



May 2023 Angel of the Month | Sheila Small

We are thrilled to announce that our Angel of the Month for May 2023 is the one and only, Sheila Small. If you can believe it, Sheila has been part of our Visiting Angels Newton/Canton team for over eleven years now! She joined us in February of 2012 with over five years of experience working both for other agencies and a handful of private clients. Since then, she has provided care and companionship to 84 different Visiting Angels clients and proven to be nothing less than a dependable and diligent caregiver.

Over the years, her clients have had a range of medical diagnosis that presented opportunities for her own growth and development as a caregiver. There is no shortage of variety, which is why she feels like she's learning something new every day. Regardless of the scenario, Sheila's always been one to flex her wings and show what she's capable of—it's how she has gained the trust of her clients, as well as their close friends and family members over the years.

“You have to love yourself and show that same love to the client,” said Sheila. “Some clients are lonely and depressed. If you just show them that love and come to their home every day with a good attitude, they'll see you as a motivation to keep going.”

It's not just our clients who have come to rely on Sheila. Our case managers have become accustomed to her dedication as well, especially when it comes to providing the level of service clients have come to expect from Visiting Angels Newton/Canton.

“She's worked with many of my clients and has always been a reliable and skilled caregiver that they can count on for quality care,” said Case Manager Traci McCarthy. “She'll cover on short notice and is always a team player.”

Senior Case Manager Elizabeth Quagraine agreed. “Over the years, she's worked with so many of our clients and has successfully navigated some very challenging situations,” Elizabeth said. “We are grateful for Sheila's hard work and her commitment to taking care of our clients.”

But as any caregiver will attest, things can certainly get stressful from time to time. In those moments, Sheila has learned to simply step back, take a breath, and try to reevaluate the





situation. She is a firm believer that it's easy to absorb the energy of what is around her when things get tense, so she has learned to keep herself on an even keel and be the best she can for our clients.

"It's what I was taught to do, and I'll always do it to the best of my abilities," she said. "I do for my clients, just as I would do for myself or friends and family members, as a matter of fact!"

Julie McBain, Director of Client Services, who is familiar with Sheila's approach in these moments, said, "She understands how to communicate with clients who have dementia by redirecting, being creative, or giving them space." She added, "We as a team have always appreciated Sheila's work and the caring nature she brings to our clients."

In yet another example of Sheila's prowess as a caregiver, Case Manager Patrick Murray had the pleasure of pairing her with one of his clients, Mr. W, last September. Since then, he has witnessed the positive impact she's had on the client's life. Mr. W. is 94 (soon to be 95) and doing remarkably well. Much of that, Patrick believes, can be attributed to Sheila's watchful eye and the care she provides.

"From visiting Mr. W. at his home when Sheila is there, I can easily tell how much he enjoys working with her," Patrick shared. He added that he has also heard Mr. W. go so far as to refer to Sheila as a "princess" and "my queen." Colorful anecdotes such as this speak to how endearing she is to clients and the lengths to which she will strive to make them happy. Ultimately, she loves spending time with her clients because there are times where she gets to sit back, listen, and absorb everything her clients have to share.

"Everyone has a different story and a way," Sheila said. "I'm so interested in hearing what our clients have to say because you can learn so many things. Some of them inspire you to do different things and even improve yourself."

When you have as much experience as Sheila, it can sometimes be hard to identify your proudest moment. However, Sheila didn't hesitate to say that being named Angel of the Month was at the top of her list. "It's helped me appreciate myself more than any other moment in all my years with Visiting Angels. Even when the case managers don't see me, they're telling people that my work is good and acknowledging me for it, so it's truly an honor."

Sheila says she has stayed with Visiting Angels Newton/Canton this long because the office staff is caring, understanding, and always willing to listen to both sides of the story. "They [the office staff] always speaks up for us and looks out for us 100 percent."

Caregivers like Sheila make doing what we do that much easier. They also serve as a reminder of what it takes to be successful in this field: care, love, compassion, patience, and communication. We are lucky to have Sheila as part of our team and look forward to working with her for many years to come. Sheila, from all of us at Visiting Angels of Newton/Canton, thank you for all the great work you do for our clients!

