

Shawn Boomgarden



I would have to say that my reason for choosing long term care for a career can be largely credited to my grandmother. She worked for many years as a CNA and a TMA in Lakefield MN. She used to take us to her place of employment to show us off to the residents when we would go to visit her. I remember being somewhat intimidated by the residents back then, but as I grew older I found myself being continually drawn to a career in the health care field. I decided to apply at one of our local nursing homes when I was sixteen and started at working at what was then called Lake Haven Nursing Home my sophomore year in high school. It did not take long for me to realize why my grandmother had loved her job so much. Being as young as I was at that time it felt as though I had a whole host of grandparents and I was lucky enough to get to work with them. The experience of being a CNA had also created a special bond between my grandma and I because we were able to share a common interest. I have worked at other places in several different fields but I can honestly say that other than being a daycare provider nothing has been as rewarding as the time I have spent as a CNA. I truly love this line of work and I am able to go home from work every day with the feeling of having done something important in the lives of our residents.

The only thing I have ever truly wanted to be is a nurse. Ever since my high school years when I was trying to decide what to do with my life that is the only thing that would come to mind. Because I was afraid of failure I would not enroll in college and as a result have worked two jobs for the past twenty five years. After receiving so much encouragement from my family and co-workers I decided it had to be done now or it would never happen. I am currently enrolled at Minnesota West Technical Community College having completed the prerequisites for the LPN and RN programs and I will start LPN classes this fall. My plan is to continue on the following year to complete my RN degree. Having worked in Long Term Care for so long I have seen the never ending need for good nurses in the Nursing Home environment. These residents depend on us so much and they deserve the best possible care we can give them while they are living out the rest of their days. My goal is to become the best RN I can possibly be so that I can continue to care for the elderly and hopefully make their nursing home experience a positive one.

I have had countless experiences when I know what I do for a living made a positive impact on someone's life. The times that stand out for me the most are when I am caring for an individual who is nearing the end. I feel it is so important that they not feel alone at such a critical time for them and their families. Compassion is a must in this line of work and even though it is important at all times I really think it is important to be compassionate toward all concerned when a person is reaching the end stage of their life. I will not forget the time I was working with one of our residents who happened to be the stepmother of a co-worker. The co-worker was also present in the room with us and when I was done doing her cares she thanked me for taking such good care of her stepmom and asked me why I wasn't a nurse. There are also a few residents who very rarely speak out loud and when they do they don't always make sense. I have found that when a resident doesn't respond it is difficult for some people to talk with them during their cares. I have also found that when I'm doing cares for these same residents that I will often get answers back to the questions that I've asked or a laugh to something that I've said. It is so important to always treat our residents equally and never assume that they don't hear you or don't understand what is being said. Seeing a response such as this always makes me feel good

about what I do. I like to do my job in such a way that I want the residents treated exactly as I would expect my own family members to be treated.

I have served on the safe patient handling committee, and the CNA QI committee. I have participated in several of our in service trainings. I serve as a mentor to my co-workers both new and old. I was assigned as one of the main trainers for our new employees and have adjusted my schedule to train them in on the particular shift they were hired for. I have worked countless hours of overtime due to our facility being short of help and have been willing to work other shifts than my own. So far I would consider myself to be a loyal, dependable employee who takes great pride in the work that I do.