

# Anna DeCorsey



## **Why did you choose older adult services as a career?**

There are many reasons why I chose older adult services as a career. I love working with a variety of different people. I enjoy making a difference in their lives. It is very difficult for some older adults to accept the fact that they may not be as independent as they once were and need the extra assistance. This, in turn, may decrease their quality of life. I would like to be that person who assists in improving their quality of life and make a difference. In the Recreation Therapy Department, I am able to assist in doing that by providing quality activities that meet their individual needs. The older adult population also has a lot of wisdom and they are very good teachers. I really enjoy working with individuals and learning about their lives. Allowing them to share their stories and wisdom helps them to reminisce about their past and also gives them a way to pass along their wisdom; it gives them a sense of belonging.

## **What do you want to do with your life within the older adult services profession?**

I would like to continue to develop programs that meet the individual needs of each resident to improve or maintain their quality of life. I would also like to continue to manage a team of Recreation and Music Therapists and really make the Recreation Therapy Department shine with making a difference in older adults' lives. By becoming Activity Director Certified, I can combine those skills learned with the skills learned while obtaining my Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist Certifications to improve the Recreation Therapy Department and continue to make a difference for the older adult population.

## **How do you hope to impact the profession?**

By obtaining my Activity Director Certification, I hope to improve the quality of programs offered for the older adults who live in a nursing facility. By combining the skills learned for the Activity Director with my CTRS certification as well as the many in-services and conferences I have attended, I hope to assist in improving the quality of lives of the residents who live in the nursing facility, as it may be very difficult for them to accept that they require extra assistance and are not as independent as they once were.

## **Provide a specific example of when you positively impacted someone through the care or services you provided.**

While working as a Recreation Therapist in a nursing facility, I came across a gentleman that was new to the facility. He was quite a bit younger than a typical "nursing home resident", and he was quite shy (partly related to his diagnosis). It took this gentleman a long time to open up to Nurses, Nursing Assistants, Recreation Therapists, and other staff and residents. I wanted to help this gentleman out and gain some information about his leisure interests to assist in improving his quality of life as he resided at the nursing facility. I made a point to approach the resident daily by saying hi and asking him if he'd like to talk. Each day he told me "maybe some other time". I continued to approach him daily to help make him comfortable with me and to let him know that I was there for him when he wanted to talk. A few weeks later, I was able to have a conversation with him about his leisure interests. He was on a "walking plan" where he was to ambulate around the facility for exercise daily. I offered to walk with him when I could (the Nursing Assistants walked with him the other days). He accepted and thus began our

friendship. During our walks, we would talk about his past, and his current interests. We both really enjoyed these daily walks and he often approached me to ask me when we would go on our next walk. After a month of the walks, I encouraged this gentleman to attend programs with me that I knew he would be interested in. He was resistive for a few weeks, but then accepted an invitation when I told him I'd walk him there and back and made sure I'd sit next to him. He started to enjoy these programs and pretty soon started to make friends with other residents who lived in the facility. I have since left this nursing facility to become a Recreation Therapy Director in another facility, but continue to hear stories that this gentleman is doing well and continues to attend programs that he is interested in. Making a difference in that gentleman's life was one of the best accomplishments I've had in my career as a Recreation Therapist.