



Excellence *in Long Term Care*

Awards Program
2025

Brought to you by



Maine Health Care Association



The Maine Long-Term Care
OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM



Welcome to the 2025 Excellence in Long Term Care Awards Program. 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 care 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 older adults and disabled citizens. It is our pleasure to honor you.

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

Fred Fowler

Volunteer Ombudsman for Long Term Care
Maine Long Term Care Ombudsman Program

Brenda Peluso

Essential Care + Workforce Partnership Coordinator
Maine Counsel on Aging

Meghan Welch, LNHA

Market Operations Advisor / New England 1 - MA, ME, RI, CT
Genesis HealthCare

Agenda

8:45 AM	Breakfast
9:30 AM	Opening Remarks: Angela Westhoff, President/CEO, MHCA, and Brenda Gallant, Executive Director, LTCOP
9:50 AM	Keynote Speaker: Betsy Hopkins, Director, Maine DHHS, Office of Aging and Disability Services
10:00 AM	Presentation of Excellence in Long Term Care Awards
11:20 AM	Closing Remarks: Angela Westhoff, President/CEO, MHCA
11:30 AM	Adjourn

Welcome Letter to Excellence in Long Term Care Award Recipients

Dear Honorees and Guests,

We are honored and deeply grateful to recognize this year's twenty outstanding recipients of the Excellence in Long Term Care award. Your unwavering commitment to caring for others is a source of inspiration, and we extend our heartfelt congratulations to each of you.

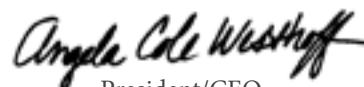
Your dedication to providing comfort, healing, and support reflects the very essence of compassionate caregiving. Direct care workers play a vital role in enhancing the lives of those you serve—bringing hope, dignity, and a sense of security to individuals facing physical, emotional, and mental challenges.

Through your tireless efforts, you create environments where residents feel valued and empowered. You are the trusted hands and hearts that families rely on, and your work improves quality of life for your residents in ways that are both profound and lasting.

The impact of your care reaches far beyond the individuals you serve. It touches families, friends, and entire communities—leaving a legacy of kindness, empathy, and excellence. You embody the highest standards of service, and your contributions deserve our deepest appreciation.

Congratulations once again on this well-earned recognition. We are privileged to celebrate your achievements and look forward to the continued positive impact you will make in the lives of others.

With admiration and gratitude,



President/CEO
Maine Health Care Association



Executive Director
Maine Long Term Care Ombudsman



Wedad Ahmed

Caregiver
Community Home Health
Care LLC, South Portland

Wedad, an exceptional caregiver at Community Home Health Care embodies dedication, compassion, and resilience. Over the past year and a half,

she's displayed an unwavering commitment to her client, Steward, going above and beyond to ensure his comfort, dignity, and well-being. Wedad has remained a dependable, uplifting presence in Steward's life, consistently showing up with professionalism and heart.

One of the most powerful reflections of Wedad's impact comes directly from Steward: "She treats me like family. I feel safe with her here. She doesn't just help me—she cares about me."

Whether it's preparing Steward's favorite meals from scratch, advocating for his needs with respect and persistence, or spending extra time ensuring his home is not only clean but comforting, Wedad never settles for "just enough." She approaches every task—big or small—with the same level of care and excellence.

Her professionalism is unmatched, communicating clearly and promptly with agency staff, respecting privacy and boundaries, serving as a role model for other caregivers, offering encouragement and tips to new staff, and demonstrating true person-centered care.

Wedad's commitment to preserving Steward's quality of life is especially evident in the small, meaningful details: playing his favorite music, decorating for holidays, and patiently engaging in conversation to help him feel seen and heard. She understands that caregiving is not just about physical support, it's about emotional connection and dignity.

In times of challenge, Wedad steps up—during a snowstorm she drove her vehicle through difficult conditions to ensure Steward wouldn't miss his medication or meals. When asked why she didn't stay home, she simply said, "He needs me. That's all that matters."

Wedad is a lifeline, a companion, and a true advocate. Her dedication makes a profound difference in Steward's life and sets the gold standard for caregiving. She is more than deserving of this recognition, and we are proud to nominate her for this award.





