

# Amber Jennum



**Why did you choose older adult services as a career?** I first chose older adult care as a job, but after working as a resident assistant for a short period of time I knew I wanted to make this my career. I enjoy assisting the elderly so they can live their lives as comfortable as possible - it gives me much pleasure to see their happiness in their everyday lives.

The seniors I work with have made my life more complete and I have come to think of them as an extended family. Many elderly residents feel they are abandoned by their children by geographic distance or life circumstances, making what should be a happy time in their life journey more difficult. I welcome the opportunity to be part of making their lives better and sharing in whom each is as an individual. Senior care has been an exhilarating and inspiring area for me to work, and is without question where I want to grow as a professional.

It is my belief that by being well informed, loving, compassionate, patient and professional, my actions can and will positively change our residents' lives and their families in a positive way.

**What do you want to do with your life and how do you hope to impact the older adult services profession?** I want to always be a caregiver that is dedicated to providing each and every resident with the kind of care that can add value, joy and satisfaction to their days - the kind of care that each deserves to be able to expect as a generation that has worked hard to provide for others.

I believe that I am a compassionate and caring professional whose sole purpose is to optimize the quality and enjoyment of life for each and every resident. I want to carry this same spirit into providing more advanced professional nursing care to add value to help seniors live life to the fullest - keeping them safe and well cared for at each step in the aging process. Young professionals like myself need to prepare ourselves to meet the needs of the growing senior segment of society.

It is my sincere desire to impact the elder care profession through leading by example. As I gain education and further experience, I can help influence others to make the personal commitment to quality care for the elderly as I do in a positive manner. I want to make a difference!

**Provide a specific example of when you positively impacted someone through the care or services you provided.** By coming in every day with a smile on my face I think I positively impact not just my residents, but my co-workers as well. When I am joyful about the work I do, it sends the message to our residents that they are important. And through this we find a level of connection with one-another that helps me understand how to serve them better and adds great value to the satisfaction I get from my work each shift.

Specifically I think of the recent death of a dear lady that had lived on our campus for almost a decade. She was a very neat lady whom we all came to love. She was one of the people that made me fall in love with this profession! When it was her time to be reunited with her young, feisty self, my co-workers and I were at her bedside so she had all the love in her room possible to help make her passing as exuberant and bubbly as she desired it to be. We laughed and cried with family and one another as we shared many of her "embellished" stories told once (or ten times in an hour) to us all. Sometimes in life we invest part of who we are with another - growing stronger and wiser because of the connection. This resident has been one of those people in my life, and hopefully in return I have been able to add value to their lives as well!

I was home after a full shift at work, studying for a bio test when I received a call that her family requested me to join them as she began her new journey. I rushed to work in my pajamas, no make-up and my hair tied up, to be with her and her family when she went. I was honored to be able to help this family grieve for their dying mother, and privileged to help give them reassurance of the quality of care their mother has with our organization. Below is a note received from our management in response to actions taken by myself and my co-workers:

*"I am overcome with emotion, gratitude and amazement at the loss of KZ and how you all made such a significant impact in her journey, but most importantly how you all came together during those last few hours, not only to offer your love and support to KZ, but to her family and each other. Her journey at May Creek, from the first day she came thru our doors, was a journey filled with laughter, humor, wit, and love. She was an amazing lady and has left a lasting impression on each of us.*

*I had the opportunity to visit with her daughter a couple of times today. She shared with me (and what I believe to be a true testament of how amazing you all are) the love and support they felt with having all of you there and how peaceful and beautiful her passing was. She stated the following: "my daughter who has been a hospice RN for five years was completely blown away by the compassion and care shown by the staff." To me, that speaks volumes about each and every one of you. I feel so much gratitude for working with all of you, and am forever thankful to have crossed paths with such a great lady."*

**How have you positively impacted your organization and increased its effectiveness?** I have positively impacted my organization by example with my desire to learn new tactics, approaches and interventions for the ones that I care for. Taking extra educational classes and staying updated on all the new methods to keep our residents in high spirits and best health makes me a more effective care provider. I help our organization become stronger by passing my knowledge on to my co-workers and new staff to enable them to be stronger assets for residents too. I want others to share my experiences to help them succeed in this field in the same way others have given me the opportunity to grow and learn!

I also help our campus through active participation in in-service opportunities, quality improvement efforts, fall prevention actions, and helping with special events and activities that add value for residents and co-workers alike. I am proud to be a volunteer in partnership with our residents in the American Cancer Society Relay for Life, and working to raise awareness of Alzheimer's disease in our community. My own grandmother has even become involved with this cause because of my passion to help the elderly and improve their quality of life wherever possible. Building this kind of ownership builds trust with residents, families and the extended community, allowing our care to be more effective for seniors in our community and on our campus.