

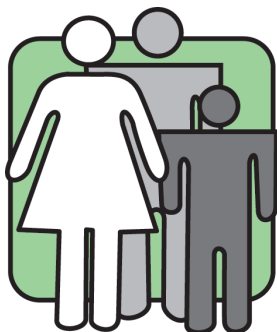


CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF HEALTH FACILITIES

2007 EXCELLENCE IN PROGRAMMING AWARDS



- **ACTIVITY PROGRAMS**
- **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**
- **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**
- **QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAMS**
- **RESIDENT COUNCILS**
- **SPECIAL SERVICES PROGRAMS**
- **STAFF DEVELOPMENT**



The California Association of Health Facilities (CAHF) is a nonprofit professional organization founded in 1950 to serve as a statewide organization for long-term care providers. The Association and its members are dedicated to improving the quality of long-term health care in California through educational programs and proactive advocacy with the Legislature and administrative agencies.

CAHF's membership is comprised of more than 1,200 licensed long-term care facilities serving a wide spectrum of health needs in settings which include skilled nursing, intermediate care, subacute, mental health, services for persons with developmental disabilities and rehabilitation. Nearly 150,000 trained medical professional and support service staff care for 300,000 Californians in these facilities each year.

CAHF serves as an information source for its members, state regulatory agencies, the California Legislature and the general public.

CAHF is affiliated with Quality Care Health Foundation, the Nurse Council and the American Health Care Association.

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**CALIFORNIA
ASSOCIATION OF
HEALTH FACILITIES**



*Supporting People,
Health and
Quality of Life*

Excellence in Programming 2007

CALIFORNIA
ASSOCIATION OF
HEALTH FACILITIES



CAHF's Board of Directors selected five outstanding programs to be recognized this year with an Excellence of Programming Award.

The Excellence in Programming Awards are presented to CAHF member facilities for superior achievement in key areas of long-term care, such as staff development, family involvement and quality assurance. In selecting recipients for this award, the CAHF Board of Directors looked for innovative and creative programs which enhance long-term care.

CAHF received a total of 31 nominations for Excellence in Programming. Nominees are evaluated through a blind selection process in which the facility names are not revealed to the review team.

The winners of the Excellence in Programming awards will be recognized at CAHF's 2007 Annual Convention in Palm Springs.



WINNING PROGRAM

Choices

*Home for Jewish Parents
dba Reutlinger Community for Jewish Living,
Danville*

Facility type: 60-bed SNF/120-bed RCFE

Program type: Community Involvement

Program leader: Carol Goldman

Program cost: \$100 or less

The activity calendar at Reutlinger Community for Jewish Living reflects a wide variety of community-based classes, workshops and lectures designed to promote wellness and provide continued education.

Via the program, the facility not only opens its doors to the community, it actively invites them in to interact with residents year-round.

Among the many offerings are a public library buddy program, classes from the local university, visiting au-



thors, Shakespeare theater productions, Girl Scout/Boy Scout organization meetings, the Zoo Mobile, docent-led lectures from local cultural museums and a variety of adult education classes.

The facility provides the meeting space to the community free of charge, with the provision that residents are able participate in the lectures/classes for free. The program allows residents to participate in a variety of experiences and be a visible and active part of the local community.



Bathroom Reading: Valley Style

Valley Health Care Center, Fresno

Facility type: SNF

Program type: Staff Development

Program leader: Vilito Israel, LVN, DSD

Program cost: \$100 or less

To help staff remember information from the facility's monthly in-service classes, Valley Health Care Center posts reminders on the back of the bathroom doors or next to the toilet seat where the staff can read while they are visiting the restrooms. Magazine racks in the bathrooms also display in-service handouts and nursing journals with articles pertaining to the month's topics. Staff enjoy the creative reminders and quizzing each other on the information they've learned.

