

To Our Clients and Friends:

In this issue we share some of the ways that Ready Hands has contributed to various charities in our area whose goals are to promote independent living. We feel that it is the responsibility of businesses, where possible, to make positive contributions to their communities; we intend to continue that practice.

Also included (on page two) is a brief

article addressing some prevailing misconceptions about employing home care personnel. And, as always, we highlight some of the wonderful Home Care Aides who are the “front line” of our company.

Thanks as always to our present and former clients and to the senior-serving professionals who continue to place their confidence in us.

The Ready Hands Home Care Team

Ready Hands Home Care Gives Back to Local Communities

In keeping with our philosophy that it is both good citizenship and good business to give back to our local communities, Ready Hands Home Care continues to support organizations and programs in our area whose missions are aligned with ours. Commitment to and involvement in the community is an important aspect of business social responsibility that we take seriously at Ready Hands. In the past year we have been pleased to support four organizations making a difference in the lives of area residents: Project Mend-A-House, AHA! At Home In Alexandria, the Benevolent Care Fund of Greenspring and the Arc of Prince William.

In October, 2012, Ready Hands was pleased to serve as a sponsor of Project Mend-A-House’s annual Taste of the Town dinner and volunteer celebration. Ready Hands has been an ongoing supporter of the Prince William County organization’s valuable work on behalf of area residents in need. Project Mend-A-House is a volunteer-based non-profit founded in 1984 to allow the disabled, seniors and low-income residents to remain safely and independently in their own homes. In 2012, Ready Hands’ Manassas office Administrator, Jo-Ellen Benson, assumed the chairmanship of the organization’s board of directors.

October also marked the first annual Benefit and Spirit Award event put on by AHA! At Home In Alexandria. The organization is one of several area “aging in place communities” or “villages”, whose mission is to coordinate access to volunteer assistance, affordable services and life-enhancing group



Project Mend-A-House honors its 2012 Volunteers of the Year. From left to right: Andrea Saccoccia, executive director, Patrick and Linda Wesley, volunteers of the year, Ready Hands Home Care’s Jo-Ellen Benson, board chair and Ernestine Jenkins, board vice-chair.

activities, all with the goal of supporting seniors who want to remain independent in their homes as they age. Ready Hands participated as a business sponsor of the gala and several members of our leadership team attended the very well-organized and enjoyable event.

At Greenspring retirement community in Springfield, Ready Hands Home Care was a proud supporter in 2012 of the Benevolent Care Fund charity. The fund provides financial assistance to residents who, despite careful planning, outlive their resources and might otherwise not be able to continue living at Greenspring. Ready Hands was one of only three Diamond Sponsors of September’s 13th annual Benevolent Care Month celebrations, which culminated in a fund-raising gala on the

Recognition Awards Given to Four Employees

We are pleased to share the names of four stand-out Home Care Aides who are the most recent recipients of Ready Hands' Quarterly Recognition Award. Each aide receives \$100, a gift basket and an award certificate.

Abena Dufie is a great aide who is long overdue for special recognition. An employee since 2007, Abena has won the hearts of every client for whom she has worked.

Georgette Prempeh joined us in 2011 on the recommendation of a friend whose mother was under her care. She has proven herself to be dedicated, hard-working and



Dufie



Prempeh



Bedzo



Twumasi-Ankrah

always upbeat. Her current client calls her a "gem."

Victoria Bedzo and **Juliana Twumasi-Ankrah** both joined our Manassas office in December, 2011. Victoria has done a wonderful job with her longstanding client and has a near perfect attendance record. Juliana conveys great warmth and competence that truly set her apart.

Five Misconceptions about Employing Home Care Aides

Unquestioning acceptance of conventional wisdom can perpetuate erroneous beliefs. Gleaned from our more than ten years experience in the home care arena, here are five examples of mistaken but commonly-accepted beliefs about hiring and employing home care aides.

Obtaining reference checks from previous employers is the best screening measure.

Ready Hands definitely pursues reference checks from previous employers, but their value is grossly exaggerated. Due to liability concerns, most companies restrict the information to dates of employment and eligibility for rehire. Often the personnel manager providing the reference has little direct knowledge of the applicant. In addition, many references provided by former employers are based 100% on memory only. Therefore, unlike many companies, we go a step further by actively seeking references from clients and families with whom the applicant has worked. Information obtained from the spouse, son or daughter of a previous care recipient is likely to be much more revealing than say, from a home care agency or a nursing home.

Proper skills, experience and training are the most important qualifications for a home care aide.

This presumption seems almost incontestable, but it is half right at best. Unlike those for a nurse or physical therapist, for example, the technical skills required of a home care aide are not advanced. More important are factors like a warm personality, a track record of reliability, good commu-

nication skills and a caring manner. At Ready Hands, we would prefer to place aides with these qualities for each of our clients. Then, if it happens that the aide needs training in particular tasks that the client needs, our Registered Nurse Supervisors can provide it.

A good home care arrangement can be defined as one in which the client's needs are being fully met.

This sounds logical. After all, what is home care all about if not meeting client needs? However, it misses an essential concept: the arrangement must meet the home care aide's needs as fully as the client's. In other words, the hours scheduled, and thus the pay, have to be enough to cover living expenses, the commute time must be reasonable, etc. If not, the aide will be forced to withdraw from the assignment. At Ready Hands, we believe that the best home care arrangements are those in which both the client and the aide(s) are happy.

Home care aides may never perform nursing-type duties (tube feedings, insulin injections, ostomy care, dressing changes, etc.).

This is false. Virginia law states that such tasks may be delegated with proper supervision to "unlicensed persons" (e.g., C.N.A.'s) by a registered nurse. Tasks and procedures that qualify for delegation must be repetitive in nature and must not require frequent reassessments, independent nursing judgment or critical decision-making. Our C.N.A.'s actually perform such tasks better than nurses might do in a nursing home, since there is much more continuity of personnel in the home care setting.

Home care aides may not administer medications.

This myth continues to survive, possibly because older Virginia licensing regulations for home care agencies specified that home care aides could only "assist with the self-administration of medications" (italics added). The current revised wording is that aides may administer normally self-administered medications, and Virginia statute further allows for "...the administration of normally self-administered drugs by unlicensed individuals to a person in his private residence." The persistent misunderstanding about this topic in the home care industry is what explains the use of the common but misleading phrase "medication reminders" to describe what home care aides can do.

Charities, continued

28th. More than 200 residents and guests attended.

We have also been ongoing financial supporters of the Arc of Prince William, where Jo-Ellen Benson also was privileged to serve as chairperson of the charity's capital campaign. The Arc's mission is to provide opportunities for persons with developmental disabilities to achieve their greatest potential for growth and independence. The campaign was instituted in 2011 to raise funds for a building expansion and retrofit of the Muriel Humphrey Center, the agency's administrative headquarters in Woodbridge. At this writing the campaign has raised 3.625 million toward its four million dollar goal.