



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RE: Human Interest: STNA'S: Love of Job

Lima: State Tested Nursing Assistants or STNA's play a big role in delivering services for individuals with MR/DD (mental retardation and developmental disabilities) served by Champaign Residential Services, Inc. (CRSI).

STNA's complete a six week, hands-on training course and must pass both a skills and written test in order to become an STNA in the State of Ohio.

Although not all direct care positions at CRSI require this training, STNA's find their backgrounds valuable when delivering services within the MR/DD population.

Compared to a nursing home setting where the STNA to consumer ratio may be as high as twenty or thirty-to-one, STNA's enjoy working on a one, two or three-to-one basis. With this lower staff to consumer ratio, more attention and time can be spent with each consumer making it easier to give good support services and develop relationships.

Within CRSI, a STNA performs a wide variety of services for each consumer in their care. Teaching and training, scheduling, budgeting, handling finances, taking them on outings, distributing pre-packaged medications, cleaning and cooking are some of those services needed to care for an individual with MR/DD.

Teaching and training are a large part of the daily care provided by CRSI. A portion of what an individual may learn from the STNA is how to do laundry, cook or clean, pack a lunch, shampoo hair, put soap on a wash cloth or other personal hygiene functions.

Christine McGee, an STNA working mostly at the Mary Ann Brown Center in Lima says, "We're helping them to be more independent and they love independence because it makes them feel like a person." Christine has been with CRSI since September 1999. "The progress you make with them is so neat. We're family to most of these people...sometimes taking the place of family. Each relationship needs to be diverse because different people have different needs and the relationships need to vary," says Christine.

Doug Shaffer is a group home manager for a three man home on Marion Avenue. He has worked with CRSI for six years through a temp organization but was recently hired in as a full-time CRSI employee in April of this year. He has also had an extensive background in nursing homes. "This is a different feeling altogether. With geriatrics you're so limited as to what you can do. It lights you up to see the smiles on their faces, it's more exciting. They (individuals with MR/DD) enjoy everything and are so appreciative.

Deborah Gipson always wanted to be a nurse. She trained in nursing homes and gained experience from temp jobs in both nursing home and hospital settings. When she was sent to CRSI from a temp service she fell in love with

individuals with MR/DD. “If you’re a caring person you have to love it. You can come in having a bad day and they just brighten you up. It’s harder in a nursing home. There’s not enough help to give proper care and form relationships.”

All three STNA’s are single parents. Deborah is the mother of five. After her children were born she went back and earned her GED. Doug has two children and would like to someday finish his LPN degree. “For a male (in the nursing field), MR/DD is easier because they want and need to be taken care of,” adds Doug. Christine is the single parent of one child and while seeking a job “found this opportunity and fell in love with the people”, she says.

All three agree that they love their jobs and it’s all about independence and giving choices to the people they serve and to provide a quality of life that so many of us take for granted.