

The Role of an Angel

Soon Ja Henderson, a resident at Life Care Center of Coos Bay, Ore., was approaching the end of her life. Complications of her health required that she be admitted to Bay Area Hospital. Her husband, Noel, had passed away in February of this year. The remainder of her family lived out of state.

But Soon Ja was not alone. She had a certified nursing assistant (and certified medication aide) named Helen Patterson who took on the role of her angel.

“Helen went above and beyond her responsibilities in caring for Soon Ja,” said Liz Miles, director of social services at the facility. “She watched over Soon Ja and spent time with her during her hospital stay. Helen even went to the hospital early one morning, around 3 a.m., when the hospital called her and asked that she come and sit with Soon Ja. Helen exemplifies the goals of *Whatever It Takes And Then Some*. Her heart is here with the residents.”



Why would Patterson help Soon Ja as she did? “I felt she was a really good friend, almost family, and I didn’t want her to be alone,” Patterson said. “That’s just what you do.”

It wasn’t the first time Patterson – an associate at Life Care Center of Coos Bay since September 1984 – had demonstrated her love for the family. When Soon Ja’s husband was celebrating his 93rd birthday, she baked a cupcake for every year. “He said he was insulted because I had made 94, and we laughed about that. He had a deadpan humor,” Patterson related.

When Noel Henderson came to the building in 2006, he drank fluids but wouldn’t accept nourishment. “We worked with him and got him to eat, and he became a totally changed man,” Patterson said.

“Helen is very, very steady,” said Mardi Robers, executive director. “She always does something extra for the residents.”

Today, June 11, is National Career Nursing Assistants Day, the start of National Nursing Assistants Week, which extends through June 18. Helen Patterson represents the ideals of what good CNAs are all about. The theme of the week is *Yes, We Can!*

(more)

Life Care is blessed with thousands of certified nursing assistants who – like Helen Patterson – touch not only the bodies of those they serve, but their hearts and their souls as well.

May God shower His favor upon them, one and all.

– Beecher Hunter