

ACCA HEROES OF THE YEAR AND INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR FINALISTS!

Below are selected excerpts received from the nominations for the ACCA Heroes of the Year and Innovator of the Year Awards.

BARB KOMARNISKY

Barb Komarnisky LPN goes above and beyond in ensuring we provide quality care to residents. With the one site restriction, it is undeniably a challenge in making sure we are staffed. Barb does not hesitate to step up when needed. She always is on the go and is always willing to go the extra mile for the residents.

Barb also volunteers half of her lunch time to help assist residents during meal times every day she's at work. She makes sure she lifts everybody up with her own little quirky ways – leaving a smile on each and everyone's face. Attached is a photo of an example of what she does for the people around her.

EVELYN MA

Evelyn leads by example, modeling a deep respect, profound love, and instinctive connection to seniors. In her role as Clinical Manager, she offers strategic and operational expertise and insight to Wing Kei, always questioning and focusing our priorities, decisions, and actions on the impact they will have for residents, their families, and our staff. The pandemic further fueled Evelyn's motivation, curiosity, and dedication to serve with love. She pulled her team and the broader care and support services teams together to brainstorm practical ways to energize and comfort residents, offer families peace of mind, and care for each other.

Evelyn embraced technology even further to help navigate the isolation that has been caused as a result of the pandemic with changes in visitation and socializing. She garnered the assistance of university students from a coop program to build and access computer and online programs for residents.

Perhaps one of Evelyn's most admirable qualities is her ability to bring people together towards a common purpose. She is compelling in her conviction that seniors must be cared for with respect and dignity, that they deserve to enjoy life and continue to flourish, regardless of their physical and mental ailments.

To quote a family member, "Evelyn is always thoughtful and considerate. When we cannot visit due to the pandemic, Evelyn is like a family member, keeping our parents happy & safe. We are grateful for her work!"

KATHARINE HAYMAN

Katharine (Katie) is a Spiritual Care Practitioner at Bethany Riverview. Katie is a true example of our Mission and our commitment to serve. She supports residents, families, and employees by intentionally creating opportunities to connect with meaning and purpose. COVID has had an impact on everything that we do. Providing Spiritual Care has been particularly challenging. The Spiritual Care Practitioners have relied on technology to facilitate a virtual presence and to support rituals that occur before and after death. Katie recognized a gap in how we were honoring at end of life and saw that there was a need to facilitate ways for employees, residents and families to bring closure at end of life. She now holds an individual memorial service for residents who have died, ensuring that all employees are given the opportunity to attend the service. Each individual resident memorial is held during the day and again in the evening. Families join the group through zoom and each staff member shares heart-felt memories and stories and places a rose in memory of the resident. Families have joined from the graveside and from their individual homes across the country. It is an innovative way of supporting employees to journey with families, grieving together and bringing closure at an incredibly difficult time. These services really are incredible...

Families have expressed gratitude for the opportunity. A daughter of one resident that was honored shared that after the daytime service, her friend (whose whole career is in healthcare, and who also had attended the service that day), immediately called her when it was over and said, "I have never seen a care home do that before. There is not a doubt in my mind that these are people who truly love the residents".

NICOLA DEVOE

Nicola Devoe LPN has always been loved by residents and family members. She has been with the organization for 16 years and always ensures residents feel cared as well as their families. She has the most genuine heart and cares for the residents deeply.

Nicola helped in creating a video to families by collecting photos of their loved ones with their agents' consents in order to help them cope with families missing their loved ones during COVID. A particular family member approached me as Nicola's manager as she really made an impression to this family. This resident was admitted to our site as a crisis placement during COVID. This was at the time when no one is able to visit. It was a struggle for both resident and husband but husband was very thankful and appreciative of the care the resident received despite of the circumstances. The resident sadly passed away a few months later. The photo of the resident used in the video was her last photo taken and husband valued it so very much that when he wrote her obituary in the paper, he had asked any donations or this resident to be sent to Bethany Collegeseide. As per the husband's words, the people who took care of his wife he called "angels".

PATRICIA CANDALERA

Patricia Candalera LPN, in her own little ways goes above and beyond in caring for our residents. She makes sure she listens to concerns especially during these tough times. She cares for the residents like her own family members. During COVID, due to the visitation restrictions everyone was missing their loved ones, Patricia and her colleague Nicola Devoe made this beautiful video in their own time for the families of B1 residents (Secured Dementia House) with their loved ones holding sweet messages for their families (consents provided by their agents). They had clips with some of residents' video messages as well as videos showing off residents' dance moves and kisses to families. Everyone was in tears watching the video and was very thankful for the thought and effort spent to create and put the photos and video clips together for the families.

Patricia also has gone out of her way asking for consents from families so that she could cut residents hair so that they could still look their best even without the professional hair dresser on site. She takes time out of her busy day as a Licensed Practical Nurse on the floor in helping the HCAs with their transfers, assisting residents with meals and is always willing to step up when needed. Patricia has the compassion, initiative and love for our residents and I could not be more proud to have her in our team. She truly is a hero.

