudsburg, PA pediatrics office for nearly two years. He has made quite an

impression on the entire interdisciplinary team. Client Services Manager **Jenna Arena** says, "His warm presence is felt whenever he comes into the office. He treats his clients, coworkers, and office staff with respect." David primarily cares for one client during school hours and often escorts him on field trips.

David and his clinical manager helped bring the dream of going to prom to life for his client. Jenna shares that without David's initiative, "the client would not have attended since his family does not have any transportation. David wanted to ensure that his client was able to experience his prom like all of his friends." The client's teacher adds, "Both David's client and my classroom are better because of his work. He is extremely knowledgeable about his craft and the needs of his client. He comes to work every day with a light, loving heart and a bright spirit that have helped his client flourish and grow." Colleague RN **Joan Pirot** similarly comments, "I enjoy the interaction I see between Dave and his client."

Clinical Associate **Katelyn McDermott** feels that David's initiative to find creative ways of making every moment fun is why he has such a strong relationship with his client. "He often takes his client on long walks outside, encourages him to interact with others, use tools to fix things, and enjoy music," says Katelyn. "He also acts as an

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advocate for his client by clarifying medical terminology and explaining to the family what others have said." David orients new nurses to his client's care to ensure everyone understands the client's and family's needs. In all, Jenna feels, "David has consistently shown a very special relationship and bond with his client that demonstrates what an exceptional person and nurse he is."

Leslie Dollar, LPN

Luzerne County, PA pediatrics office



Leslie Dollar joined BAYADA in 2002, and has been working with one Luzerne County, PA pediatrics client for a number of years. Client Services

Manager Michelle Shimonis shares, "Her client, a girl who has a severe seizure disorder, is non-verbal, non-ambulatory, and requires around-the-clock care. These client characteristics may make even the most experienced nurse uncomfortable, as anything can happen at any time.

It's important that the client's nurse interpret her cues correctly while performing assessments. Leslie somehow managed to master this understanding of her client on her very first shift. She can detect even when the slightest thing is off, even when the client's family may not be aware of it, and provide appropriate interventions before the situation worsens." The client's mother agrees, indicating that Leslie is "dependable and giving" and takes impeccable care of her daughter.

The client's mother also attributes her mental well-being to Leslie's presence after she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. "Leslie was the voice of normal. As I was flying off the handle, dwelling on every possible gruesome scenario of the future, she slowly but surely pulled me back down into the present. She kept me focused. As the days turned into weeks, I got a hold of myself and was able to cope. Leslie made me see that life had to go on. There were people depending on me and I could not just give up."

Michelle says that Leslie's "bubbly, compassionate personality and way of providing care kept her client and the family in a very calm state, like attending a yoga class without all the work." In addition, the client's mother shares that Leslie's presence

offered her the security of knowing that if her own symptoms worsened, she would be there for her daughter, reliably providing care with as much love as she did.

Pamela Strong, CNA

Haywood County, NC assistive care state programs office



CNA **Pamela Strong** joined the Haywood County, NC assistive care state programs team in July 2013. It was then that she joined the team of caregivers

for a very special client who was diagnosed with ALS. Pam assists her client with daily living skills such as showering, dressing, and preparing meals.

Director **Nicholas Vollmer** offers, "If I had to choose one particular characteristic of Pam that demonstrates her commitment to *The BAYADA Way*, it would be her unwavering support to raise awareness for ALS, and more importantly her overall commitment to her client, as he continues to share and implement his phenomenal dreams of bringing the ALS community and many others into the spotlight."

Pam's client keeps himself happy and healthy by riding his recumbent trike. Admittedly, Pam was not a bicyclist before being assigned to his care. She recalls, "I started out on the electric bike and we would just go around the neighborhood, but you still had to pedal in order for the motor to work. We gradually started going as little as five miles. To date, the furthest we've gone has been 30 miles. I recover quicker now, and I feel like I could go forever." Pam participated six of the seven events in the 2014 ALS Connect Tour, which included a Walk to defeat ALS, a 5k, the Cycle for Life Bike Tour, 3 triathlons, and the Blue Ridge Breakaway biking event.

