



February 2024 Angel of the Month | Maliza Leonard

Gather around, everyone. Congratulations are in order! Maliza Leonard has been named our Angel of the Month for February 2024. For the past ten years and continuing right up until now, Maliza has provided the kind of top-notch service our clients have come to expect from Visiting Angels Newton/Canton, which is why we're thrilled to award her this honor.

Maliza's journey with the Newton/Canton caregiver team began back in January of 2014. At the time she was already a seasoned caregiver, having acquired her Home Health Aide certificate in 1983 and her Certified Nursing Assistant license just a few years later. Working with many clients in the following years, she learned what it takes to forge strong, long-lasting relationships with seniors, making sure they're eating right, washing regularly, taking their medications, and so much more.

Maliza exemplifies what it takes to be a Visiting Angels caregiver. "It's about empathy, understanding, caring, and comfort," she said. "You need to look at the client as yourself when you're older, or even your own parents. The same thing you'd want someone to do for you or your parents is what you should do for the client,"

As any caregiver knows, though, it's not always easy—so what's the magic ingredient? To this day, Maliza continues to preach the art of patience, and you can hear that in her voice as well. "Bottomless patience" is how one of our Visiting Angels case managers described it, in fact. Perhaps it's something Maliza learned by working as a teacher for so many years, something she enjoyed doing but decided to give up in 2012 because she loved caregiving even more.

"Even when I was a teacher, I would still work through the summer as a caregiver," Maliza said.

While the decision to leave teaching was bittersweet for Maliza, we here at Visiting Angels—and all 56 of the clients with whom she's worked over the years—are thrilled she continued being a





caregiver. Senior Case Manager, Elizabeth Quagraine, has gone so far as to say she believes that Maliza is an angel on earth working in the form of a caregiver.

“What she does and accomplishes with clients is beyond what mortals do,” Elizabeth said. “Her flexibility, calmness, love for her clients, and the dedication to this job is unmatched. Each day she makes a positive impact on the lives of our esteemed clients.”

Case Manager Patrick Murray has noticed this as well, praising Maliza for her warm and caring approach that’s enabled her to establish strong bonds with so many clients and their family members. “I have been fortunate enough to work with Maliza on several different cases during my time here, and I’ve always admired her commitment to our clients, even in the most challenging of situations,” Patrick said.

It’s in those most challenging moments that Maliza believes it’s good to give the client some space and come back a few moments later. She also believes there’s a bit of psychology involved in how she approaches the client, explaining to them exactly what she’s trying to do and why it’s important for them. For example, one of her clients wasn’t eating anything when Maliza first started visiting, but because she made a point of explaining why good nutrition was crucial for older individuals the client started to try different foods.

“I make little things, and if the client likes it, the next day I try something else. Now I have that client eating three meals a day! I’m telling you. You just need to show them that these things work.” she said with enthusiasm. Maliza went on to boast that she has that same client eating vegetables now, which wasn’t the case before she arrived!

Stories like this exemplify her dedication and commitment to her clients, which Director of Client Services Julie McBain believes to be so integral to Maliza’s success. “She’s worked successfully in some very challenging situations over the years because she has such strong interpersonal skills, a caring heart, and the perseverance to help seniors remain in their homes with her support,” Julie said.

Ultimately, Maliza believes she’s doing something she expects others will do for her in the future, so she sees taking care of senior clients as her way of paying it forward. However, nothing beats the feeling of knowing she’s made a difference. “Sometimes you work with a client and you’re the only person they have, with no family around, so when you leave, they’re back by themselves,” Maliza said. “At the end of the day, though, you’ve made a difference and provided them with company.”

Maliza loves working for Visiting Angels Newton/Canton because of the excellent communication between the caregivers and office staff. She said that whenever she calls, she knows she’ll be met with the same compassion and understanding that she shows her clients. In





the eyes of the Visiting Angels Newton/Canton office team, Maliza is nothing short of “a sheer joy to work with” and “an extraordinary person.”

Maliza, it’s with our deepest gratitude and appreciation that we recognize you as our Angel of the Month for February 2024. Your boundless energy and compassion for this work is nothing less than a shining example of what our Angels can do for our clients. We look forward to having you continue to fly with our team and lift our clients’ spirits for years to come!