Tonya Brewster

CRMA
Montello Commons,
Lewiston

Throughout her 13 years with Montello Commons, Tonya has consistently gone above and beyond every day for residents and staff. One resident said, “Tonya is wonderful because she has been here with me since I came here, and because of her it feels like home.” Tonya goes above and beyond for her residents with many of her residents sharing, “Tonya is one of us.” Tonya takes the time to know the residents’ likes, dislikes and preferences. She’s often able to tell if someone is in pain, sad, or just having a bad day. Tonya is willing to stop what she’s doing to console a resident, make a cup of coffee, get them anything they need.

Tonya’s compassion and advocacy extend beyond the residents she serves, as she’s always willing to help other staff. Tonya works hard to set up other shifts for success, making sure everything is stocked, clean and ready. Her co-workers report that Tonya cooks food for them, provides direction when needed and is honest, and they all rave about her good sense of humor. Many staff rely on Tonya for guidance, and support. Tonya has been known to tell her co-workers, “I want you to call me, check in with me, so you don’t make a mistake.”

Tonya is the go-to person for orienting new staff. Her strong leadership skills and keen eye for organization ensure new staff learn the ropes of Montello Commons, including what’s expected of them, how to treat residents, and the rules and regulations.

As a new supervisor, I have learned many things from Tonya. The most important lesson she has taught me is to prioritize the needs of residents, ensuring they feel valued and respected.

Tonya is an exceptional employee to work with and a great advocate for our residents, to their family, and for our staff.



Raeanne Burgess

Life Enrichment Assistant
Barron Center, Portland

Working with Raeanne is nothing short of a delightful gift. Each day, she bursts through the doors joyfully dancing, infusing the atmosphere with an exuberance that lasts throughout her shift.

She began her journey at the Barron Center in 2004 as a housekeeper. Even back then it was evident by the care she took transforming residents' rooms into inviting places that Raeanne was going far in her career. In 2019, she took her commitment to the next level by completing the activity certification course and officially became a life enrichment assistant, and 6 months ago, she took on the role of training a new colleague.

Raeanne's unwavering dedication to service transcends the boundaries of her job description. While some might say, "that's not my job," Raeanne constantly seeks to go above and beyond, expanding her skills in the process.

Raeanne makes it her mission to connect with the newcomers and their loved ones. She warmly invites spouses and partners to join in community outings and celebrations. To ensure couples can strengthen their love, she helps plan special events, like a Valentine's Day luncheon and apple picking dates.

Raeanne is described as "very patient," embodying the spirit that ensures she makes a profound difference in the lives of all those around her. The new staff person whom she recently trained said, "Raeanne presented each resident as a real person, suggesting ways to interact with them as well as their activity interests. She wove in helpful tidbits, facts and very important lessons throughout my early days while also being open to my contributions."

Raeanne's sacrifice to the work at the Barron Center means the world to the residents, their families, and to her fellow staff. She's willing and dedicated to giving her time and energy to enrich all our lives, that is the true essence of compassionate caregiving.





Josie Chase
Activity Director
Russell Park Rehabilitation
& Living Center, Lewiston

As Activity Director, Josie Chase is the heart and soul of our community. Josie displays an unwavering commitment to enriching the lives of those in her care, taking seriously her role of bringing residents and staff together. Whether it's her ability to offer a listening ear, design a themed celebration, coordinate multicultural celebrations, provide therapeutic or stimulating cognitive games, Josie fosters joy through creativity. Our residents rave about the activities programming—because it's more than just entertainment; it's about connection, purpose, and happiness. Her dedication makes a lasting impact on everyone she encounters.

Josie's leadership encourages staff to participate, engage, and grow closer to the individuals who live here—not just as providers, but as fellow human beings. The result: a workplace filled with warmth, laughter, and mutual respect—and a community where everyone feels like they belong. Her dedication to our residents doesn't end when her shift does; she often comes in on her own time—checking in, lending a hand, making sure no one is overlooked, and ensuring every resident feels seen, heard, valued, loved, and empowered to live life to the fullest. She spends Christmas, New Year's, Easter, Mother's and Father's Days, and most all of the other

holidays to make sure the days are special for all our residents. For Josie, this work is a calling. We are proud to have an Activity Director who brings such warmth and creativity to every moment. Our residents rave about the activities programming—because it's more than just entertainment; it's about connection, purpose, and happiness. Our home is stronger, warmer, and more connected because of her selfless dedication.





