

For Immediate Release:
January 13, 2015

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Lourdes At Home Therapy Team Wins Statewide 'Home Care Proud' Contest for National Home Care Month

The Home Care Association of New York State (HCA) has awarded Binghamton-based Lourdes At Home as the winner of HCA's "Home Care Proud" Contest in recognition of National Home Care Month.

In November, for National Home Care Month, HCA launched a contest asking home care providers to tell us what makes them "Home Care Proud." Lourdes at Home, who submitted the winning entry for HCA's contest, provides in-home nursing, therapy, home health aide, social work and other services to keep patients in Broome County healthy at home, where patients want to be, and to help patients avoid hospitalizations, ER visits, or premature nursing-home admission.

The winning team at Lourdes at Home told HCA about the work of home health therapist Kim Jones, who helped a patient with dementia regain her voice.

In-home therapy services play a crucial role in the multi-disciplinary home care service package, preventing patients from being readmitted to the hospital after surgery or helping with the long-term rehabilitation needs of patients at home.

"In home care, we often see clients with varying stages of dementia or other disorders that cause cognitive decline," wrote the staff at Lourdes at Home in its nomination. "One approach to treating these patients is to educate the caregivers and client in a home exercise program, home safety, disease prognosis/progression and other strategies as appropriate for the client's level of function. Caregivers are the ones often left with the challenge to motivate these clients to participate."

"Kim Jones, one of our Physical Therapists, is exceptional at seeing the 'whole picture' when it comes to her patients," said Ben Robinson, Rehab Manager at Lourdes at Home. "She has a gift to be able to reach through to clients that may otherwise be disengaged, and this gift has achieved extraordinary results, especially in patients with cognitive decline."

In its entry for the contest, the Lourdes team explained Ms. Jones's work with a woman who was bedbound, mostly nonverbal, and had a diagnosis of severe dementia.

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Through clinically-based activities, as well as music, singing and breathing, this patient has begun speaking. She is now able to hold conversations with her husband.

“The progress this patient has made is truly remarkable,” Mr. Robinson adds. “The difference in this person’s quality of life can be attributed to Kim’s hard work, persistence, creativity and dedication. We are proud to have therapists like Kim on our staff, and we are proud to make a difference in people’s lives.”

Ms. Jones also educated the patient’s spouse on engaging the patient in activities and setting a routine, while Ms. Jones used her therapy skills to work with the patient on verbalization. One benefit of home care is its ability to work with family caregivers at home to maximize the benefits of a particular service in ways that is not usually possible in institutional settings.

Within eight months, the patient was becoming increasingly more verbal. Her attention had improved, she started following commands, and she was participating in activities.

“When the patient started to converse more, I was really able to get to know her wonderful, fun personality,” Ms. Jones said. “I always looked forward to coming to her sessions to talk and work with her. It was also so great to see how happy her spouse was to be able to have conversations with her again. I loved when the patient and spouse talked about their old memories and fun times.”

She adds: “Dementia is a challenging diagnosis. There will be days when frustration and agitation may be present. The strategies that we use now may not be successful later on. However, I think that with the right tools, understanding dementia, maintaining a safe and comfortable environment for the patient, being patient and positive, it is possible to work through the challenges. The patient and spouse have been working through these challenges for about five years now and there are plenty of happy days now too. I can say that I have been lucky enough to share in the laughter and good days.”

Home care is very much a team approach; in addition to therapy services, this patient also receives nursing care, social work and home health aide services to meet her medical, social and assistive needs.

HCA is happy to recognize Lourdes at Home for our Home Care Proud Contest. To learn more about home care, please read our *Home Care: What It Is, Why It Matters* publication at <http://www.hca-nys.org/documents/HomeCareWhatItIsWhyItMatters.pdf>.

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