Celebrity Chef

Parkside Special Care Center, El Cajon

Facility type: 52-bed SNF/Secured, Geriatric or Alzheimer's Program

Program type: Activity/Culture Change

Program leader: Activity Director

Program cost: \$100 or less

This Celebrity Chef program is a cooking demonstration which takes place once a month at the facility. Donning a chef's hat and jacket provided by the Administrator, a volunteer staff member cooks up her or his favorite dish as the residents watch. The program allows staff to share a difference aspect of their personality and some amusing entertainment for residents. With Parkside's multi-cultural staff, there is also an opportunity to share and learn about a variety of ethnic foods. When the food is ready, everyone sits down together to share the treat.

Celebration of African American History

Horizon Health & Subacute Center, Fresno

Facility type: 180-bed SNF
Program type: Community Involvement
Program leaders: Carmen Cadriel and LaTonya Taggert
Program cost: \$100 or less

In addition to the facility's usual activities related to African American History Month – such as a soul-food potluck, history lessons and storyboard presentations – this year's celebrations included a month of community-related activities.

A local school presented a demonstration of “stomp,” a popular African American dance. A nearby church provided an old-time gospel and praise show. Another group staged a craft and clothing demonstration for residents, highlighting traditional clothing from various tribes and regions and African crafts and artwork. The local African American history museum provided an educational presentation about the great contributions of African Americans to the American history.

There was even a braiding demonstration in which the art of plaiting and cornrowing hair was demonstrated. The program celebrated the rich heritage of African Americans, while providing a platform for community agencies, schools, organizations and individuals to interact with residents and staff in a positive way.

Farmer's Market

Brookside Skilled Nursing Hospital, San Mateo

Facility type: 98-bed SNF
Program type: Activity/Community Involvement/
Culture Change/Family Involvement/
Resident Council
Program leader: Myla Alimaro
Program cost: None

Every Tuesday afternoon, eight to 10 Brookside residents and their chaperones visit the 25th Avenue Farmer's Market. While there, they are able to sample local produce and other goods and, most importantly, feel more a part of the community.

The market is three blocks from the facility and the residents are able to window shop on 25th Avenue on the way to the market.

The program has become so popular, a rotating schedule of residents had to be developed to accommodate everyone who wanted to attend. All staff members are eligible to be chaperones. On some days several members of the dietary and housekeeping staff help.

This fosters a more resident-centered approach and beneficially blurs the line defining who is a caregiver.



Cheat Cards

DeWitt Subacute and Skilled Nursing Center, Fresno

Facility type: 57-bed SNF/Subacute
Program type: Staff Development
Program leader: Rachel Arenas
Program cost: None

Color-coded and laminated “cheat” cards, which are attached to staff ID badges, contain a variety of important information, procedures and phone numbers. The white card contains abuse-reporting procedures. The red card contains fire-prevention procedures and how to activate disaster procedures. The blue card lists the location of shut-off valves, tamper switch and procedures for emergencies. The purple card focuses on national safety goals which include resident identifiers and medication safety. Even the staff's regular ID badge becomes a cheat card with the addition of important phone numbers and procedures for an emergent situation.





WINNING PROGRAM

Concierge Program

Downey Care Center, Downey

Facility type: 99-bed SNF

Program type: Quality Assurance/Special Services

Program leaders: Interdisciplinary Team

Cost: None



The Concierge Program at Downey Care Center is designed to ensure the smoothest transition possible for new and returning residents. When a resident is admitted to the facility, she or he is met at the door by the facility's concierge, who spends the next two hours helping the resident settle in to the facility and feel welcome.

The role of concierge is filled by the members of the facility's CNA staff. Each new resident receives a welcome bag and assistance in unpacking personal belongings. If the residents are able and willing, they are taken by the concierge on a facility tour and introduced to the staff.

The concierge's duties also include recording vital signs and weight, assisting the licensed nurse with body assessment and initiating the ADL and intake/output sheet. Once the concierge's admission duties are completed, he or she introduces the resident to the assigned CNA.

The concierge will return to the resident for any necessary follow-up throughout the resident's stay. As part of the process, the concierge completes a checklist of duties which is signed by the licensed nurse, reviewed by the administrator and placed in the medical record.