SARAH ALLEN

Sarah Allen is a Recreation Therapist Aide (RTA) from the Bow View Adult Day Program (ADP), and has been with our organization for over 6 years. Sarah goes over and above in her role as an RTA in ADP by consistently coming up with new program ideas and special events to make her clients happy. Sarah constantly seeks feedback from her clients each day and introduces programs that would specifically appeal to each different set of clients. Examples of special events and programs she has brought to ADP are: 1980's week, winetasting, picnic lunches, pretzel making, oktoberfest beer tasting, pen pal group with residents from Long Term Care, around the world culture celebration week, easter egg hunt with elementary school students, client education sessions from specialists (mental health, dietary, CPS Police etc), fresh orange juice making class, pizza making class, and much more. Sarah challenges herself to bring new ideas and activities to her clients every single month.

Sarah is also a certified facilitator of "Opening Minds through Art" and was a Brenda Strafford Foundation Scholarship winner as she is taking courses to work toward her Recreation Therapy degree.

Due to Covid-19, all Adult Day Programs were mandated to close. Sarah was finally allowed to return to Bow View in July, at which point she quickly put a plan in place to engage all 120+ clients from a distance. Sarah developed our "Staying Connected" program which includes daily virtual activities: seated exercise, virtual tours, musical entertainment, interactive word games, reminiscing and soon she will be doing art programs! She also completes countless phone calls and sends out activity packages to make sure our clients without computers can stay connected as well.

There was a noticeable improvement in the mood and well-being of our clients once “Staying Connected” began. Clients feel like their world is “a little more normal” and “a little less lonely”. Clients welcome the seated exercise after months without and are so happy to see their fellow members over the computer. Sarah brings a smile and brightness to their days that they had been missing since the closure. An example of a calendar is attached and illustrates the depth and breadth of programs that Sarah provide through the “Staying Connected” program.

STACEY LIU

Stacy’s compassion working with the senior’s population was evident. She possesses excellent interpersonal and communication skills and plays a vital role in managing the daily operations on the floor. What stands out the most about Stacy is the joy and happiness she brings to staff, residents and families with all of her interactions. Stacy always ensures that residents, families and staff feel comfortable, respected and needed. She has a way of making everyone she talks to feel special. Her attitude, combined with her exceptional nursing knowledge makes Stacy an outstanding RN.

Stacy monitors health conditions and communicates with the interdisciplinary team. Through the creation of these care plans, Stacy always advocates for residents and ensures that care plans are resident-centered. An example that illustrates this is her person centered approach when it comes to palliative care. She always ensures to take care of not only the needs of the residents, but also the needs of the families.

Stacy is also a strong leader and has been a wonderful resource for staff but an excellent leader through the pandemic. She has helped implement changes according to the CMOH order, answer families’ questions, and help meet all residents’ needs through these challenging times. Stacy was also a “super user” when the Foundation switched over to an electronic medication administration system. She helped mentor and coach new staff on the system. Yet another example of her willingness to expand her knowledge base and work in different leadership capacities as an RN.

THE BRENDA STRAFFORD FOUNDATION

The strength, compassion, dedication, and commitment shown by everyone this year, especially during the pandemic, makes an organizational nomination very fitting. Below I will provide a summary of the key accomplishments that could not be possible without the culture of innovation that the staff have built at the organization. They are true heroes and so deserving of this nomination.

Select Achievements:

Drum Circles, Release of the Butterfly, A Guide to Creating Dementia Friendly Communities in Alberta, the Music for Memory Program, the Pursuit of a Lifetime Program, and many, many others!

Even during the pandemic, the teams are constantly looking for ways to innovate and look at things differently. Below are some key highlights to date:

- Visitation Scheduling Software – Trialing a technology to make it easier for families to book and schedule visits on their own.
- The creation of isolation units at each of our Manors which are recommended best practice for cohorting affected patients when managing outbreaks of infectious diseases by reputable expert organizations including the World Health Organization and Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
- Reverse Trade Show – Rapid Solutions for COVID-19 in continuing care – in collaboration with other partners, a virtual tradeshow was organized to connect health care providers with industry and entrepreneurs to maximize opportunities for conversations and to develop connections that address real-life issues.
- Creation of Wellness Wednesday to provide healthy and nourishing treats and advice for staff. As part of this we also trialed “wellness texts” to those that were interested in subscribing.
- Bumping up morale through the creation of care packages, team t-shirts, ice cream socials, taking out ads in local newspapers and specific commendations from our board chair.
- Creating a campaign called ‘BSF Strong’ to capture the stories and moments of the heroes working on the frontline to deliver the best care possible to residents.
- The creation of a help line where staff can ask for help with finding a babysitter to getting connections for counselling support.

Even through the pandemic, it is evident that the team has stepped up and innovate on a daily basis.

AGECARE

AgeCare pilots and builds community relationships, and worked to provide MAID (Medical Assistance in Dying) Program. Additionally, the organization worked hard to provide the mental health unit with the necessary resources that otherwise would not have been available during Covid-19.