Richard Clift

Activities Assistant
MaineGeneral Rehabilitation
& Nursing Care, Augusta

Richard “Rich” Clift is an amazing example of Excellence in Long Term Care. Rich has been part of the activities department at MaineGeneral Rehabilitation and Long-Term Care – Glenridge for 4 years. He has a remarkable approach with the residents, providing personal interactions that bring joy and a sense of connection. Rich’s compassion and understanding are instrumental to the success of Glenridge’s activity department.

Rich’s unique skillset, especially his musical prowess, brings joy and creativity for the residents involved in the music and memory program. The residents and staff love seeing him play his guitar, often at the request of residents. His music brings joy and uplifts during times of sorrow. Rich is highly respected by the residents, their families, and his peers. Families enjoy his regular and detailed communication, and we all get a kick out of his ability to bring modern technology to the residents. You’ll often hear him encouragingly say, “with YouTube, you can learn anything,” and he does just that, teaching himself some new tech resources to help residents recall their core memories.

A family member shared, “Rich treats the patients with the utmost respect. He truly cares and goes the extra mile for our family member, without judgement. We appreciate his good sense of humor, and authenticity. Glenridge is very lucky to have Rich on their staff! It’s extremely difficult to have to place a loved one in a facility, but its people like Rich that makes it a little bit easier knowing he truly cares.” To say that Rich is an asset is an understatement. He is always looking for new ideas to engage the residents, whether it be a fun culture activity, a hobby, or relationship building, he finds the right activity to help residents meet their maximum potential.

The activities department is a better team because Rich is an invaluable member, and he is very supportive in all the department’s endeavors.





Angela Friend

Director of Activities
Scarborough Terrace Assisted
Living & Memory Care, Scarborough

One of the most rewarding aspects of the senior living industry is its genuine potential for upward career mobility—especially for women. It is with great pride and admiration that we nominate Angela Friend for Excellence in LTC Award, recognizing her remarkable journey and unwavering enthusiasm that has enriched the Scarborough Terrace community since 2009.

Angela began her career with as a dietary aide, bringing with her a radiant sense of humor, deep compassion, and an innate drive to serve others. Her dedication and spirit quickly stood out, earning her a promotion to dining lead, followed by a transition to activity assistant in 2014, and ultimately to activity director in 2018—a role she continues to thrive in today.

Angela leads a team of “merry makers,” always dreaming up new ways to spark joy and connection. Whether it’s themed events, spontaneous hallway parades, or heartfelt one-on-one moments, Angela’s creativity and warmth are the heartbeat of our community. Her love of games, puzzles, and word searches are infectious, and her willingness to try anything, especially baking—has become legendary. Several times a week, she attempts to recreate the residents’ cherished recipes, often resulting in delicious but hilariously unrecognizable dishes.

Throughout her tenure, Angela has celebrated major life milestones—graduating from school, getting married, and becoming a mother—all while continuing to uplift those around her. Her resilience and positivity are a model for our entire team. As Rose Espito, a current resident and sharp-witted New Yorker put it best: “Angie is an angel, but a baker she is not... yet!”

Angela’s impact goes far beyond her job title. She creates spaces where people feel seen, valued, and joyful. Her leadership is rooted in empathy, her work ethic is unmatched, and her presence is a daily reminder of the power of kindness and community. We can think of no one more deserving of this recognition than Angela Friend.





Joyce Gagnon

Certified Nurse Assistant
Brewer Center for Health
& Rehabilitation, Brewer

When asked who should be nominated for the Excellence in LTC Award, one name was shouted out, "Joyce! Joyce Gagnon, she is a rock star!"

She is a rock star due to her work ethic, personality, patience with mentoring new staff, and dependability.

Joyce, a seasoned CNA came to us in 2021, as a 1:1 for a specialized behavioral health case. After working 40+ hours, on an overnight shift Joyce would stay and care for her mother who was a resident on the long-term care unit. Eventually Joyce would go home, but before returning for her shift and clocking in, Joyce would be back by her mother's side, visiting and providing care.

Joyce believes strongly in showing up, in giving it her all to our residents and her team. She is often heard saying they deserve our best.

