

There Are Angels Among Us

Anonymous

Wrapped in my blankets like a human burrito made of bed linens, with my face buried in my pillow, I would sleep...until a piercing and resonating sound would go off. Every morning my hand would scramble across the night table, knocking everything off. I was desperate to hit the snooze button like a detonator to silence this obnoxious alarm. I am not a violent person but the temptation to send it hurling across the room definitely crossed my mind a time or two. For several years, that is how my day would start. I loved my job as a nurse, but every day was a drag – the monotonous sun up and sun down routine day after day, week after week, until months turned into years and before I knew it two years had come and gone.

One day, in 2006, Hospice of Marion County's Human Resources Department called me and asked if I was interested in a position. I have to be honest, when I graduated nursing school we had a hospice representative from Jacksonville try to recruit nurses from my class, and I scoffed saying I would never have a career in hospice – "people just die, what's the point?" But all of that came to a screeching halt! Little did I know that my ignorance would soon be redirected when my ailing grandmother would need hospice in our home. Then, six months later, my father was diagnosed with terminal metastatic cancer and again, we were at the mercy of hospice. I am forever grateful and it was a humbling experience, as well as an educational one. I realized then that hospice did far more than I had ever given it credit. And so, remembering the significant impact hospice had for me and my family, I accepted the interview and decided to pursue a career with hospice. It's amazing how one phone call can change the course of your life and influence the way you live it.

Now, instead of formulating diabolical ways to destroy my alarm clock, every morning I awaken with a goal in mind and a proud responsibility, not only to my peers, but to the patients everyone in this organization strives so diligently to serve. In all my years of employment in different places and various capacities, my employment here has provided me with much more than just an income. It has given me the gift of many friendships, the honor of loyalty, the lesson of humility, and the acceptance of sacrifice. It has strengthened my ability to express compassion and kindness, and it has proven to me that there are angels among us, even though their wings are only visible in their actions.

Being a part of Hospice of Marion County is carrying out a mission to which everyone contributes. When the doors are closing in a person's life and their journey is nearing its end, our staff walks with them and their families; providing comfort, support, and care. Each individual in this organization is crucial, from the clinical to the non-clinical; everyone has an intricate responsibility that makes us who we are as a whole. One cannot function without the other and when everyone works from the heart—that is what makes our hospice elite.

In my four years of being an employee of HMC, even though I'm not directly involved with patient care, I have learned that every day is a gift. Hospice has taught me that we never know when someone will deliver the news that tomorrow may not come. I recognize so many families and friends that let time and tribulations burn bridges that should have never been broken, estranged children who no longer speak to their parents, or siblings who have long forgotten each other; to me, these things are the most painful to witness when someone is nearing the end of their journey. Working for hospice has given me the grace to appreciate each day and the people in my life. I've always known that you should live life to the fullest, but working here has truly shown me that you need to laugh and love as well!