

ISSUE -3 | 2024

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LOVING ARMS
HOME CARE

content

LAC JOURNAL published by
Loving Arms Care

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owner's reflections

Dear Loving Arms Care Community,

As we continue our journey together, I am filled with gratitude for the unwavering support and dedication of our community. In this issue, I am excited to share stories that exemplify the compassion and resilience at the heart of Loving Arms Care.

In our interview section, we feature Jennifer Perry, whose story is a powerful reminder of resilience and the strength found in human connection.

The Loving Arms Care Corner reflects on our recent partnerships and initiatives that further our mission of providing exceptional care. In the Caregiver Spot, we honor our caregivers who tirelessly embody our values, with a special recognition for , whose dedication continues to inspire us all.

Together, we are building a legacy of love, hope, and community. I look forward to the new milestones we will achieve together.

With warmest regards,

*Zakiya Toirova
Owner, Loving Arms Care Inc.*



Jennifer's Journey of Compassion and Geriatric Care Excellence

Meet Jennifer, a dedicated occupational therapist who is the driving force behind Benchmark Senior Solutions. In this interview, she shares her journey into geriatric care, the rewards of working with seniors, and how she helps families navigate senior living with compassion and expertise.

Question 1: What inspired you to pursue a career in OT, especially in geriatric care?

Since a young age, I have always enjoyed visiting seniors, including my grandparents. In high school, I had an assignment to interview a local senior. I interviewed a member of my church, Alma. The interview was the very beginning of a beautiful friendship. I would spend about one evening each week picking up dinner for us (she loved a Big Mac from McDonald's). We enjoyed sharing stories and laughter together. For Senior Prom, I made sure to go by and visit her as she was completely invested in the dress, jewelry, and make-up selection!

Also in high school, I sprained my ankle playing basketball. This led to physical therapy appointments and thus an interest in therapy. I then volunteered at a hospital to explore physical therapy further during college. While there, I was drawn more to what the Occupational Therapists were doing and eventually ended up in that department, which led to my future career! I enjoyed not only helping the patients walk



and transfer, but how that translated into functional daily needs such as bathing, dressing, toileting, cooking, laundry, etc. During the completion of my clinical rotations in graduate school, my love for geriatrics was confirmed when I spent 3 months at Johns Hopkins Bayview Geriatric Center. Since 2002, I have only worked in senior settings and have loved every moment.

Question 2: What do you find are the biggest challenges and rewards of working with geriatric patients?

I find the biggest challenges often lead to the biggest rewards! One of the biggest challenges is how confusing navigating healthcare is for anyone, especially older adults. Having worked in the system as a clinician, director of rehab, regional director of rehab, and educator, I am very familiar with the levels of care, payment systems, and options available. While I may not know all the details, I will try to help clients make connections with other professionals depending on their unique situation.

Being a one-stop resource for seniors and their families is what we try to do at Benchmark Senior Solutions. While our primary role is assisting in finding the best fit senior living community, we pride ourselves in having resources vetted from past clients for home health, home care, companion care, Medicaid, day support centers, hospice, etc. As therapists, we have encountered many patients who after an acute event were unable to return home safely. The emotional toll this takes on the entire family is extreme. Adding on top of that researching what is next for care can be overwhelming.

This is where I see the greatest reward. When families realize that in one call they have details on an array of options, the relief in their voices is what matters most. We have heard it from spouses who say, "I would have never been able to tour options on my own; knowing you were meeting me was the only way I showed up." Children from out of state are so relieved to know that we will set up tours for their day in town, including sending confirmed availability in their price range and managing the planning, which



“One of the biggest challenges often leads to the biggest rewards. When families realize that in one call they have details on an array of options, the relief in their voices is what matters most.” —

Jennifer

takes a huge weight off their shoulders. One daughter recently told her mom: "Having Jennifer local was like having a sister in town communicating to me with updates!" Spouses who are recently widowed find comfort in knowing that I can help them one-on-one with exploring senior communities if they are not comfortable living in a home alone and isolated. All of these examples are the biggest rewards. We strive to take the research, phone calls, and planning off the families and allow them to place their focus on their loved ones.