After her mother passed away, we feared Joyce may want to retire but thankfully she stayed, she knew the special case still needed her support. Our special case resident would say, "You know, for a little French lady, she does not let me get away with anything. I do love her." When this resident ended up in the hospital Joyce would ask permission to visit her

and check on her. When this resident graduated Joyce was the first to volunteer to pack the resident's items into her personal car and deliver them to the new group home. Both the resident and I had a sneaking suspicion that Joyce wanted to make sure her new room was organized. There were smiles, hugs, and tears as Joyce wished our specialized case the best of luck in her next chapter in life. Joyce was a large part of this person's success in our community. After this resident left, once again we thought Joyce may consider retiring, but again we were thankful that she wanted to stay on our team.

Words cannot express how grateful I am to have Joyce Gagnon on my team. I wish I could clone her 100 times. She is a keeper.





Courtney Gold

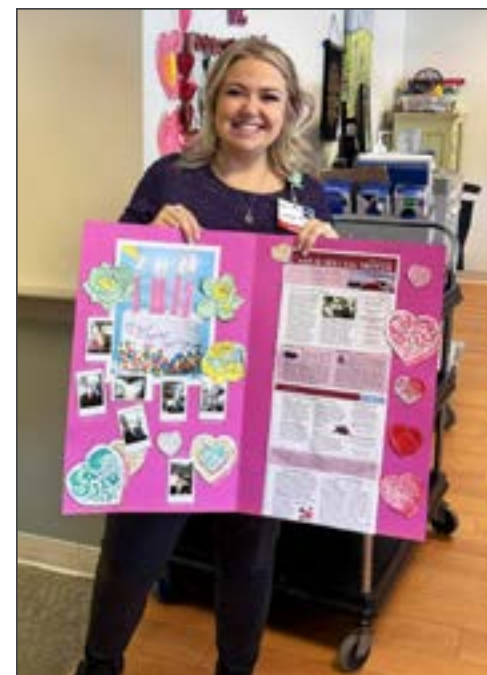
Manager of The Garden
Mid Coast Senior Health
Center, Brunswick

For the last 8 years, Courtney Gold, RN, has brought joy to all at the Mid Coast Senior Health Center in Brunswick. Courtney is the nurse supervisor for Memory Care at The Garden, overseeing 15 staff members, 17 residents and countless family members.

Courtney's coworkers describe her as "always willing to help out," a "caring" leader who is "kind, humble, and approachable." There is no doubt that Courtney's skills, deep compassion, and remarkable ability to connect with each resident are why she always scores as a Best in Class in all areas on the Pinnacle survey and why her staff engagement scores are some of the highest at Mid Coast Senior Health. Courtney's natural warmth and sense of humor bring comfort to residents, especially on tough days. Her caring demeanor helps them feel safe and understood, which is invaluable in a memory care environment.

Courtney's compassion is summed up best by the family member of a resident, saying, "Courtney takes the time to truly understand my mom's needs and the other residents too, their personalities, their backgrounds." This family member has experienced Courtney's special ability to treat residents as the unique individuals they are, and she cares for them as such.

What's also striking is how Courtney seamlessly balances the demanding administrative tasks of her role while consistently spending time with the residents and staff. Her leadership in The Garden is exceptional; she keeps things running smoothly behind the scenes but never loses sight of the personal connections that make The Garden so special. Courtney truly makes The Garden feel like a home for the residents, for their families and for her coworkers. Her dedication and love show through in all she does.





Michael Hawley

Certified Nurse Assistant
Maine Veterans' Homes,
South Paris

Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) Mike Hawley lights up the faces of the residents on our LTC-dementia unit at the South Paris Maine Veterans'

Home. He sets a standard of excellence, inspiring his colleagues, bringing joy to the residents, and instilling a sense of confidence in the families of residents.

Mike consistently goes above and beyond to provide exceptional care to residents, always treating everyone with dignity, empathy, and respect. His ability to connect with residents and families fosters a sense of trust and comfort. Recently, the spouse of a resident reported that from day one her husband had a bond with Mike and that he felt safe with him. This is the highest compliment a family member can give after making the hard choice of moving her husband into the dementia unit. More times than I can count, residents have asked to speak with me just so make sure I am aware that Mike is the best around. One resident made it clear to me that Mike should be training all our new CNAs, exclaiming, "Mike knows what we need and how to make it happen."

As true service leader, Mike supports and provides mentorship to staff with patience and integrity, creating a working environment grounded in teamwork, accountability, and continuous improvement. His innovative contributions have led to high resident and family satisfaction and increased resident participation in activities, significantly impacting quality of life and care outcomes.

