

## **Caring Spirit Award**

The 2010 Caring Spirit Award goes to **Melissa Wood**, a CNA at Rose Villa in Portland.

It is a typical rainy winter day as Melissa makes her rounds from house to house on the Rose Villa campus, caring for residents who, with her help, are living independently in their apartments. Melissa provides supportive living services to two dozen residents, from reminding one to come to dinner, watching some take their medications correctly, or helping a few with dressing and other activities of daily living.

Melissa is well-known to the residents at Rose Villa, as she has practically grown up on the campus. As a child she lived just blocks away, and started working at Rose Villa at the age of 16, almost 30 years ago! She considers the Rose Villa residents and staff part of her family. She worked as a CNA in the Care Center for many years, caring for residents in the last phase of their lives. Now she ministers in body, mind, and spirit, to those whose failing health or cognition puts them at risk.

Melissa's long association with the residents in this CCRC has given her insight into the needs of individuals. She goes above and beyond providing care to anticipate the supports she can provide to keep each person independent in his or her own home as long as possible.

For instance, Melissa sits at the table with the resident takes her medications. Within the course of a brief conversation she notes any change – physical, mental, behavioral or mood, and is prompt to report any change to the nurse. She works with the nurse to establish a plan for service and is a strong and faithful advocate for each person in her care.

Melissa's care and concern for each person gives the individual a sense of confidence and trust. She is self-directed and responsible. Any time she is not busy serving residents in the community, she is in the Health Center assisting with meals, participating in activities, or answering call lights. She does not hesitate to volunteer to work in the Health Center if there is a last minute need on another shift, and when recently asked to change a day in her routine schedule replied, "I'll do whatever you need."

It is this commitment to each person, and to the community as a whole, that sets Melissa apart. Recently, when a resident died unexpectedly in her home, Melissa was greatly grieved at the loss, but when given the opportunity to leave for the day, she said, "No, thank you. I need to be professional and stay for the others."

Melissa's colleagues at Rose Villa say they feel fortunate to have such a dedicated staff member on their team.