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“You must appear comfortable in uncomfortable situations, or you will lose your patients’ trust.” — Jennifer

providers and were clinicians to seniors prior to this role. This background is quite different than many franchise companies where most advisors have a marketing or business background. Our priority is to use our knowledge and experience to help clients understand the healthcare system and the options available to them. Having a clinical background amplifies our rapport building and understanding of various diagnoses from a therapy point of view. These skills allow us to swiftly guide our clients as they navigate senior living options

Question 4: How do you balance your clinical and managerial roles to ensure quality care?

While I am not currently providing direct patient care as a clinician in a therapy setting, I am working directly with clients as they navigate senior living options and

Question 3: How do you build trust and rapport with patients, families, and colleagues in such a sensitive field?

One of the key things that therapists learn in school is building therapeutic rapport. It is imperative that a therapist can build trust with their patients. This is one of the first steps towards a successful rehab experience for the patient and their family. Years of experience treating patients one-on-one has helped shape my ability to collaborate with people experiencing various healthcare needs. Being sensitive to each person’s unique situation is important, and being able to stay calm and show you care is key.

As a previous mentor to student therapists and as a professor, one of the first things I would tell upcoming clinicians is: “You must appear to be comfortable in an uncomfortable situation, or you will lose your patients’ trust.” While your ability to build therapeutic rapport can improve and be fine-tuned with experience, it also requires a personality type that is both sympathetic and empathetic. Most colleagues who work in healthcare have this type of personality, and it was their love of helping others that led them into a healthcare career. This is another aspect of what makes us at Benchmark different than most senior living advisors. We are all licensed healthcare



resources. During this relationship, I use my occupational therapy skill set to understand what type of apartment and community might be best for someone with Parkinson's versus a person with dementia. Having worked on various leadership teams onsite in senior living communities as well as from a corporate level, I am able to use those skills to understand state regulations, pay sources by setting, and survey results. This allows me to assist clients in asking the right questions during tours and which settings would best meet their needs, ensuring quality based on function and long-term needs.

Question 5: On a personal note, how do you unwind and maintain a healthy work-life balance?

I have a hugely supportive husband and family. They understand my love for my clients and are also always willing to help! My husband has helped me move furniture for a client who did not have family in the area. My son helped me unpack boxes for another client who was moving in, and their family got stuck and was unable to travel due to a snowstorm. My daughter loves to come on visits with me and help with marketing and any fundraising we support!

Outside of work, we all enjoy being outdoors, especially with our dog Remi! I also am an avid member of Burn for my daily dose of exercise! My husband and I enjoy small home projects and traveling with friends. Our son, Joseph, keeps us busy with golf tournaments, and our daughter, Haleigh, is a sophomore at Longwood (alma mater to both my husband and I) in the nursing program.

We sincerely thank Jennifer for sharing her invaluable insights and experiences. Her dedication to improving the lives of seniors and supporting their families is truly inspiring. Thank you, Jennifer, for your unwavering commitment to compassionate care and guidance in geriatric services.



LAC Corner: Celebrating Community, Compassion, and Milestones

In the past few months, Loving Arms Care Inc. has made incredible strides in fostering community engagement and ensuring the well-being of our senior clients. We were proud to feature our "Handle With Care" Loving Letters Pen Pal Project on CBS19 News: Charlottesville News First. This initiative aims to combat loneliness through heartfelt letters, and we're excited to announce it as a recurring event, held every 4th Thursday at The Center at Belvedere. We also celebrated our 4th anniversary with an Ice Cream Social and partnered with Otto Turkish Street Food to offer a special discount for our caregivers. Lastly, we're deeply grateful for the success of our Bake Sale in support of the Alzheimer's Association. Thank you to everyone who participated and helped make a difference.

Let's continue moving forward together!



Heartfelt Thanks: A Sweet Success for Alzheimer's Awareness!





Celebrating 4 Sweet Years: Ice Cream Social Fun!



