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PAC Spotlight: Jessica Pelkey

Adversity can inspire us and show us who we are. A broken and troubled home can instill responsibility on a big brother or sister with tremendous conviction. Navigating poverty, addiction, and family services shapes a person as they develop. Life Coach, Tony Robbins says, "In life you need either inspiration or desperation." Caring and advocating for my three younger sisters was my inspiration from an early age. The same drives and passions continue to fuel me in the work that I do. With my big-sister duties on pause and motherhood setting in, long-term care was a natural fit for me. Convenient, as I'd moved to a little town with one traffic light, but three nursing homes. My last dozen years have been enriched with joys, rewards, and challenges of caring for people living with dementia. To dementia, adversity is no stranger. The dark corners of the room where dementia lives will break your heart. I have learned much and come far, but none-so-far as the last three years.

Three years ago I saw light. It wasn't a 60-watt bulb that we think of metaphorically when an idea strikes, but a blazing sun, shining light into the many aspects of dementia care, unabashed and with intimate recognition. It was a day of Positive Approach to Care, bringing to light not only the nature of people living with dementia, but the nature of human beings in general. As understanding builds, compassion and love are nourished. What we are seeing is truly not so far from ourselves. This is where dementia advocacy starts: on a human level.

I was compelled to go further, to build on and share what I had learned. I am now better able to advocate for my residents in my hands-on care and behavioural support roles. As a certified Coach and Trainer I am able to provide first-rate training and support building skills that enhance care and outcomes. I have been fortunate enough to become part of the PAC Team. I believe in what we are doing and I deeply appreciate that we work hard to live our philosophies and to integrate our skills into every interaction. At its core, PAC promotes and fosters psychosocial competency. PAC skills are life skills: enabling us to deal adeptly with the demands and challenges of everyday life. PAC skills serve, not only in the work that I do, but in all my relationships and each situation I face. My PAC skills serve me wherever I go.

I strive to embrace Positive Approach to Care because it enables me not only to be a better care-partner and advocate, but a better human being. To me, there is no greater inspiration than that.