

## **An Up and Coming Direct Care Worker Advocate!**



**Name:** Deb Larson

**Hometown:** Marion, IA

### **A few words about my work:**

I work at Meth-Wick as a CNA, an OMT, and a Rehab aide. I love where I work, and I love my work, where else can you adopt so many grandmas and grandpas?

**Recent accomplishments:** I recently finished my rehab aide class thanks to the scholarship available through the ICA. I have also been granted part of a scholarship to help me attend the conference in Washington D.C. I also have had the privilege to be part of the Direct Care Worker Advisory Council through the ICA. I also have gotten a scholarship to attend the ICA conference in Des Moines in September. (All of these accomplishments would not have been possible without the ICA.)

**My first job:** I worked at The Good Samaritan Center in West Union, IA. If not for those wonderful co-workers that I had when I first got into this, I don't know if I would still be doing it. They were all so patient and understanding with me, it was really appreciated!!!!

**My favorite part of caregiving:** If I have to pick just one, it would be that I get to be there! I get to share in every aspect of their life, some more personal than others, because they allow me more deeply into their lives. I feel very privileged to be able to be a part of so many wonderful lives.

**The toughest part of caregiving:** If I have to choose just one, it would be losing the ones you care for most. It's so hard to let go of them after falling in love with them and having them be such a constant part of your life. They leave me brokenhearted, but they also leave me a changed person every time I lose one, and in the end they always make me better for what they taught me.

**Something I'd like to change about the caregiving industry:** The lack of respect we receive. I think if people saw us in the light that the people we care for do, a lot of the things could be solved. People on the outside would understand more of our frustrations, and be willing to lend us more respect and kindness.

**How caregiving will change in the next decade:** The need for caregivers is growing so rapidly, that I hope lawmakers will understand how much they need us, and how important we are. I think that this may lend a hand to help increase our pay, our resident to caregiver ratio,

and our ability to be trained better, and longer. I think that caregiving is going to become more complex, and we as caregivers are going to have to know more as well. Whatever happens, I hope that the shortage decreases, and people understand the caregiving profession a lot better than they do now!

**Something else I'd like to accomplish:** I would like to become a more known and outspoken caregiver. I would like to become more of an advocate for us as caregivers (much like Di!). I want the senators and legislatures to know me, and know that as long as I am around the issues surrounding caregivers won't be allowed to drop to the wayside!

**Someone I admire:** Di Findley and Lin Salasberry

**Outside interests:** Camping, golfing, walking, biking(not motorcycles!), reading, writing, MY KIDS, swimming, canoeing, planting flowers

**About my family:** My husband Scott, daughter, Hannah, 2(will be 3 in August), son, Carter 11 months. I am very thankful for them, especially my husband who encourages me, and always reminds me how much I love my career!!

**Favorite vacation spot:** West Virginia