Gardening Club

Valley Pointe Nursing & Rehab, Castro Valley

Facility type: 50-bed SNF

Program type: Activity

Program leader: Activity Director and COTA

Program cost: \$100 or less

The Gardening Club at Valley Pointe is designed to meet the individual preferences of the residents who enjoy gardening and as a group therapy program for short-term residents.

The program is scheduled once a week with a group of about five to 10 residents. The residents plant flowers and vegetables, either sitting or standing with the presence of a COTA who cues the residents on proper balance and fine motor coordination.



This activity promotes exercise, mental stimulation and endurance. The residents also maintain the garden, including pruning, watering and harvesting of the plants. Throughout the activity, residents have the opportunity to reminisce and socialize with others.

Harvest Festival

Windsor Manor Rehabilitation Center, Concord

Facility type: SNF

Program type: Activity/Community
Involvement/Family Involvement

Program leader: Activity Director

Program cost: \$251-\$500

For the last 11 years, the residents at Windsor Manor have hosted an annual Harvest Festival on the last Saturday in October.

The facility's parking lot is transformed into a harvest motif with bales of hay and an open flea market. The public is invited to buy a table and sell flea-market items.

There are food booths and carnival games for the children, all of which are overseen by the facility's residents



and staff. A live band plays western music during the day and provides the music for a line-dancing exhibition. During the day, raffles are held to help increase the residents' activity fund.

At the end of the day, the residents and staff have freshly baked pumpkin pies available for purchase by the community. Everyone has a wonderful time!

Nursing Home Week: Valley Style

Valley Health Care Center, Fresno

Facility type: 98-bed SNF

Program type: Activity

Program leader: Leila C. Knox Mailcoat

Program cost: \$101-\$250

The whole facility gets involved in National Nursing Home Week celebrations. Each day brings a new event or activity sponsored by a different department of the facility. The sponsoring department provides the theme and develops contests for staff to participate.

The residents and families act as judges. The week ends with a wheelchair contest with each department participating and residents cheering them on, followed by a potluck meal that everyone participates in.

The resident council president and administrator then present an award – a stainless steel bedpan painted with flames – to the department head and staff member who wins the wheelchair race. The coveted trophy is displayed in the department's office for the entire year, until it is bestowed upon the next year's winner.

The program creates camaraderie among the staff and provides both residents and staff something beyond the usual monthly activities.

Getting to Know Each Other

Horizon Health & Subacute Center, Fresno

Facility type: 180-bed SNF

Program type: Culture Change

Program leaders: Karen Warner, Sandra Fillmore,
Hope Torres and Lorette Adams

Program cost: \$500 or more

The roots this program start from a very basic concept – the more we know of one another, the more we care, and the more we care, the better we serve each other. With this in mind, several activities have been developed to foster better relationships with residents, staff and families.

A “Welcome Aboard” board displays photographs and index cards on which the staff members write something about themselves. The board is posted in the hallway so that families and team members can learn the new faces and help welcome them. Shadow boxes outside the residents' rooms tell different and beautiful stories about the residents through words and pictures.

A key element of the program is a video slide show, which tells new families and residents about the facility, its staff and services. The slide show runs on several computers throughout the facility and is updated regularly to include photos of residents, as well as special events and activities.



WINNING PROGRAM



Nursing Soft-Touch Pressure-Prevention Technology

Vernon Convalescent, Los Angeles

Facility type: 99-bed SNF

Program type: Quality Assurance

Program leaders: Administrator, DON and DSD

Cost: \$500 or more

Participation in the On-Time Quality Improvement for Long-Term Care Initiative has helped Vernon Convalescent Hospital improve documentation, resident care, efficiency and staff satisfaction.

In an effort to move away from the problems of paper-based collection of information, the CNAs were trained to use handheld devices to record information for the resident's medical record right at the bedside.

Using off-the-shelf software templates, the facility adapted their existing nurse charting flow sheets for handheld devices.

