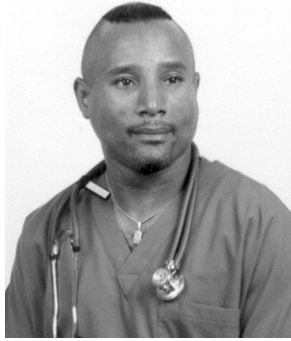


An Up and Coming Direct Care Worker Advocate!



**ANTHONY WELLS,
CNA/CHHA, CHPNA**

Hometown: Dallas, Texas

A few words about my work: It's not a paycheck, it's a calling. Not a job, but a profession.

Recent accomplishments: I attended my first (of many) Annual Iowa CareGivers Association Conference 2005 "ICA Rally: Checkpoint to Success" and was awarded a scholarship. I also was appointed to the Direct Care Worker Education Task Force. And just recently became a member of the ICA Direct Care Worker Advisory Council.

My first job: In my previous life it was at the Mercantile Bank, Dallas, Texas as a Transient Operator which started my career in Accounting, but in my current life it was Redwood Terrace Health Center, Escondido, California that put me on the road to this profession along with a great CNA instructor by the name of Joan Levine.

My favorite part of caregiving: Other than the spirituality that is shared when one gives care from the heart. It's (hands down) the oral histories, the stories, the lives.

The toughest part of caregiving: Is not being able to fix that one thing (that you can't fix) that would make it better for that resident/patient/client.

Something I'd like to change about the caregiving industry: How we are viewed and treated by other members in the health care industry. The lack of reverence and respect by (some) caregivers for the profession. Equal education across the board throughout the U.S., so that reciprocity becomes an ugly word and last but not least, cross training, more of it.

How caregiving will change in the next decade: Improved pay and benefits, improved awareness of our role in health care by others in the industry and (I hope) a sense of pride, respect and reverence for the profession by its own members.

What advice would you give to employers about what they need to do to find and keep direct care workers? Offer a competitive (or slightly above) wage and benefits package, actively recruit from the local colleges/schools training CNAs and treat your CNAs as though they were just as valuable (if not more) than your RNs and LPNs. Also, use your CNAs as part of the multidiscipline panel that interviews prospective CNAs.

Something else I'd like to accomplish: I would like to see myself a permanent fixture within the ranks of the ICA with a title like CNA Field Liaison to the ICA. SSSSSSure, in my dreams. Yet, to be of some service to the ICA would be an accomplishment. Well, if I couldn't have this I guess a Gubernatorial appointment would do. What better way to help the profession.

Someone I admire: The history of my life is replete with people I admire so I will say this: All who have struggled and fought so I can do, say and be without fear and practice my craft with a voice has my complete admiration.

Outside interests: Member of the Gold Wing Road Riders Association, Master #4603 (I love to ride); I love to study ancient civilizations; reading (of course); caring for my birds (4 cockatiels and 1 parakeet) and gardening.

About my family: Relatives are few, but I have all that I need in family with my partner, the love of my life and the loyalty of Brown (the dog). Oh, and I can't forget Beau, Belle, and the menagerie (the birds). Each to his own gifts and these are mine.

Favorite vacation spot: Cairo, Egypt