When the motor on the client's trike needed repair, discussions ensued on how to raise money for the repairs. Soon, talks turned to developing a website for helping disabled individuals get the supplies, recognition, and support needed to stay active. By Pam providing her client the physical assistance needed to operate a computer, a web-based, non-profit organization called Active Reconnect soon became a reality.

Pam intends to help her client share his story in a new role in support of BAYADA's partnership with The ALS Association. As Nicholas reflects on the relationship between Pam and her client, he feels it is symbiotic. "Pam provides the physical, emotional, and spiritual support her client needs to continue his projects. Interestingly enough, this is one of his many projects. He serves as a coach, physical trainer, and personal motivator so that she can help him raise awareness and make his story known to the world."

Tracey Read, CNA

Shelby, NC assistive care state programs office



CNA **Tracey Read** joined the Shelby, NC assistive care state programs team in June 2013. To Clinical Manager **Trish Lail**, she is a unique CNA. "Tracey never fails to have a smile

on her face and is respectful to everyone she meets. She ministers disenfranchised members of our community and has opened her home and her heart to many people in crisis."

Client Services Manager **Gabrielle Tubbs** shares, "Tracey has the ability to see past deplorable living situations, impossible hours, demanding caregivers, and exhausting personalities. Her passion for meeting the needs of others is why she has bloomed in her role."

One client recently and unexpectedly lost his wife. Trish explains, "He had not been dealing very well with this loss and demonstrated anger and frustration with the aides who staffed his case. His living situation is very challenging, as the house is cluttered and home to many mice." After many failed attempts to permanently staff the case, Tracy agreed to fill in, and then volunteered to add the case to her regular schedule, citing the client's need for consistency. Gabrielle offers, "Tracey does nothing half way."

Another one of Tracey's clients is regularly in and out of the hospital due to major health concerns. To keep on top of any problems, Tracey diligently communicates status updates and unusual behaviors to the office. Another client exhibits noncompliance with family members, but will readily perform daily living activities for Tracey. The client's daughter states, "I appreciate

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feeling confident that when Tracey is there, everything will be all right." Another client from another agency testifies, "I know that Tracy always wants what is best for me and that is why I decided to keep taking my medication even though I didn't want to. She was encouraging and helped me see that it needed to be done. I am switching to BAYADA because I love my Tracey!"

Cynthia Lane, OT

Tucson, AZ West home health office



OT **Cynthia Lane** joined BAYADA in 2009 and has established herself as a real team player for the Tucson, AZ West home health office. With her excellent planning and

organizational skills, Cyndi attends all case conferences and staff meetings and keeps her clients abreast of all schedule changes. She takes an active role to ensure quality care by contributing to TWV's Performance Improvement team.

When another OT relocated out of state, Cyndi said, "I will work six days a week doing whatever is needed to ensure our clients receive the care they need."

Clinical Manager 2 **Lisa Olson** says, "Cyndi has a special place in her heart for people who are most affected by traumatic events or unplanned illnesses. She works especially hard with these clients to get them back to their prior level of function." One client, a mother and a bookkeeper, lost the ends of her fingers due to a septic illness and the drugs used to save her life. By searching and shopping for just the right hair dryer and stand, Cyndi helped her client achieve her goal of being able to style both her own hair and her daughter's hair. Cyndi also took extra time to help this client apply her own makeup. Lisa says, "This was a special case that Cyndi showed how much she cared."

4Q'14

Joyce Rohrbach, RN

Paoli, PA pediatrics office



Since **Joyce Rohrbach**, RN started with the Paoli, PA pediatrics office in 2012, she has only missed one shift and currently possesses 99.6 percent reliability.