After overcoming some initial apprehension, the staff quickly came to see the benefits of the technology. More information about the residents can be gathered for the chart in "real time" rather than at the end of the day. There is now a uniform collection of data on residents' conditions, and documentation processes have been streamlined.

At the end of the day, the computer can identify any missing charting before staff have even left the building. Staff can view timely information on residents and identify potential problems before they happen, which has helped reduce the incidence of such things as pressure ulcers.



Holiday Carnivals

Country Villa Auburn, Auburn

Facility type: 84-bed SNF

Program type: Activity/Community Involvement,
Family Involvement

Program leader: Activity Director

Program cost: \$100 or less

The residents and staff at Country Villa Auburn enjoy putting together their own annual holiday carnival. Staff create booths with decorations and activities for the residents.

Family members are also invited to put together a booth and supply small prizes for the residents to win. The residents visit each booth and perform the activity for a chance to win the prizes.

The facility also provides corn dogs, snow cones and other fun snacks for everyone to enjoy. Everyone gets involved!

Home Grown Vegetable Club

Hale Aloha Convalescent Hospital, Ceres

Facility type: 46-bed SNF

Program type: Activity

Program leader: Vickie Baker, Activity Director

Program cost: None

Two years ago, the facility's maintenance man, Charles Barnabus, a gardener extraordinaire, asked to plant a small garden in an empty field at the back of the facility. He and Vickie Baker, the Activity Director, worked together to develop the project, and soon the whole facility was involved.

Staff brought in seeds for a variety of vegetables. Residents helped plant the seeds and nurture them as they grew. Over the next two years, the project truly blossomed, and now the field includes vegetables, grape vines, fruit trees, corn and other homegrown items that are shared by residents and staff alike.

Incontinence Management

Horizon Health & Subacute Center, Fresno

Facility type: 180-bed SNF

Program type: Quality Assurance

Program leaders: Karen Warner, RN, DSD; Millie Darrough, LVN; Joye Boissoneault, LVN; AnaLisa Rafanan, RN, and Rosella Jantz, RN

Program cost: \$500 or more

The staff at Horizon Health decided to challenge old beliefs regarding the use of disposable incontinence briefs through a multi-step program. They began by using the PDSA and Learning Circle techniques learned from Lumetra.

The CNAs of one unit were integral to the entire project, assisting in identifying a sample group of residents, participating in manufacturer demonstrations, meeting to discuss and rate each product after a one-week trial period and voting on the final product.

Unit managers completed an incontinence assessment tool and used the tool to select the appropriate disposable product, if any, for each resident. The vendor then sent its incontinence nurse to the facility to evaluate the assessment accuracy, properly size and select the product for each resident and inservice the staff.

CNAs were also highly involved in the implementation process, developing a communication system to ensure each resident received the correct product and how it would be distributed.

Implementation was done slowly with a small pilot group and grew as each phase was successfully completed.

Success is measured in the elimination of rashes and excoriations, increased staff satisfaction as staff took ownership of the process, decreased number of incontinent episodes and no decline in ADL function associated with the use of disposables, family satisfaction and cost impact balanced by savings from laundry costs, treatment costs and staff efficiencies.



International Lunch Buffet

San Bruno Skilled Nursing Hospital, San Bruno

Facility type: 45-bed SNF

Program type: Activity/Culture Change

Program leaders: Christine Nacion, Misrak Awage, Kusum Prasad, Myra Punla and Paula Yaish

Program cost: \$101-\$250

The International Lunch Buffet program is designed to enhance the quality of life for the residents and staff by providing an opportunity for those involved to share their cultural background and assist in the planning and creation of a full menu based on a specific country featured each month.

The program takes place every other week, and all the residents and staff are invited to participate by suggesting menu ideas. The Administrator and customer team approve the menu, ensuring that all nutritional values are met and the dietary department prepares the meal. Feedback and suggestions are brought up during resident council meetings and general staff meetings.

Express Recovery Program

Valley Health Care Center, Fresno

Facility type: 98-bed SNF

Program type: Special Services

Program leader: Larry Barnes, OTR, DOR

Program cost: \$500 or more

Express Recovery is a unit and program designed to provide comprehensive inpatient care and treatment for those who have an acute illness, injury or exacerbation of a disease process, and who have a prognosis for recovery which allows discharge to home or a lower level of care.

