

Kathryn Schoenecker



When I was in college I always pictured myself being a Dietitian working in a hospital. I thought it would be fast paced, challenging and fun. I discovered that long term care is fast paced, challenging, fun and in addition I actually have the opportunity to develop a personal relationship with the residents I care for. Despite what I thought I wanted, a higher power pushed me in an entirely different direction and I find myself pursuing a degree in Nursing. After graduation I found a job at a large long-term care facility in the heart of Minneapolis called Good Samaritan Society University Specialty Center and remain employed at this facility. I have developed relationships with my residents, have been exposed to complex medical conditions and have started new programs to promote dietary satisfaction for the residents. My career path has changed for a variety of reasons. The reason first being that I miss having contact with the people I care for. My current role as a dietitian includes lots of paperwork which takes time away from being on the units and around the residents. I have so many residents to assess and most of my contact goes to those with the greatest need.

In the past when I worked as a Nursing Assistant I was able to share a special bond with all of the people I cared for. I was able to find ways to connect with them and I feel that this is a gift I possess that isn't utilized as my role as a dietitian. Another reason I've decided to change my path involves looking forward to the future. I don't feel that I could be completely satisfied with a long term career in dietary. In nursing there is room for growth and opportunities for further education. Some day I would like to be a Nurse Practitioner at a long term care center. I feel that I am a very motivated and ambitious person who could succeed in nursing. I am constantly looking for ways to improve systems and I enjoy working with older adults. Residents in long term care facilities do not always have family and visitors so I feel it is our role to serve them not only as a caregiver but also a person who truly cares about them. For some residents, the staff becomes their family.

The joy I receive taking care of older adults is beyond words. The relationships I have built with the people I serve have made a major impact on my life. Although the residents come and go, the memories last a lifetime. Sometimes I think about a resident who has passed and I will chuckle thinking about a joke they used to tell. Although I never pictured myself as a nurse in long term care, the path was laid out for me. Recently my Aunt was diagnosed with cancer. The news was devastating. As the cancer progressed, she began needing more assistance, however, her family wanted to keep her at home as long as possible. I was able take time off of work and care for her when she was still able to live at home. It was difficult but very rewarding to bond with her during her last weeks. After she passed away I knew that I needed to make a career change.

I believe I possess strong leadership skills and have positively contributed to Good Samaritan. I have started buffet style dining at the facility, cooking groups, wellness programs, a new snack program and I am working to develop a dietary computer system. I have received training to supervise dietary staff on a regular basis and feel have I excelled in this role. Recently during a snow storm I worked throughout the weekend. Many employees were unable to come to work. I organized safe rides home for staff and provided meals to staff and residents during the storm that stayed at the facility over the weekend.

I chose a Distance Nursing Program because it made the most sense. The program allows me to live near my family, attend school and continue being with the people I serve. I have a strong support

system both at work and at home and I believe I have the ability to succeed in the Nursing and I know that I will make a difference in people's lives.

Thank you for your time and consideration.