Whether advocating for residents, supporting families, or making residents smile, Michael Hawley consistently demonstrates what it means to provide care from the heart. His exemplary service truly embodies the values of this award and MVH seeks to honor.





Katrina Hedgpeth

Certified Nurse Assistant
Hawthorne House, Freeport

Katrina consistently goes above and beyond in her role. She doesn't simply provide care, she delivers person-centered care with a rare attentiveness to the small, meaningful details that matter most. One team member shared, "She takes time to do the little things, talking, sharing, engaging with the residents." In an environment where time is precious and demands are high, Katrina manages to prioritize human connection.

Her presence on the floor is a source of reassurance. As one nurse stated, "When she's working, I know the residents are cared for. It's a relief." That sentiment captures the reliability and trust that Katrina inspires among her colleagues. She brings calm, steadiness, and an unmistakable sense of purpose into every shift.

Katrina is deeply committed to ensuring residents are not only safe and comfortable but respected and seen. She takes no shortcuts in her care. Every task, from ensuring hydration to assisting with ADLs, is performed with thoroughness and grace. Even when the day runs behind, she doesn't let that stop her. Another coworker noted, "If work has gotten behind, she will put forth the effort to make sure the residents are cared for, such as giving an extra shower." Her priorities never waiver: residents first, always.

What makes Katrina truly stand out is the way she uses her calm demeanor, warmth, and good heartedness to nurture one-to-one connections. She listens to stories, holds hands, shares laughs, and treats every resident as the unique individual they are.

In a field that often moves too fast, Katrina slows down just enough to make a lasting difference. Her excellence doesn't shout; it shows up in the quiet moments, the smile she draws from a resident, the dignity she restores through her care, and the example she sets for those around her. Katrina Hedgpeth is a caregiver and reliable teammate in the everyday rhythm of long-term care with consistency, integrity, and heartfelt compassion.





Kim Horton

Private Duty Nurse
Home, Hope & Healing,
Smithfield

Kim Horton, RN, with over four decades of nursing experience, is a dedicated member of the Home Hope and Healing team for the past nine years. She is a prime example of a committed, compassionate, unwavering role model in the field.

Kim goes above and beyond to meet the needs of her clients. She consistently advocates for their care by reaching out to providers, navigating complex systems, and securing essential medical supplies and equipment—often before anyone else even knows they are needed. Kim embraces some of the most medically complex clients, including those requiring tracheostomies, ventilator support, and post-surgical care. She approaches each challenge with determination, grace, and a tireless drive to ensure her clients receive the highest quality of care.

When we're faced with workforce challenges, Kim steps up: covering shifts, mentoring newer staff, all while maintaining the same high standard of care for her clients, uplifting and motivating her team to excellence.

Kim is deeply respected for her clinical skills and for the way she promotes the quality of life and dignity of her clients. She listens closely to their needs, honors their preferences, and ensures their voices are heard in every step of their care.

One particularly heartfelt moment that illustrates Kim's impact comes from the parents of one of her pediatric clients. They shared, "Kim has been a godsend for our child. Without her dedication and motivation, our child would not be where they are today—both clinically and developmentally." This kind of feedback is not uncommon. Kim's presence brings expert medical support and peace of mind to those she serves.

In every way, Kim Horton embodies the spirit of this award. Her years of dedicated service, exceptional caregiving, and commitment to excellence make her a shining example of what long-term care should be. She is a trusted nurse, a compassionate advocate, and a true role model for all who work in this field.





Sandra Illingworth

Speech Language Pathologist
Maine Veterans' Homes,
Scarborough

Sandy Illingworth's impact at Maine Veterans' Home Scarborough is exceptional. For fourteen years she's dedicated herself, serving as a SLP, and in our Dementia Capable Care.

Sandy's skillset has allowed her to be on the forefront of best practices for many years. She started off by establishing the evidence-based music and memory program, then moving on to leading a Parkinson's support group giving resident and family education, peer to peer support and staff awareness about this diagnosis. Sandy also instructs and trains new staff through the Crisis Prevention Institute, ensuring the teams understand the compassionate care necessary for the dementia unit, but perhaps her most impactful work has been accomplishing her long-term goal of establishing a Dementia Team within the facility to carry out ongoing education. The team, with whom she mentors and actively supports, is stronger and able to provide quality care for our clients, especially those who exhibit behaviors that may interfere with care. It is because of Sandy's efforts that the residents have the highest quality of care possible.