The program includes a distinct environment designed to promote recovery and wellness, with state of the art furnishings and equipment geared toward each step of the recovery process. The staff are well trained to deal with complex medical and comprehensive rehabilitation services.

Residents discharged from the Express Recovery unit receive a certificate signed by all the therapists, the DON and Administrator.



WINNING PROGRAM

Horizon Holiday Mall

Horizon Health & Subacute Center, Fresno

Facility type: 180-bed SNF

Program type: Activity

Program leader: Carmen Cadriel

Cost: \$100 or less

For three days last December, Horizon Health & Subacute Center transformed its dining room into a Holiday Mall so that residents could enjoy the experience of shopping for gifts for their loved ones.

The program actually began in October, when residents began earning holiday “dollars” for attending or participating in facility or resident council activities or events. Residents who had not previously attended activities

began to come out more often so that they could earn enough holiday dollars to buy their loved-ones something special at the Holiday Mall.

Staff and families generously donated new and used items to stock the shelves, and the dining room was set up like a department store with different areas, including women’s wear, men’s wear, accessories, housewares, cosmetics, toys, etc. The shoppers enjoyed holiday music, cookies, hot mulled cider and entertainment from caroling groups.

A local Starbucks even set up a booth and served samples of its hot, creamy drinks. Free gift-wrapping was provided by volunteers. Everyone had a fabulous time, and residents and staff are already looking forward to the next shopping season!



Ling’s Hour

Horizon Health & Subacute Center, Fresno

Facility type: 180-bed SNF

Program type: Family Involvement

Program leader: Carmen Cadriel

Program cost: None

When Ling’s brother came to reside at Horizon Health & Subacute, she became concerned because he would not attend activity programs, eat in the dining room or engage in facility life.

Ling decided to start volunteering at the facility, and she brought her brother along while she helped out. She enjoyed the residents so much that she decided to develop her own special activity, and “Ling’s Hour” was born.

Every Monday she conducts an hour of fun and activities for residents. She does everything on her own, from bringing her own props or instruments, making her own songsheets, providing any food or snacks, even booking live entertainment. Ling’s Hour has become a highlight of the residents’ week.

Ling has been an inspiration to other families to get involved in facility life. She has a steady group of volunteers from her own community group and other residents’ family members here that help her out each Monday.

Memories on Tape

Horizon Health & Subacute Center, Fresno

Facility type: 160-bed SNF

Program type: Special Services

Program leader: Vanessa Guzman, SSA

Program cost: \$100 or less

Many of the residents in the facility’s subacute unit are semi-comatose or comatose. To aid the families of those residents in their desire to provide meaningful visits and support, the facility assists them in recording Memories on Tape – cassette tapes with personal messages and words of encouragement for the residents to hear. Families are asked to record messages of inspiration, tell personal stories and offer words of encouragement. Tapes may include sounds which represent the resident’s life, such as a revving motorcycle, favorite lullabies, mariachi music or sports events.

The tapes can be played during family visits or when the family is not able to be present. The tapes provide individualized sensory stimulation for the residents and help families by providing meaningful activities which benefit their loved one.

Memories on Tape also helps staff to get to know each resident more personally, as many of these residents cannot share their own lives and history. The program has also been incorporated for some of the residents with dementia and those under hospice care.

Paradigm Shift

Ararat Nursing, Mission Hills

Facility type: 196-bed SNF

Program type: Special Services

Program leader: Margo Y. Babikian, RN, MS

Program cost: None

The goals of this program are to provide quality of life; build and maintain positive relationships with residents, families, staff and physicians; provide workplace care for the caregiver; promote physician collaboration and retain staff. These goals are achieved by implementing relationship-based system designs.

