



THE CARE WORKERS CHARITY – WRITING COMPETITION

Entry by Kelly MacDonald, Care Assistant at Craigielea



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I WISH I'D DONE IT SOONER!

I was in admin since I left school (17 years old) when I decided I needed a change. My mum had worked in care for 10 years before she had to give it up for health issues, she always talked about the feeling you got at the end of a work day when you felt you had helped people. I decided that was what I wanted to do, and applied to Craigielea Care Centre, part of Holmes Care Group in January 2017.

I started in February 2017 and I was nervous. I started in the Adams Unit which cares for young disabled and young dementia residents. I thought this was strange as I had always thought of care homes only having elderly people in them. The moment I got to the unit the energy that was coming from all the carers was addictive and my charge nurse was amazing she made me feel so at ease, she told me that everyone is an individual and to think how I would like a relative or myself to be treated if I was in the same situation as the residents. I thought this was a very human way to look at it and really liked the fact that she didn't use big medical words and quotes that I probably wouldn't understand. The love and compassion she has for all the residents is amazing and I found myself really enjoying my day.

The day starts off with everyone getting personal care and up for breakfast we then assist with eating breakfast and morning tea. I love the fact that with this job you are interacting with people and brightening up their day. After breakfast there is a bath to do. Every client has a designated day for a bath as my charge nurse believes that a bath really helps as some clients can't move due to their injuries and the bath soothes their muscles. After the bath we then assist with lunches and at 3.30pm we start to get everyone back into bed, due to some of our client's injuries they can get tired and sore, so we hoist them into bed, and again personal care is given. We then assist them with dinner. I was so exhausted my first day that I slept until 1pm the next day but it was a happy exhaustion and I knew I had made the right career choice.

As the weeks went on I started to get to know the clients and their likes and dislikes. Some clients unfortunately cannot speak but we have care plans in place, and their relatives have told us what they love and hate. We have one client who loves car racing, he has a remote-control car which I assumed he likes as he couldn't stop looking at it and we assisted him with the controls as he has movement in his left hand. It was good to see that the clients can still enjoy things they loved. We also have an activities member of staff who comes in on a Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and interacts with the residents i.e. listening to music, arts and crafts and interactive games.

Moving and handling is a big issue in the care home. As so many of the clients in my unit can't move we need to assist them into their chair, baths and bed with the use of a hoist and sling. As soon as I started I had already read about moving and handling on eLearning but within the first week of starting I also had practical training on moving and handling so that I knew the use of the hoist, how to place the sling correctly on the client and how to inspect the equipment before using it. There is a lot of training at Craigielea, but we are working with people and everything must be correct as these people are putting their life in our hands and they must feel secure and safe when we are assisting them.

Sometimes I did get the terms of caring mixed up. One member of staff asked if anyone knows how to read a dipstick which I replied I did then proceeded to say that "you take the dipstick out the engine clean it then put it back in then take it out and that's how much oil you have in your car"... I got a few concerned looks as the employees then told me that they meant the urine stick and not the car dipstick! But I'm starting to get the terms.

I have now been in care for a year and wish I had gone into it sooner as I love every minute of it. I would urge anyone who is thinking of caring as a career to do it as soon as possible. I have had people tell me that they couldn't do the job due to the personal care, but this is just a small part of it and there is so much more to caring than that.

It's the interacting with residents having a joke and laugh with them. Hearing their stories, listening to their music and comforting them when they are sad, and above all making sure they are treated with dignity and respect. I now can't wait to get to work which was a real difference from being in admin and wishing I would win the lottery, in a way I feel I have won the work lottery at least and the care centre I work in is amazing all the staff are there because the care for everyone in the centre and I am very proud and humbled to part of that.