Recently, a family member of a resident who participates in the Parkinson support group commented on Sandy's patience and ability to build rapport with all the residents, noting that no matter what, Sandy listens to the residents, is flexible, and helps everyone feel heard and cared for. Sandy is a strong role model for all staff here at MVH-S because of her compassion, strong advocacy for the residents, initiation of support groups, involvement in committees, and unwavering focus on resident dignity and quality of life.





Lacey Kalloch

Social Worker
Maine Veterans' Homes,
Machias

Lacey's been an integral part of Maine Veterans Home - Machias team for eight years, starting as a per diem CNA/CRMA in the nursing department and working her way up to social worker.

Lacey strives to attain the highest level of quality and satisfaction while delivering person-centered care with competence, compassion and commitment. Even prior to admission Lacey is connecting with the potential residents and their family, answering questions, setting their minds at ease. It is her ability to build a strong rapport, and the kindness she displays that sets her apart.

Families rave about Lacey, commenting that she helps make sure residents are treated as individuals, like by buying favorite treats (powdered sugar donuts), and by coordinating visits and special family events, including a recent 100th birthday celebration.

Her care and compassion extend to her coworkers too, as the wellness coordinator Lacey works to make sure her coworkers are healthy, providing nutritious snacks and recipe ideas, knowing that a healthy staff is a happy staff.

Other staff are inspired by Lacey's efforts to always go the extra mile, be it with her punctuality, her willingness to help others on shift, or by coming up with new ways to ensure residents' safety, like when she introduced the idea of purchasing cup holder that attach to residents' walkers, to prevent spills and slips.

Whether she is supporting a resident through a difficult transition or empowering a family to make informed decisions, her work is driven by heart and passion for her job. She exemplifies the MVH core values daily and we are incredibly fortunate to have her on our team.





Tanya Kennagh

Housekeeping Supervisor
Schooner Memory Care,
Auburn

Hired as a housekeeper in 2021, Tanya immediately became an invaluable team member of Schooner Memory Care. Quickly promoted to her current position as housekeeping supervisor where she trains and supervises a staff of four.

Her coworkers and supervisors talk about Tanya as dedicated, hardworking, a team player who consistently demonstrates her passion for the residents. The maintenance director notes that Schooner Memory Care would not be the same without her, especially as she's integral in getting rooms ready for new residents and preparing the building and grounds for seasonal changes.

In addition to her maintenance duties, Tanya helps the clinical and dietary staff after her regular shift. Tanya inventories and organizes clinical supply closets and communicates ordering needs with the purchasing agent. She also organizes and files past medical records to ensure easy access. Her willingness to support across departments exemplifies true commitment to the well-being of our residents and the success of our community.

Staff, residents and family all appreciate Tanya's smile and consideration. She knows everyone's coffee order and brings flower arrangements. Tanya plays an invaluable role in the first impressions families have when touring. Her commitment to cleanliness and attention to detail consistently comes up in conversations with prospective residents and their loved ones. Families often comment on how welcoming, fresh, and well cared for our environment feels, and that's a direct reflection of Tanya's dedication. Her work not only elevates our standards but helps build the trust and confidence families need when making such an important decision. Tanya makes sure to spend time getting to know each resident and family member, some of whom consider her family.

Tanya's dedication to her responsibilities, and pride in her work, is noteworthy. Her extraordinarily kind and encouraging disposition ensures she treats residents like family, while taking a personal interest in them, and attending to their needs to promote their well-being.

Schooner Memory Care is better because of Tanya.





Dianna Leeman

Clinical Care Coordinator
Elder Care Network of
Lincoln County, Damariscotta

Dianna is the heart and soul of eldercare!
She is responsible for the clinical care in the five homes part of Elder Care Network of Lincoln County, known as The Greens.

As the clinical care coordinator, Dianna's mission is to provide loving, eldercare for low-income elders, allowing them to stay in the communities where they have lived, worked, raised families and given so much of themselves.

One of her great joys is getting to know everyone during the admission process. She puts people at ease, often fostering trust and connection that quickly results in shared coffee, laughter and a sense of relief. For many of the residents she becomes a well-loved adopted daughter, someone special they share their happy times, fears and dreams with.