The primary characteristic of the system is an “interlocking relationship” component which fosters sensitivity and respect for others’ needs and expectations. Key elements include “primary intersystem care” by all services (housekeeping, activities, social services, etc.); “caring for the caregiver” which features open communications,



resources and relationship-building with leadership; and “medical staff collaboration,” which focuses on sharpening staff’s critical thinking and allowing better collaboration between physicians and nursing staff.

Success is measured through zero use of physical restraints, significant decreases in falls, weight loss and infections and increases in staff, resident and family satisfaction. Although one goal is to *avoid* focusing on a zero-deficiency survey, the facility has received two back-to-back zero-deficiency surveys.



Race for Excellence

Stonebrook Healthcare Center, Concord

Facility type: 120-bed SNF

Program type: Staff Development

Program leader: Sally Shirley, LVN, DSD

Program cost: \$500 or more

The Race for Excellence is a program designed to get all employees involved and excited about striving for excellence in their performance. The program focuses on quality improvement, person-centered care, culture change, leadership development, empowerment and resident/family satisfaction.

A 4-ft.-by-8-ft. racetrack, which holds eight racecars, was constructed. The staff (including contracted therapy) was divided into eight random performance-improvement teams or “PIT” crews. Each PIT crew is represented by its own colored T-shirt and matching racecar. Teams win points through such things as personal recognition from a resident or family, perfect attendance, safety, participation in QA programs, promoting resident choice, etc. Points are lost for not wearing a nametag, speaking in a foreign language, missing documentation, walking past trash and not picking it up, etc.



The goal is to be the first team to earn 1,000 points, representing a lap around the racetrack. Each team’s car moves forward or backward on the track depending on their team performance. Six race officials randomly monitor team performance. The first PIT crew to get its car across the finish line wins.

The program helps give each employee a personal stake in providing excellence care and services. It also helps to foster staff relationships throughout the facility as teams work with others outside their department to achieve goals.



WINNING PROGRAM

Teamwork Breakfast

Horizon Health & Subacute Facility Center, Fresno

Facility type: 180-bed SNF

Program type: Staff Development

Program leader: Karen Warner, RN, DSD

Cost: \$100 or less

On the third day of Horizon Health & Subacute’s four-day orientation program, new staff who are going through the orientation together get a little surprise.

The DSD welcomes the group to a table where they find uncooked eggs and sausage, bread to make French toast, oranges for squeezing, an electric skillet and the rest of the things needed to make a delicious breakfast. The DSD then informs them that their first task of the day is to cook the breakfast, that they have 30 minutes to prepare it and that she’ll be back when its ready.

She waits a few moments to see how the group responds and if there are questions, but then leaves them alone to complete the task.

Once the breakfast is ready, she invites a few service leaders, such as the administrator, housekeeping supervisor or others to come join them for breakfast. Everyone enjoys a wonderful, hot breakfast while getting to know each other.

Then, just about the time everyone is finished eating, the conversation is steered to the task itself. The service leaders ask new staff to share how they formed their team, who became the leader and how they decided which task each would do. They are asked what was fun about the task and what was threatening about it, etc.

The challenge allows new staff to reflect on what goes into establishing a team for a specific task, the importance of consensus and clear communication. It also gives them confidence that they can handle the unexpected and an experience in orientation that they are likely to learn from and remember.



Reminiscing Through Your Senses

The Venturan, Ventura

Facility type: 62-bed SNF

Program type: Activity/Community Involvement/Family Involvement/
Sensory Stimulation

