

* VISITING NURSE / HOSPICE ATLANTA *

Sue Wholley, R.N.

Sue Wholley, R.N., has never been content to rest on her laurels. As Care Coordinator and Clinical Manager for the Care Management Services division at Visiting Nurse / Hospice Atlanta, (aka Visiting Nurse Health System), Wholley is a leader in her field. Her comprehensive and non-traditional approach to caring for a frail and disabled population not only helps her patients, but the nonprofit organization's clinicians too. She is known for her embracing management style, her compassion and her outstanding performance as a clinician. She manages 11 nurses and has maintained a cohesive, hard-working, collaborative and supportive team with a high rate of retention. She nurtures her staff and models the highest skill level and work ethic. She inspires her team by being "a leader not a boss. I believe in respecting people's abilities," she says, "and identifying what people are good at. I keep a case load of patients because it's important to know what I'm teaching on an experiential level. I like to teach people by example." In November she will continue her education by studying for a Commission for Case Management Certification (CCMC).

Wholley readily participates in cutting-edge research projects and tries to find ways to integrate the new skills into practice for all staff. She was instrumental in establishing a Falls Risk Protocol, has implemented evidence-based models into the practice of geriatric care management, and has received extensive training in the Stanford Chronic Disease Self Management Programs. A big believer in the power of community, she leads groups in disease self-management in senior centers and other locations.

While she loves hands-on nursing, Wholley understands that in her current role she can impact the health and well-being of more than 3,000 patients a year, instead of the 200-300 she would see as an individual practitioner. Regardless of how much is on her plate, Wholley maintains a positive and upbeat attitude. "I love it all," she says. "And I laugh a lot."



Beulah Leuthold

Beulah Leuthold has been a nurse for more than 50 years. Now in her early 70s, she joined the clinical team at the Hospice Atlanta Center in Buckhead 13 years ago, two months after the 36-bed inpatient facility opened. She is one of the Center's most-loved and most-respected hospice nurses, known for her strong clinical skills, her deep compassion and her calm, reassuring manner. Now a head supervisor, Beulah has built a cohesive and highly proficient and caring team and she oversees many younger nurses, keeping them motivated and giving them guidance.

During her years at Hospice Atlanta, a division of the nonprofit Visiting Nurse / Hospice Atlanta, Beulah has served thousands of patients and families and people remember her for years afterward. One woman whose daughter she cared for remembered her by name almost ten years later. Beulah is meticulous about ensuring that patients' symptoms are managed well, and has a deep understanding of their needs. She has worked with patients who have known for months or years that their illness is terminal, as well as those who receive an unexpected diagnosis of a life-limiting illness. She has cared for people of all ages, from babies to adults in the prime of life and seniors in their 90s.

Beulah's late husband was a Methodist minister so it is no surprise that she treats her work as a ministry. "Every day, when I drive to work, I ask the Lord to help me be the kind of nurse I need to be," she says. As much as she treasures her own faith, Beulah makes a point of accepting her patients' beliefs, whether they are Christian, Jewish, Muslim or belong to no religious community. Working with the Center's chaplain, she allows them the space to experience life and death their own way, in their own time.

Beulah credits her children and grandchildren for supporting her as she continues to care for patients at the end of life.



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PHOTO: Each day at Shepherd Center hundreds of nurses like Tammy King provide the best personal care for patients like Jack Woodall of Seaford, VA. Tammy, who joined Shepherd Center in 1975, is now Chief Nurse Executive.

*National Database for Nursing Quality Indicators