



Caregiver Spotlight: Yvonne Strong

Here at Visiting Angels, we know the value of caring and compassionate workers. However, healthcare trends show that keeping good caregivers is sometimes an uphill battle. Among a national caregiver turnover issue, we are extremely lucky to have one of the best caregivers, Yvonne Strong, at our agency since 2002. During Yvonne's nearly 14 year tenure at Visiting Angels Wayzata, she has worked with different owners and teammates, clients and families. Through it all, she has shown her commitment to senior care over and over.



"I stay because Visiting Angels Wayzata has a clear passion for caring for seniors."

Yvonne knows that staying at a homecare agency for more than a decade is not the norm in the industry. However, she doesn't have any plans to go anywhere. "The owners at Visiting Angels have always been

clear with their passion for senior care," Yvonne says. "Each may have been different, but they all put our seniors first and I respect that because I feel passionate about it too." We know what a treasure we have in Yvonne, and are thankful for her ongoing service to our agency and clients.

"You have to make the effort to leave your ways of doing things at the door."

Yvonne is able to connect with seniors in a special way, gaining their trust quickly. One way that she begins to build that relationship happens every time she walks in their door. "I know that I'm essentially a stranger coming into their home, but I don't want them to feel like I don't care about how they prefer to do things," says Yvonne. "I ask them how they want things done – if they prefer their towels folded a certain way, I honor that. I don't go into a home just to do things my way. I ask lots of questions and adapt to the preferences of the clients."

Yvonne does ask lots of questions during her time with clients, and her relationships with them are stronger because of it. She truly does honor them by asking how they like their coffee or

how they prefer laundry to be sorted; these small gestures of doing chores the way the senior prefers makes our clients know that they are important and valued by Yvonne.

“Kind words, asking questions, listening, and getting them involved – that’s what I do.”

Yvonne’s quest to make each senior feel special and seen doesn’t stop with her questions. She aims to speak kind and encouraging words to all of her clients throughout their days together. “Everyone wants to feel supported and praised,” Yvonne says. “It’s my job to let my clients know that they are loved, and I do it through kind words and a little bit of pampering.” Yvonne gets her clients involved with daily activities, whether it is baking brownies and giggling together in the kitchen or listening to a client’s favorite polka album over and over (and over). “Hey, I may not like polka that much, but if my client loves it, then I do too,” says Yvonne. We love this part of the way Yvonne cares for her clients – the senior is put first, no matter what.

“I want families to ask me questions and leave me notes. We are working together, after all.”

When it comes to relationships, Yvonne recognizes that she needs to cultivate a spirit of trust and teamwork with family members of her clients. To help foster that connection, Yvonne encourages family members to call her to ask questions, or to leave her notes. She leaves notes too, jotting down sentences to family members in a notebook that she keeps at each of her client’s homes. “I just think it is so important to include the family members in our day,” states Yvonne. “We are all in this together, and I love to hear their feedback or instructions. If I can help out by completing some duties for them so that when they come to visit, they can just be a son or a daughter with their Mom – and not a caregiver – then I feel good about myself and about their time together.”

Yvonne is an amazing caregiver, but it isn’t just because of the duties she performs. It is because she is a question-asker and a note-taker. She is a listener and a brownie-baker. She is able to honor the stories of her clients with grace, patience, kindness, and a little bit of laughter (and polka music). She is truly a gift to our agency, to our clients, and to everyone she meets!

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