

An Up and Coming Direct Care Worker Advocate!



***Cindy Ramer,
CNA/Program
Assistant***

Hometown: Denver, Iowa

A few words about my work:

I work at Harmony House Health Care Center in Waterloo, Iowa in the MR unit. I am a CNA and Program Assistant, which supervises direct care staff. I do the scheduling, set up and assist with training and work the floor when we have staff shortages.

Recent accomplishments:

I am a member of the Direct Care Worker Advisory Council. I attended the first Leadership Training session in April of 2004, in preparation for membership on the Advisory Council. I was awarded scholarships to attend the ICA Conference and the Direct Care Alliance Conference last year and really enjoyed the experience. As a member of the council, I will be attending the Direct Care Alliance/Pioneer Network Conference in Orlando, Florida in November. It is a real privilege to attend these events. Most recently, I was awarded the ICA Leadership Award.

My first job: My first job was as a Developmental Assistant in the MR unit at Harmony House.

My favorite part of

caregiving: is working with and just spending time with my residents. Sometimes they just need a smile or a hug and sometimes want to give me a smile or a hug. It makes my day go better.

The toughest part of

caregiving: Confronting an angry staff member and trying to fix the problem. I think the leadership training has helped with that.

Something I'd like to change about the caregiving

industry: I would like to help others understand that we are professionals and we need better benefits and wages, so that we can take care of ourselves and our families.

How caregiving will change

in the next decade: As I and many of my peers of the Baby Boomer generation reach retirement, the need for CNAs is going to increase. My generation is going to want more home or assisted living care and we are going to need many more CNAs to meet the demand.

What advice would you give to employers about what they need to do to find and keep direct care workers?

Just to recognize us as professionals, help to improve wages and benefits, and to give us lots of encouragement, so we can do our best to give the best care we can!

Something else I'd like to

accomplish: Just to be a part of helping others recognize us as professionals and to start the changes we need to happen.

Someone I admire:

All of my peers on the Advisory Council because we are all working together to make a difference. Di and Lin for all of their encouragement. My boss, Michele Moore, because she keeps me going and has been very supportive of my efforts with being a member of the Advisory Council.

Outside Interests:

Camping, gardening, crafts, upholstery, and just doing things with my family and friends.

About my family:

My husband Jim and I have been married 31 years now. I have a step daughter Robby, a step son James and sons Chad and Bob, and a step daughter Cleta, who was adopted as a baby and found Jim a few years ago. We have seven grandchildren, an eighth on the way, and one great grandchild.

Favorite Vacation Spot:

I can't think of one favorite spot. I've had many enjoyable camping trips with my family over the years. My dream trip is to go to Hawaii some day. There are also many other places I hope to visit some day.