

2011 Heroes of the Year

Barbara Sauer, Master of Social Work
Denver, Colorado



MSW Barbara Sauer has been a valuable member of the Denver, CO Visit (DV) clinical team since 2006. North Denver, CO Visits (NDV) Director Channie Wright says, "She has faithfully covered the entire Denver metro area for all three skilled Visit offices. Her knowledge of community resources and her expertise in Medicaid regulations have been invaluable in helping countless patients receive additional services." DV Director Linda Gaetani adds, "Barb always attends care conferences weekly and is seen as an integral resource for patient care needs by nurses and therapists."

At the drop of a hat, Barbara will take action to help a client in need. When a call came in about a client without food, she visited the client the same day so Meals on Wheels could begin delivery without delay. Barbara also helped an elderly woman replace her furnace after seeing space heaters scattered around her home for a few weeks. Then, a subsequent visit to this same client's home revealed the strong odor of gas. With her oxygen tank in place, the client was about to check the pilot light in her kitchen. Barbara stopped the client in her tracks, and called 911 instead.

When emergency help arrived, all were told that the building would have exploded with any spark of flame. PT Maryanne Kenney says, "Barbara was a hero who truly saved lives with her quick thinking."

Barb's nature is cheerful and optimistic and always offers a solution to a problem. Channie describes her as "a gem for all of the Denver offices and a great asset to BAYADA."

Jane Harrison, Home Health Aide
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



HHA Jane Harrison joined BAYADA in 2001, and has been caring for one Main Line, PA Adult (MLA) client for the past six and a half years with 100 percent reliability. Jane cared for her elderly client, who was both blind and unable to walk, in an assisted living facility in her own apartment. Recently, however, the client moved to a senior apartment complex outside MLA's regular service area to be closer to family. There was no question that the family wanted Jane to continue providing care, and without hesitation, she did. Clinical Manager Jackie Sallade shares, "Along with providing excellent personal care, Jane always makes sure to care for the whole person." Although moving out of the assisted living facility meant there would be no more concert trips to the Academy of Music or lunches out that the client loved, Jane found a way to continue the tradition. Fridays became regular concert days, whereby Jane's client would get dressed up and sit in her special concert chair to hear recordings of her favorite composer, Mozart. Friends would sometimes gather to make it a social event.

Despite the client's pureed diet, Jane creates special lunches on occasion and announces that they will be eating at the client's favorite destination, the Merion Cricket Club. Jackie calls Jane an "intuitive caregiver. She knows her client may have limitations, but that does not limit what the client can experience. She makes all the pleasures that mean so much as real as possible."

The client's son shares, "There is no doubt that Jane's loving care has positively affected the quality of my mother's life. I feel blessed to have such an incredible person taking care of her."

Toni Kearns, Licensed Practical Nurse

Lewisburg, Pennsylvania



LPN Toni Kearns has worked for the Lewisburg, PA (LEW) office since 2007 and has proven time and again that she can and will positively impact the life of any client in her care. Clinical Manager Toni Shaffer remembers when she successfully transitioned her most medically fragile client home from the hospital. The infant was with a trach and vent and Toni took great initiative in accepting hours on this 24 hour, 7 days a week case. From the beginning, she was instrumental in allowing this child to remain home. Toni gave up time with her own family to ensure that this family could be home together and love their baby. As the parents recognized that the end of their baby girl's life was coming, they contacted the office to ask for Toni. In true Hero fashion, Toni went to support and care for this client and her family as she passed away. In the parent's saddest moments, they found great comfort in Toni's presence.

Another client Toni helps is a little boy who has struggled with eating since birth. His mother says, "Toni is able to take the extremely difficult task of getting him to eat and turn it into a positive experience for him. Her approach is not only encouraging, but empowering. She cares for our son the way she would care for her own." Another client under Toni's care is a teenager who endured years of reconstructive surgery to her face and head. Toni helped her transition from home to school.

Director Ruth Ann Kephart shares, "It wasn't long before the client was sporting a new hairdo, with Dad's permission of course. The client gained confidence with Toni's love and support." Client Services Manager Lauren Johnston believes, "Toni is a great goto nurse in any situation, challenging or otherwise, and I couldn't imagine nominating anyone else to be our hero!"

Cathy Akbari, Registered Nurse

Charlotte, North Carolina



RN Cathy Akbari from the Charlotte, NC Pediatrics (CHP) office has cared for many clients since her start with the company in 2002. Director Ali Genthner shares, "She has always displayed such compassion for our clients." The family of one client immediately fell in love with her when she began caring for their child. Recently, they developed an even deeper respect for Cathy when she willingly put her own life in danger to secure the safety of her five-month-old client during a recent electrical fire in the home.

The incident began when a fire broke out on the first floor of the family's two-story home. Cathy immediately yelled for the baby's cousin, a young male, to grab her client's emergency go-bag, containing needed medical treatments, while she carried the baby out of the home. The cousin ran upstairs to get the bag, but on the way down, the stairway runner caught fire, trapping everyone upstairs. Ali says, "Cathy did everything she could to shield the baby, and had to make a terribly

difficult decision." She realized the only way to get the baby out of the burning house was from the upstairs window. Gasping for air, Cathy did the almost impossible, and tossed the baby from the second-story window to safety outside, where a neighbor was ready to catch him, with the cousin, who had jumped from the window himself.

Fire crews had to rescue Cathy from the home. Miraculously, the baby only sustained a dime-sized burn on his knee. Cathy's injuries resulted in a three-week hospitalization and a week of rehab. Clinical Manager Amy Winborne shares, "It was not until we could prove to Cathy that the baby was alright that her condition started to improve." The BAYADA Lifesaver Award was presented to Cathy's daughter on her behalf. This award honors BAYADA caregivers who have literally saved the life of a client, and that is exactly what Cathy's selflessness, clinical excellence, and quick actions did. She is truly an inspiration and Hero to all of us.