Dianna's attention to detail and her fun personality can be seen when she's preparing rooms for new residents, a task she lovingly refers to as fluffing and buffing, or shopping for special curtains and correctly colored bedding of the resident's choosing. She knows it's important to personalize the space.

Di's day is spent dedicated to the needs of the residents, sometimes it can start at 2am, when beckoned to sit with a hospice resident who is having a restless night, other days she's creatively solving staffing issues, or spontaneously creating a rambunctious afternoon game of cutthroat Bingo, which everyone seems to love.

She is a role model for all her staff and the residents, always leading and living by example, developing personal and unique relationships, making sure everyone feels safe, comfortable, and cared for. That is the essence of Dianna.

Before passing away, a resident told us that he, "came to life out my days here, but I never expected to be this happy, which is because of you, Dianna and your staff".





Daniel Martel

Rehab Tech
RiverRidge Center,
Kennebunk

Dan has been an invaluable member of the RiverRidge Center team since 2016, serving as a dedicated rehab technician on our specialized acute brain injury unit. Over the years, Dan has worked his way up, starting as a recreation assistant, transitioning to the dietary department, and now excelling in his current capacity as a rehab tech.

His profound enthusiasm is consistently evident, as highlighted by a resident's commendation of his "golden microphone" during Bingo activities. Dan knows how to make the everyday community reintegration tasks a lot more fun, taking great pride in helping residents regain and practice skills like baking, meal preparation, and vehicle cleaning, by adding playful elements like water balloons to bring people joy, laughter, and an element of surprise.

Beyond his technical proficiencies, Dan exhibits exceptional attentiveness to resident behaviors, demonstrating a remarkable aptitude for de-escalating challenging situations. Dan is great at individualized engagement with residents, fostering personal connections through activities like Connect4, iPad bowling, and bean bag toss, and being able to give them much needed 1:1 attention.

Dan also serves as a strong advocate for residents. Recently, he collaborated with the maintenance director to establish raised gardens within the courtyard, allowing residents to cultivate flowers and vegetables and observe their growth. He is recognized for his spontaneous "pop-up events," which include barbecues and carnival-themed days, and consistently ensures that holidays are particularly special. For instance, Dan came into the center on his scheduled night off to host a New Year's Eve celebration, complete with a televised countdown, thoughtfully arranged post-dinner to facilitate resident participation in a memorable occasion.

Dan's genuine satisfaction derived from witnessing residents' smiles and his dynamic energy are precisely what our unit requires. We are grateful to Dan!





Mariko Murray
CNA-M
Hibbard Skilled Nursing &
Rehabilitation, Dover-Foxcroft

There's just something special about Mariko. This refrain is often echoed by residents and co-workers who describe CNA-M Mariko Murray as having a calming effect on everyone she encounters: residents, families, and her peers. There is no shortage of examples to the positive impact she makes, the many smiles she brightens, and the moments of joy and enrichment she fosters.

Originally from Japan, Mariko has been with Hibbard Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation in rural Maine since 2016. For some, the culture shift would have been a challenge, but not Mariko, she demonstrates an ability to adapt to any situation.

Mariko enjoys taking her time to get to know the residents, cultivating trust, and building a strong rapport and relationship based on mutual respect. She has a keen knack for learning the unique nuances and personalities of the residents, so much so that she knows their baseline and can quickly tell when someone is deviating, enabling quick interventions.

It's not unusual to hear staff saying, I'm so happy Mariko is here today. That's because her happiness is infectious. She sets a positive tone in the workplace and is always willing to help without being asked, stay late to cover a staffing need, and to show examples of what kindness can look like in long-term care.

The administration of Hibbard is lucky to have Mariko part of the team. Many things come naturally to her that not only make her a great caregiver, but a great person, in particular, her ability to be patient, her work ethic, and her ability to help people rise. Hibbard Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation celebrates Mariko Murray for her nomination for the Excellence in Long Term Care award.





Nicole Ramsey

CNA/CRMA

Piper Shores, Scarborough

Nicole began with Piper Shores as a server while she was still in high school. Her bright and energetic personality and capacity for caring was quickly recognized, and she soon advanced to a hostess position. In this role, Nicole demonstrated excellent leadership and service, and her supervisor encouraged her to complete CNA training. Nicole completed this training in 2021, and in the thick of the pandemic joined our health center team, providing care and service to our most vulnerable residents, during one of the most critically challenging health events our nation has seen.