However, the number alone doesn't adequately describe the lengths that Joyce will go to meet her clients' needs. Client Services Manager **KC Jones** explains, "Joyce began caring for her client when he was first discharged from the children's hospital in December 2013." The baby required sixteen hours of very complicated clinical care daily from someone with trach and vent experience. Joyce was a perfect match, but another agency had to assist BAYADA in bringing the baby home to ensure full coverage. Both Joyce and the client's family soon became aware that the other agency was unable to meet the clinical demands of the case. KC recalls, "Joyce made herself as flexible as possible to match the availability of other BAYADA nurses, so she would be able to train them to care for her client." Joyce did all she could to pick up any open shifts, and often accommodated the family's frequent requests to arrive earlier than scheduled, after gaining approval from the office. "Because of Joyce's efforts," reports KC, "BAYADA was able to provide full coverage several months after discharge and the family very happily terminated their relationship with the other agency." During an extremely harsh winter last year, Joyce was motivated to alleviate two families' fears of going without coverage. She reserved a hotel room near their homes to minimize any commuting challenges.

KC shares, "Those who know Joyce are very aware of the passion she has to care for others. In fact, her clients refer to her as "one of the great ones, a true professional, and a wonderful nurse both clinically and socially." Joyce posted a recent Facebook status that read, "How many people wake up truly excited to go to work? I hope everyone can experience the enthusiasm I get to feel before heading off to a case. #LoveBAYADA".

Michelle Harer, LPN

Williamsport, PA pediatrics office



LPN **Michelle Harer** became a BAYADA Nurse in 2005 and has been working with her client, "a very sweet, lively, young girl who has Cerebral Palsy," since

2007, says **Kristen Beals**, Director of the Williamsport, PA pediatrics office. "I wish everyone had Michelle's work ethic. She is very upfront when she can and cannot work. She is consistent with reporting information to the office, often calling many times during the day, and stopping in for one-on-one meetings to ensure that we are all on the same page. She is also part of our take-home team of nurses, who helps us bring home many babies from the hospital, working any shift that is needed."

After a series of events that unraveled last June, Michelle showed Clinical Manager **Karen Agrippine** that she is as a true client advocate, "someone who educates, protects, and is able to see the whole picture." A sleep study was ordered for Michelle's client for what was felt to be a routine snoring issue. The surprising results were a diagnosis of obstructive sleep apnea and a tracheostomy was scheduled in one month. She felt the client's snoring was a result of positioning and could be resolved by propping the client on her side. Karen recalls, "Michelle knew in her heart that the client's father, a passive man and single parent, did not make an informed, educated decision about the surgery." Michelle arranged for Karen and a social worker to meet with her and the client's father to ensure he was fully informed on the issue. After watching a YouTube video and witnessing a lab demonstration on tracheostomy changes and care, the father felt educated and supported, and no longer felt that moving forward with the surgery was the best option for his daughter.

Michelle experienced roadblock after roadblock in trying to secure the correct path forward. Her client's specialist was a challenge to work with, so the primary care physician ordered equipment to treat the snoring instead of moving ahead with the drastic surgery. The equipment was denied by insurance, and the primary care physician sided with the specialist. The father canceled the surgery but then needed

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Meet Our National Heroes

approval in order for the insurance to cover a second opinion from a children's hospital, four hours away. When the second opinion was ultimately approved, Michelle traveled with the family to the appointment and the second sleep study that resulted. The client left with a corrected diagnosis of occasional sleep apnea. Several pulmonary interventions were put into place and a recommendation was made for nasal spray twice a day.

Karen asserts, "It is not an overstatement that Michelle's persistence and determination changed her young client's life forever, and ultimately her family's life as well. This ball was dropped more times than I can count, by numerous medical professionals, and each time Michelle picked up that ball and kept fighting for her client."

