



For Brookdale Nurse, Those in her Care Feel Like Family

Nurse Rebecca Gawlick has made many new friends through her position at Brookdale and they have enriched her life in ways she never previously imagined. Gawlick works in Brookdale Belle Meade's Clare Bridge program, which serves those with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Caring for residents has taught her to appreciate them as individuals and form close bonds that make each "feel like a member of my own family."

Her daily responsibilities at the Nashville, Tenn. community span a spectrum of duties, from administering medications and other health-related activities to helping residents take part in art, exercise and other engagement programs. Having such an integral role in their lives builds relationships that would be impossible in other settings. "I have taken care of them for two years now, not only getting to know them, but also their families," said Gawlick, 27, and a Phoenix native who attended Arizona's GateWay Community College. "I just love the interaction with the residents. They know me and I know them. I think that's the best part of it."

Her work has also given her a deeper understanding of dementia. She sees that with the right kind of care, life can continue to be meaningful for those with the disease.

"People don't always understand that someone with Alzheimer's or dementia is still a person," she said. "They don't see that the person used to be a pilot or a television host or a veterinarian. All they see is the disease." In reality, Gawlick said, each still has much to give to others. "They deserve to be treated with respect and kindness, to live their life with dignity."

In fact, she gets even more out of her job than she gives. "When I leave every day, I feel like I have a purpose. I feel I did my best and that I made a difference in someone's day."

We enrich lives every day.