Connecting Hearts: "Handle with Care" Pen Pal Program Launch



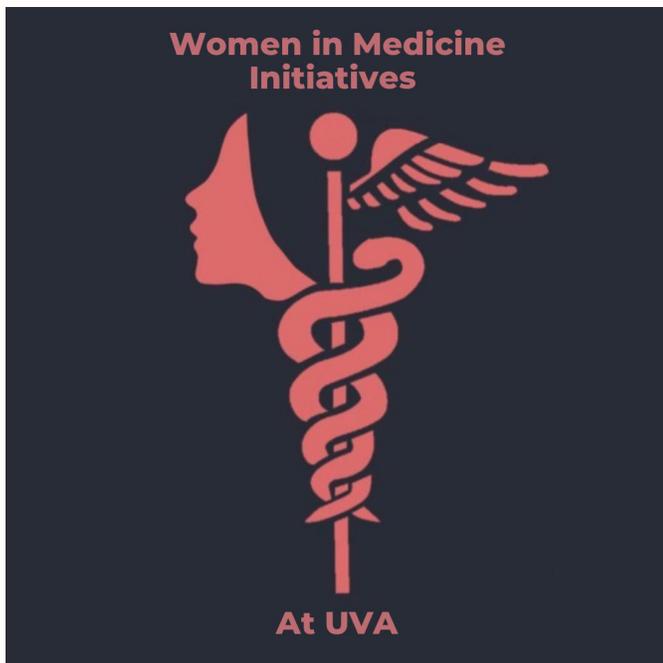
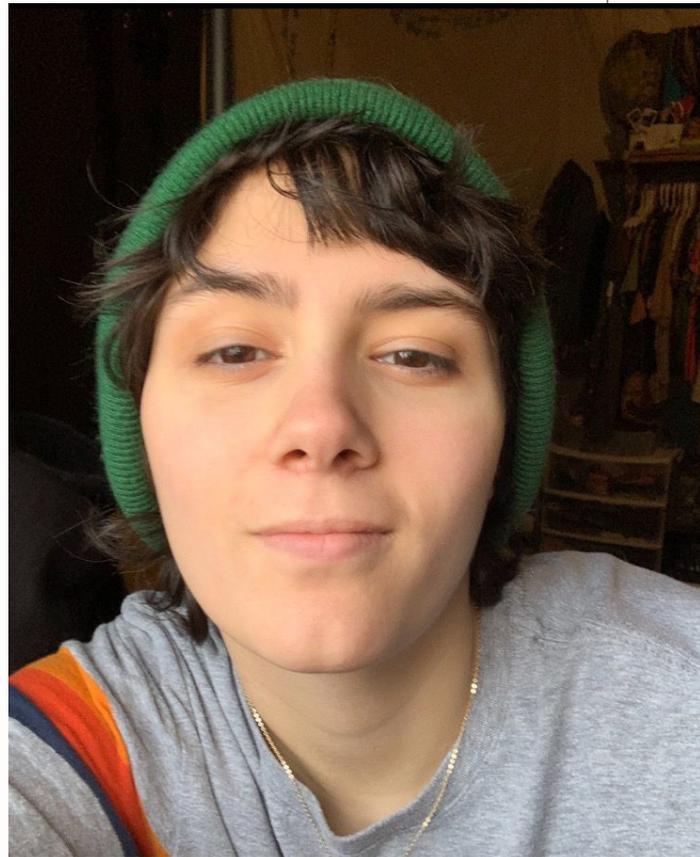
Caregiver Spotlight: Kayla

Client Favorite: Known for her warmth and empathy, Kayla builds meaningful connections, making every client feel valued.

Reliable: With her punctuality and dependability, Kayla ensures timely assistance, giving families peace of mind.

Engaging and Creative: Kayla's vibrant spirit and love for storytelling bring joy and laughter to every interaction.

Thank you, Kayla, for your dedication and the positivity you bring to our caregiving family!



In our third issue, we proudly feature the Women in Medicine Initiatives (WIMI) at the University of Virginia. This organization is dedicated to empowering women to pursue careers in medicine through peer mentorship, a supportive social network, and hands-on opportunities to engage in science, patient care, and community involvement.

Additionally, WIMI fosters critical discussions on healthcare and gender issues, encouraging students to actively shape the future of healthcare.

Check out their instagram page here:
@wimi_uva