Kimberly Russell, CNA

Shelby, NC assistive care state programs office



When Shelby, NC assistive care state programs Client Services Manager **Gabrielle Tubbs** heard President **Mark Baiada** say, "Consistency is a form of compassion,"

she knew she would never forget the words. "CNA **Kimberly Russell**," asserts Gabrielle, "is nothing if not constant. Whenever I give her a client, she sticks with her through thick and thin. Kim's personality is one that does not waiver. She is the same today as she was yesterday, and she will be the same again tomorrow. She always has a smile and is always looking for a way to share that smile with others. Kim also pays attention to the details, and does not quit until the client is satisfied. This, in turn, makes the client feel comfortable enough to ask for help when they need it."

One of Kim's clients elaborates, "Kim really takes her time bathing me and when she is done, I'm clean! Not only does she do a great job, she gives me the impression that she enjoys her work, which makes her a joy to have around." Another finds Kim's talkative nature enjoyable. "Kim is a breath of fresh air with all her talking." The client admits, "It sounds silly, but I love that about Kim because I really don't have anyone else to talk with. My husband is deaf so when we communicate, we have to write everything to each other." Yet another client offers, "Kim fusses over me and won't leave in the afternoons until

my arm, which has given me a lot of pain recently, is propped up on a pillow and everything I need for the evening is within reach. There have also been several times she showed up and brought me pumpkin bread or banana bread simply because she had made some for herself. Things like that make you feel like someone cares." Another client who wrestles with bouts of depression and loneliness shares, "Some days don't feel like they will end OK, but whenever I feel that way, Kim always finds a way to bring me back up again. She will either say or do something to make me laugh and I am grateful for the effort."

Kim's dedication to her clients resounds in her unflinching compassion and reliability. One client in particular lived in a trailer that sat in the backyard of her family's property. The client was difficult to staff not only because of her tight quarters, but because she was a chain smoker who often had three or four cigarettes lit at once. The client was always cold due to her ailments and insisted that her doors and windows be kept shut. Smoke typically filled the air and could not escape from the surfaces within. The woman's voice was gruff from years of her habit and as such, her intentions could easily be misinterpreted. Gabrielle reveals, "She felt abandoned by her loved ones and she often turned to Kim for emotional support through the difficult journey. Kim was constantly on the lookout for ways to encourage and bring joy to her situation." Gabrielle feels, "Kim had helped me see her client through a softer lens. That vision was what helped me soldier on in my quest to take care of her despite the obstacles. Kim is the queen of "the little things." That is why she is a Hero.

Ashley Piccinni, PT

Newton, MA home health office



PT **Ashley Piccinni** joined the Newton, MA home health team in 2013.

Every single day since, says Associate **Samantha Dalmass**, Ashley has made it her aim "to make

clients and their families feel as if their case is her sole priority." One way she contributes to this end is through her unprecedented client advocate efforts. Samantha has witnessed that Ashley devotes much time ensuring her clients receive all the resources that may be of benefit. "I have seen multiple examples of her compassion over the past

few months through her well thought out and researched letters of medical necessity." Another way Ashley makes clients her priority is by making herself available for extra shifts, even when she is at productivity.

Ashley has a knack for making strong connections with her clients, who typically perceive her to be optimistic and warm. One in particular expressed, "Ashley helps me take an active role in my own treatment. She accepts suggestions and criticism openly and makes me feel as if my input is valued. She is lively and has a very strong presence—in a good way—all of which leads to the ability to actively inspire others."

Ashley builds relationships by collaborating with other therapists and clinicians in conferences and meetings, which leads to sound decisions that ultimately benefit the individual clients who she serves. Still, the positive outcomes that result from Ashley's work are not a foregone conclusion. Samantha explains, "Ashley has a lot of difficult and noncompliant clients who try to refuse services. She always manages to convince them of the importance of their therapy and doing their exercises regularly." Irene C., the case manager of a referring physicians' group, proclaims, "Ashley worked with two of my patients, who both have spoken highly of her. Both were challenging and I commend Ashley for giving them ample time and the attention they required. It is truly refreshing to know there are clinicians like Ashley available to my patients. I recommend BAYADA all the time because I trust the quality of care." ■