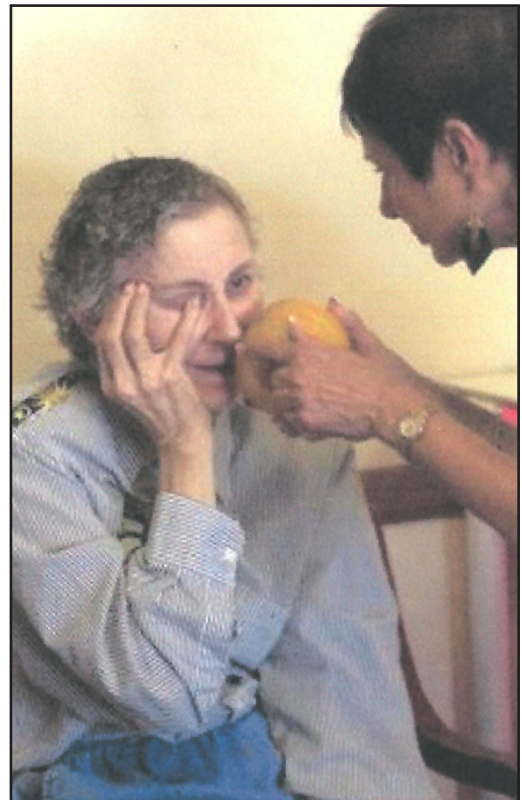
Program leader: Suz Montgomery

Program cost: \$100 or less

Every Tuesday, the residents at the Venturan wake up with enthusiasm to attend the food class “Reminiscing Through Your Senses” with Suz Montgomery, adult education instructor at the Ventura School District.

The purpose of the class is to provide an opportunity to relive the past and restore long-term memory skills through food. The seniors learn about food origins, cultivation, growing techniques and harvesting of the ingredients. Recipes are prepared using the ingredients discussed. The seniors then get to taste the food and relate their impressions, using long-term memory skills.

The class stimulates all five senses and brings back old memories. Another added benefit of the class is increased family involvement and participation from members of the community.



Shining Star

Beverly Living Center Hy-Lond, Fresno

Facility type: 111-bed SNF
Program type: Staff Development
Program leader: Charlene Harris
Program cost: \$100 or less

Shining Star is a new program designed to recognize all staff members. This program allows any staff member, family member or resident to write a message on a star to recognize and thank a particular staff member for going the extra mile or a simple act of kindness. The star is then placed on a bulletin board that is prominently placed in the facility.

The stars are left on the board for the month to allow staff, family members and residents to read the messages. Staff members look forward to reading the messages every day and hope to see their name on a “Shining Star.”

At the end of each month the stars are removed from the board and placed in a basket for a drawing. Five stars are chosen, and the messages are read aloud at the staff meeting. The chosen stars receive a prize. The remaining stars are then returned to the employees.

Stylin’ in the Summer

Vista Pacifica Center, Riverside

Facility type: 108-bed SNF/STP
Program type: Activity
Program leaders: Three activity directors at three facilities – a board and care, Alzheimer’s and locked psychiatric.
Program cost: \$100 or less

Three facilities got together to stage a fashion show featuring residents. The residents were sponsored by staff members at their facility. Each sponsor was responsible for clothing, makeup and hair styling. The residents were groomed and pampered by staff prior to walking down the runway.

As a DJ described what they were wearing, the models posed, waved and some danced. At the conclusion, each model was presented with a framed certificate of participation, and each sponsor received a flower.

The event created a special opportunity for residents to shine, and allowed their peers, staff and friends to see them in a different light.



Sombrero Contest

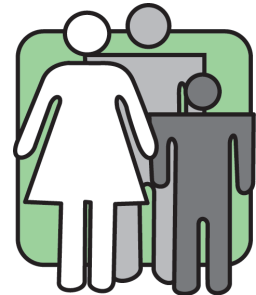
Horizon Health & Subacute Center, Fresno

Facility type: 180-bed SNF
Program type: Staff Development
Program leader: Karen Warner, RN, DSD
Program cost: \$100 or less

In celebration of CNA Week this year, each of the facility’s four communities was given a team building task called the Sombrero Contest. Each unit was given a bare woven sombrero and was asked to decide upon a theme and decorate the sombrero using only materials found at the facility. The teams were judged on creativity, expression of theme and teamwork across the shifts.

Additionally, all the sombreros were displayed to residents, families and all staff so they could vote on a “People’s Choice” award. The results were fabulous! Each sombrero was lovingly transformed into a unique work of art. One had a garden theme, with pictures of all the team’s residents and staff in the center of cardboard flowers in the garden, with a picture of the Administrator as the queen bee flying above the flowers.

