

## Nicole Leasure



I have chosen to pursue a career in older adult services from the experiences I had while completing my Bachelor of Science in Social Work. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to volunteer and intern at St. Benedicts Senior Community. This experience allowed me to engage with older adults and learn about the aging process. My appreciation and respect for older adults grew immeasurably, which was the reason I chose to be a social worker in the long term setting.

My ultimate life goal is to obtain my Masters in Social Work with a special focus on aging. Once I obtain my Masters I plan to work towards obtaining my Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker Licensure. From my experiences I have seen an increase in older adults with mental health and chemical dependency issues. Once I accomplish my Masters I will be able to better serve this population with a clinical focus. I hope to make an impact by enhancing the quality of older adults' lives by gaining a greater understanding of the challenges they face. I will use my knowledge to educate others and advocate for the aging populations rights.

A specific example of when I positively impacted a patient's life would be when I was planning a discharge for a middle aged woman from the transitional care unit to a senior apartment. This patient had a below the knee amputation as result of a long history of diabetes. Prior to admitting to the hospital this patient was living with her two dogs in a trailer home. The patient had been recently informed that her trailer home was being condemned. She was single with limited family involvement, as well as limited income. I helped the patient deal with the feelings of loss and grief. I provided the patient with accessible and affordable senior apartment options. Due to the lack of family involvement I helped the patient tour available apartments that were dog friendly and fit her needs. By the end of this patient's stay at our facility, her signs and symptoms of depression diminished and she was able to move to an independent apartment.

I continue to positively impact Park Health & Rehabilitation through the ongoing teaching and mentoring. I enjoy working with the interdisciplinary team while providing insight to the older adult's psychosocial factors. I educate new staff about the roles of the social service team and assist with arranging in house services to further their education. I also provide mentorship to social service staff at sister facilities and have a social service intern starting this fall. I appreciate the opportunity to teach others what I have learned. I am a strong advocate for the residents as well as the staff. My door is always open and I strive to maintain a calm and positive attitude in a challenging work environment.