Nicole takes time to get to know each resident. She is the go-to archivist and remembers every resident she has encountered, warmly memorializing their life story. In her current role as a CNA/CRMA, Nicole's regular responsibilities are within the memory care neighborhoods. However, because she has her CNA credential she may be asked on occasion to help lend a hand in the skilled nursing unit. When this is asked, she never hesitates.

She truly has a gift for working with residents living with dementia and is an incredible presence on the team. Her ability to connect on a personal level creates moments of genuine joy and comfort for those under her care. Always quick to assist, she is not only responsive to the needs of individuals but proactive in finding ways to uplift and support the team. Nicole has goals for her future, planning to enter a nursing program when her child gets older, and we are confident that her strong clinical acumen and her positive approach to all elements of care will make her an excellent RN or LPN. The healthcare community in Maine is better off for having her in it, and we are proud to have called us one of our own since 2015.



**Nancy
Schvertt-Paige**
Administrator
The Meadows, Old Town

The Meadows is proud to nominate Nancy Schvertt-Paige, Administrator/CRMA for the 2025 Excellence in Long-Term Care Award.

With more than nine years of dedicated service in her role, Nancy exemplifies the very best of leadership in long-term care. Her unwavering commitment to quality, compassion, and integrity has elevated every aspect of the facility. Under her guidance, The Meadows has consistently surpassed regulatory expectations, met and exceeded quality assurance goals, and maintained high levels of resident and family satisfaction.

Nancy leads with a steady hand and an open heart. Her calm, thoughtful decision-making and clear communication inspire trust and confidence among staff, residents, and families alike. She prioritizes continuous staff development and fosters an environment where every resident's dignity, safety, and well-being remain at the forefront of care.

What truly sets Nancy apart is her "resident-first" philosophy. This approach resonates throughout the facility and informs every initiative she undertakes. In times of staffing shortages, Nancy does not hesitate to step in wherever needed—whether in the kitchen, as a CRMA, or providing

direct care—always with a smile and never a word of complaint. She leads by example and with humility, demonstrating time and again that no task is beneath her when it comes to ensuring quality care.

Nancy cultivates a culture of mutual respect, accountability, and compassion. Her coworkers describe her as, "amazing, amazing!" noting that she always has a smile on her face and is responsible for building a workplace culture staff are proud to be part of.

It is rare to find a leader who balances operational excellence with such a genuine heart. Nancy is not merely managing a facility, she is building a community, and stewarding lives with purpose and grace.

For all these reasons and more The Meadows is honored to nominate Nancy for the 2025 Excellence in Long-Term Care Award. This recognition would be a fitting tribute to her extraordinary leadership and unwavering dedication.





Sherry White

CNA-M

Market Square Health Care
Center, South Paris

Market Square Health Care Center would be hard-pressed to identify a candidate more deserving of recognition than Sherry White. Sherry, a dedicated med tech, joined our team in September 2020 during the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic. Demonstrating her exceptional commitment, she expanded her role to include central supply and purchasing in January 2024, showcasing her versatility and willingness to take on additional responsibilities.

Throughout her tenure, colleagues note her cheerful demeanor, easily lifting the spirits of residents when they're feeling low, regaining a sense of calm to difficult times, and consistently displaying an extraordinary level of compassion, kindness, empathy, and integrity.

Sherry forms strong bonds with those she serves, earning their trust and respect through her attentive and compassionate approach, and often serving as a surrogate family member for residents who may be missing that personal connection, providing warmth and familiarity. During the passing of one of our residents, Sherry embraced her role as a caretaker with profound sensitivity. Sherry held the resident's hand and offered

soothing words, providing a calming presence during a remarkably difficult transition. Her compassion at that moment had a lasting impact, not just on the residents but on those observing her.

In every interaction, Sherry brings a steady, reassuring presence that goes beyond the typical scope of her job. Whether she is providing medication, supplies, or simply an attentive ear, she makes it a point to engage with residents, ensuring they feel seen and valued, even if it means her daily responsibilities take a little longer to complete. Her genuine empathy and unwavering support are what truly set her apart as an outstanding candidate for this honor.



Thank you to our Sponsors!

Event



Awards (partial sponsor)



Program Book (partial sponsor)



Breakfast (partial sponsors)



Flowers



and to the following Annual Sponsors

Premier Patron



Platinum Sponsors