A second sombrero celebrated teamwork and was colorfully decorated with words and pictures cut from magazines. A third portrayed a nature theme to go with the community’s décor and pictured the facility’s animals and various scenes of what “home” means. A fourth sombrero had pictures and biographies of five residents in their community nearing or over the century mark, celebrating 500 years of richly lived lives. Each was creative, amazing and beautiful.



Team Members of the Month

Horizon Health & Subacute Center, Fresno

Facility type: 180-bed SNF

Program type: Resident Council

Program leader: Carmen Cadriel

Program cost: \$100 or less

What makes this facility's Employee of the Month program unique is that it is totally a product of the Resident Council. Because the individual honored is selected by the residents, there are no "stuffed ballots." To campaign for the title, staff are inspired to work harder and give a little bit extra.

Those who get recognized – and the reasons behind their selection – are also unique. It might be the night laundry lady who works all by herself, quietly throughout the night, while most residents are sleeping, because, "You never wake us up when you put away our clothes. ...We notice that you sew a button on now and then and you try hard to find all our socks and little things that sometimes go missing."

It might be the janitor, who unbeknownst to the rest of the staff, always shares a new joke as he does his rounds. Or the dining room aide who knows just how everyone likes their coffee. The program is special because what matters to the residents is what gets celebrated.

Each month a new winner is announced. They are invited to attend Resident Council and are given a beautiful certificate by the Council President.



Thank God for You

Valley Health Care Center, Fresno

Facility type: 98-bed SNF

Program type: Culture Change

Program leader: Vilito Israel

Program cost:

The TGFY program was established so the staff and their families will know that their special efforts in helping the residents, families and other staff members do not go unnoticed.

When someone tells a department head or supervisor about a specific act of kindness done by a staff member for anyone in the building that is not part of her/his job, a letter expressing appreciation for the specific act is generated by the DSD.

A letter of recognition is signed by the employee's department head and the administrator and mailed to the employee's home address. The employee is asked stop by and see the DSD at her or his earliest opportunity and is presented with a gift of appreciation.

All the employees who receive the letter of appreciation are also acknowledged during the general staff meeting held at the last payday of each month.

The program recognizes the staff who go the extra mile and allows the employees to share that recognition with their families at home.



The Mall – Community Within

Dewitt Subacute and Skilled Nursing Center, Fresno

Facility type: 32-bed Subacute

Program type: Activity/Culture Change/Family Involvement

Program leader: Neighborhood homes

Program cost: \$None

The subacute unit's location on the third floor limits the residents from going outside. The unit has five large rooms located off a long hallway adjacent to the resident quarters. The neighborhood homes decided to better utilize the area as "The Mall." Each home created a room called "Motivational Moments" that showcased the mission and household goals. It became the staff rest area and location for neighborhood meetings.



The next room became a movie theater, the "Cine 5," complete with a big screen TV in the middle and smaller TVs in each corner connected to a DVC/VCR. Each TV plays a different movie from the community's collection. The Mall also includes a "Malt Shop" that serves popcorn and root-beer floats or a café room. One room, called "Simple Pleasures," has become a sanctuary for meditation and the place where each home brings and shares their hobbies.

Beauty treatments and massages are also offered free for staff and families by a certified masseuse and beauticians. The Mall brings outside recreation into the unit, decreasing boredom and relieving stress. It also helps build a sense of community and normalcy.



View from the Chair

St. John Kronstadt Care Center, Castro Valley

Facility type: SNF

Program type: Activity/Community Involvement

Program leader: Briannah Wilright, Activity Director, in conjunction with the Resident and Activity assistance.

Program cost: \$100 or less



"A View from the Chair" is an article that is authored by the facility's resident council president who writes or verbally dictates to the activity staff on a specific subject matter pertaining to the Americans with Disabilities Act or concerns and solutions for designing a more comfortable and interactive physical plant. The article is published in a monthly facility-based newsletter which is distributed to families and visitors. It gives the author a voice and provides readers the opportunity to step out of their own shoes and into someone else's for a moment.

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