

Ready



Hands Inc.

Home Care Services for Seniors

(703) 750-3170

www.readyhands.com

July—September 2005

News for Clients and Friends

To Our Clients and Friends...

This has been an exciting three months for us. May was our busiest month ever, until June surpassed it handily! Ready Hands is on track to double our total hours of service in 2005 as compared to 2004. We continue to be gratified by the confidence and support of eldercare professionals, present and former clients and many others in our community.

We welcomed a new addition to our team in May. She is Brenda Kilhefner. Brenda performs varied office duties including serving as receptionist, carrying out certain human resources functions and keeping the office running smoothly. We are very pleased to have her assistance!

Have a great summer!

Granger Benson, M.D.

Sue Benson, R.N.

Doreen Bowen-Wright Gets Recognition Award

This quarter our award goes to Home Companion Doreen Bowen-Wright. Doreen joined Ready Hands in July 2003. Ever since then, she has always displayed the qualities that



Ready Hands values most in its employees. She is very dependable, well-liked by clients, has a cheerful attitude, completes her work records properly and stays in regular contact with the Ready Hands office.

Doreen also has an unruffled nature. She can adapt to many different kinds of situations, and has been able to work successfully with clients that have very different personalities and needs.

Doreen is always willing to help when asked. She responds to messages promptly and is a good communicator. She never complains.

We congratulate you Doreen, and thank you for being such a great asset to our company!

Thank You For Your Referrals!

We owe a big "Thank You!" to the following people and organizations who have recommended us during the past three months. We can't always identify a specific person who passed on our name, so if we have left you out, **please** let us know!

Barbara Payne, M.S.W. of ElderCare Strategies; Renaissance Gardens; Joan Van De Moortel of Care for You, Inc.; Roseann Gillis; Capital Hospice; Inova VNA Home Health; Ann Lewis; David Kendall; Theresa Wielga; Ama Hunter of Trinity Physical Therapy; Donna Ivey of I-Care, Inc.; Anita Baker of ElderCare Strategies; Mr. Howard Doescher; Bill Rogers

Finding The Best Employees — An Ongoing Challenge

Ready Hands strives to employ the highest caliber nurse aides that we can find. It's not always easy, and we occasionally make misjudgments, but here's our process for making the best hiring decisions we can.

First, we keep in mind the key characteristics and behavioral traits that make for a successful aide. These include a history of demonstrated reliability, honesty, a cheerful and willing attitude, industriousness and the ability to communicate well in English. We also want an indication that the aide genuinely enjoys caring for others. Certainly training and credentials are important, but at the end of the day it is personal character that matters most.

Second, we try hard to maintain a reputation in the nurse aide community as a preferred employer. Many of our aides are referred to us by current employees who are happy working with us. We treat every applicant with courtesy and respect. Whereas some companies require interested applicants to come to the office before receiving an application, we try to make it more convenient by

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sending applications by mail and recording initial information by telephone.

Next, we maintain a detailed searchable database of all applicants, drawn from information obtained by phone and from their applications. The database now contains nearly 1000 names. We first gather basic contact information. We verify the hours and days that each applicant is available. We record whether an applicant drives, is willing to work weekends, nights, live-in cases and various other details.

Also important is to verify that each applicant meets Ready Hands' basic credentialing standards. In order to qualify, our applicants must either have completed 120 hours of training as a nurse aide in an accredited Virginia program, or possess a Virginia Nurse Aide license

At the initial telephone screening we also ask a key question which we refer to as our "values" question. It is: "What do you think it takes to do a good job as a home care aide?" We're looking for answers like being on time, showing initiative, attending to the client's needs, maintaining a cheerful attitude, showing compassion and patience, doing things without having to be asked, etc. We find that applicants who can readily articulate such "values" will usually make good employees. Finally, we give each applicant preliminary rating on a scale of one to three, based on the tele-

phone screening interview.

We try to keep in contact with highly rated applicants in order to learn progressively more about them and reinforce our relationship with them. When we need to hire additional aides, we invite the most qualified individuals in for a detailed personal interview. Ready Hands has a comprehensive interview procedure that is carefully documented in our Operating Manual. Candidates who perform well in the interview then undergo careful reference checks. We try to obtain these via telephone, not just in writing, so that we can better judge the quality of the reference. The most useful references are previous clients or family members who have had direct experience with the applicant.

Finally Ready Hands offers employment to applicants who "pass" all of the foregoing steps and who have the work availability we are seeking. At that time, they undergo criminal background checking through the Virginia State Police Central Criminal Records Exchange. They then receive their orientation to Ready Hands' standards, policies and procedures before being assigned to a client.

Our process is not absolutely perfect, but we certainly look hard for the best aides available to take care of our valued clients. In a future issue, we'll relate how we work to retain the best performing employees—because the first step in treating clients well is treating employees well!

Eldercare Help and Advice: The Role of Geriatric Care Managers

Geriatric care managers are professionals from the fields of social work, gerontology, nursing or psychology who help families make safe arrangements for frail seniors to remain in their homes and communities. The services available to help this population are often fragmented and confusing. Many people find it bewildering and time consuming to locate reliable resources and information. Geriatric care management emerged in response to this need.

Geriatric care managers (GCM's, for short) most often work in the places their clients call home and do many of the things that family members would do if they could. They help families through complex situations and assist them in making good decisions about eldercare based on the needs and wishes of the family system. They are often involved in very intimate aspects of their clients' lives. Professional rules of confidentiality apply to GCM's just as they do to other health care professionals.

You can benefit from working with a GCM if:

- ◆ You are concerned about an older family member but don't know exactly what to do.
- ◆ You are a caregiver and don't know what your next steps should be.
- ◆ You are trying to get information to help your family

member but don't know where to look.

- ◆ You live at a distance from your family member and need a liaison to do the things you would do if you were there.
- ◆ You feel an organized plan of care should be in place, but don't know what to include.
- ◆ A crisis, hospitalization or other change affects your loved one that is beyond your understanding.
- ◆ You are frazzled and overwhelmed, and just need some help.
- ◆ You want objective advice and reliable information about how to address your family member's needs.
- ◆ The entire family is at odds over how to proceed with the care of an older family member.
- ◆ You think your family member needs additional help to stay at home, or may need to move to a more supportive environment.

At Ready Hands, we can certainly steer clients toward other resources if our home care services alone are insufficient or not appropriate. However, we don't pretend to be a substitute for a competent GCM. We work with a handful of excellent GCM's in our area and are always happy to pass on their names to families who need the help.