

An Up and Coming Direct Care Worker Advocate!



**BARBARA
CARLSON, CNA**

Hometown: Lake City, Iowa
A few words about my work: I am starting my 30th year as a nurse assistant on the first of June, 2006. I care for patients of all ages and love my work. Also an activity director for the people in our skilled unit of the hospital.

Recent accomplishments:
To be selected to be on the Direct Care Worker Advisory Council is a real plus. I'm so much more aware of my profession and how important it is. Also my friends, we are a close team.

My first job: My first job was being a secretary (before marriage). My next job was being a stay-at-home mom, working the farm fields with my husband and doing lots of chores! As the two youngest children were in high school I needed income and became

a nurse assistant at a hospital.

My favorite part of caregiving: I love the "hands-on" experience of caring for my patients and seeing their faces light up when I come in the room.

The toughest part of caregiving: Living in a small community and knowing everyone, it's very hard when death comes and I am there with the patient and their family.

Something I'd like to change about the caregiving industry: Being recognized for the truly hard working and loving people we are.

How caregiving will change in the next decade:
We will need many more CNA's, people will try to stay in their homes and we as nurse assistants need to be there to care for them. As the rural population grows so does the need for nursing home for the elderly. People in the USA need to be aware they cannot put their loved ones in a care center if there is no one to take care of them.

What advice would you give to employers about what they need to do to recruit

and retain direct care workers?: Be more personally involved once you get the CNA recruited and trained. There needs to be more mentoring going on with new nurse assistants.

Something else I'd like to accomplish: Be a spokeswoman for the state of Iowa, telling our story.

Someone I admire: Cathy Collins, one of my first nurses and house supervisor. She's always there to listen and offer practical advice. She is someone you can confide in.

Outside interests: Walking, biking, athletic events, reading, but most of all being involved with my family. They are so important.

About my family: My husband, Aaron, and I have been married 51 years. We have 3 sons, 6 grandchildren, 5 great grandchildren. We stress education for all, work hard and love God.

Favorite vacation spot: We camp a lot during the summer, when time permits. We've been going to Arizona during vacation time for 23 years. We love the mountains, so a dream vacation would be in Colorado.