



Angel of the Month: Suze Philippe

It is a great honor to award Suze Philippe Angel of the Month for November 2021. Suze joined *Visiting Angels* Newton/Canton in April 2011, celebrating her 10th anniversary with us last spring.

Over her ten-year career with us, Suze has assisted twenty-two of our clients. She has been valued by the office staff and fellow caregivers for her professionalism, positive attitude, and outstanding work ethic. Suze cared for one of our beloved clients for eight years. Our client began services with us in July 2013, and Suze started to pick up shifts with her that August. “It took her time to get to know and feel comfortable with us,” Suze said. “But once she did, she was so kind and endearing. She became like a grandmother to the other caregivers and me. My fondest memories were when our client was still able to go out for activities. She wanted to go to The Cheesecake Factory every Saturday for dinner. We would get all dressed up, and her beloved dog would be in tow in his carrier. She would gleefully remind me of our dinner date when I would arrive each Saturday for my shift.”

Luckily for us, when Suze went online searching for home care agencies to work for, she came across *Visiting Angels* Newton/Canton and inquired about the caregiver role. She remembers calling and speaking with Joanne. An interview was scheduled, and, as a testament to her warm, caring personality and skillset, she was hired on the spot! She chuckled as she reminisced about looking up addresses to her clients online, taking notes, and then pulling out her maps to figure out where to go before GPS became available.

Suze has worked with our Director of Client Services, Julie McBain, straight through the past ten years. Suze gushed when asked about her experience working with her. “I have truly loved working with Julie!” she said. “She is so calm and caring, and if there were any issues, she would handle a situation right away. I have enjoyed working for *Visiting Angels*. It feels like family because the company really cares about us as individuals.”

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A True Angel

“I can’t say enough about how amazing Suze is as a person and professional caregiver. I have worked closely with her over the past ten years with many different clients. I have always greatly admired her skills, commitment to our clients, and Visiting Angels. Suze has a refreshingly positive attitude and sincerely puts her heart and soul into her work. She is so thoughtful about learning the client, their needs, and the family dynamics so she can provide the best care to them and ease any concerns they or their family may have. She is fully invested in her work and is dedicated to the process from introductions to end of services. Suze is a true angel, and I consider myself extremely fortunate to work with her.” Julie McBain, Director of Client Services, shared.

Professional Background

Suze moved to New York City from Haiti in 1991. She enrolled in a comprehensive Home Health Aide course through a home care agency in 1992. The program required students to complete training and then work directly with clients while a nurse evaluated them. Suze was so efficient and committed to her work; she was advanced to her certification early. She went to another agency a few months later, enrolled in a three-month Certified Nurse Assistant program, and interned at the Coney Island Hospital. Suze worked at a nursing home briefly and realized that she was most comfortable assisting elders one-on-one in their homes. “I want to make a difference in the lives of those I help,” Suze shared. “I didn’t feel that measure of accomplishment working in a facility or hospital.” Suze returned to her previous employer and stayed with that agency for sixteen years. She continued her education by obtaining a phlebotomy certification in 2000.

Suze decided to move to Massachusetts in 2010 to provide her two sons and daughter with a better education. Her plan worked out well as her oldest son graduated from high school with a full football scholarship. He went to Hartford University in Connecticut and graduated as a biomedical engineer. Her middle son is attending university in Rhode Island with the goal of becoming a pediatrician. Her daughter is a sophomore in high school.

During her 29 years as a professional caregiver, Suze has taken several specialized dementia care training courses, including some with Visiting Angels Newton/Canton. Her empathetic and compassionate nature and cheery disposition, along with technical training, have helped Suze successfully support aggressive and fearful seniors with dementia.

Suze’s patience and dedication to the well-being of others are demonstrated in a story she shared of someone she cared for early on in her career. “I had a client named Viola who had late-stage dementia. She refused to bathe for months. Family members and other caregivers could not get her to allow them to wash her. I was determined to help her! I told her we had to get ready to go

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shopping and said we needed a bath one day. I filled the tub and got in myself. 'See, Viola? I have to get ready too!' She felt encouraged and got into the bathtub with me. I realized I needed to bring a fresh pair of clothes with me each time I had a scheduled visit with her. I wasn't always successful in getting her to bathe, but I was prepared and got in the tub each time. Personal hygiene is essential to everyone's health and comfort."

Words of Wisdom

When asked what advice she would offer to others in the field or just starting out, she shared, "Be very patient with your clients. But, most importantly, have a heart. If someone is disagreeable with your care, have a calm manner and compliment them. Never use an aggressive tone or show you are frustrated – charm them." Suze also emphasized taking advantage of classes and programs to learn further skills that will enhance the ability of caregivers to handle a variety of health issues and challenges.

On a Personal Note

Growing up in Haiti, Suze was the only girl among six brothers, one of whom had passed away. She is very concerned about the current situation in her home country. She still has two brothers there and is heartbroken by the conditions and that so many people are suffering. "I wanted to go back to help out," Suze said. "But it has not been possible. I am fortunate that one of my brothers has finally received his visa and will be coming to the United States very soon."

Suze picks her daughter up from school every day and loves to spend time with her, including lots of trips out shopping or online. Suze enjoys cleaning her home and cooking when she is not working with our clients. She is looking forward to returning to her routine of visiting friends in New York City on the weekends soon. Suze also attends virtual services from Ephese SDA Church in Providence, Rhode Island.

With Tremendous Gratitude

Suze, we are truly grateful to have you as a member of our Visiting Angels Newton/Canton family. Your warmth, positivity, determination, and depth of experience are remarkable and greatly valued by us all. Thank you for devoting over ten years to providing exceptional care to our clients. It is a true honor to award you Angel of the Month, for November 2021.

We look forward to working with you for years to come.