

Nurse's aide needs patience, stamina on job

by KAYE BARTON

"I just love my work," says Louise Worley. "You take a lot of nonsense from people in other jobs, but I get real satisfaction from working as a nurse's aid. When I help a patient walk who was never supposed to walk again, I feel really good."

But Worley, a 45-year-old restorative aide at St. Jude's Home in Sandy, emphasizes that the job requires a lot of patience, a strong stomach and sturdy legs. Those who try it and don't last usually lack at least one of those three qualities.

Many aides make a career of it, however, and stay on year after year. Worley is one of these. "I worked as a waitress in both restaurants and cocktail lounges," she explained. "But I quit that, and I've stayed with aide work for 15 years."

Most of Worley's duties are carried out in St. Jude's therapy room complete with parallel bars, overhead pulls, exercise mats and a restorator (stationary bicycle). She has taken special physio-therapy training to receive certification as a restorative aide and she administers physical therapy to patients whose doctors have ordered it.

As she talks, she is helping a patient do his laps on the parallel bars. "Doc" is doing very well," she says as they move along the length of the bars. "He's up to 12 laps now, and he can move about on his own in the walker."

Therapy often includes what Worley calls the "range of motions", a special series of exercises designed to restore the patient to mobility after accidents such as hip fractures.

In addition to her specialty of

physiotherapy, Worley does general aide work. She joins the other aides in their mealtime line-up at the kitchen door. She distributes the trays to the patients and feeds those who are unable to help themselves, spooning the potatoes with gravy and the pureed vegetables into their mouths.

Because Worley is on the day shift she helps get the patients up and prepare them for the day's activities. Some of them must be bathed each day, some lifted into wheelchairs. Teeth must be cleaned and hair combed. Those who are bed fast need to be turned regularly to prevent the formation of bedsores. And there are beds to make.

Worley and her fellow aides say that the women patients are especially grateful for the grooming services the aides perform. "They care about the way they look and it distresses them when they can't keep up their appearance," Worley said.

Almost any walk down a corridor at St. Jude's will provide a glimpse of an aide arranging a woman patient's hair. The gentle use of the brush and comb suggests a mother with her small child.

The aides describe their work mainly in physical terms. Even the special services they perform for the patients are related as physical tasks: "I stay after work to curl Mrs. B's hair; I bring Mr. S an extra glass of juice." They don't often talk about reassurance and encouragement. But Worley admits that it is a very important part of her job in therapy — perhaps the most important.

"We have to help them believe they can walk again or the exercises wouldn't do any good," she said. "It's a matter of giving the patients confidence

in themselves."

Another aide, Marie Howe of Boring, has worked at St. Jude's "off and on" for three years, interspersed with half-serious attempts to launch a singing career. Howe is 22 and agrees with Worley that aide work is better than some other jobs she's held.

She has worked in various nursing home jobs, including the kitchen, since she was 14. "I've also worked in a bar and on a milk farm," she said. "Some people think being an aide is dirty work, but it doesn't compare with some of the sights and smells you get in other jobs."

Howe is very matter-of-fact about the occasional bathroom accidents or bed linens that require cleaning up. But she concedes that the job requires "a great deal of patience. Some of the older people are very demanding, and they don't realize that we have many patients to care for. It takes a lot of self-control."

Howe and Worley compare their daily schedules and find that their alarm clocks ring at the same time: 5: a.m. "It gives me time to get my head together before I get here at 6:30," Howe said. The aides visit over coffee, then punch in for work at 7 a.m.

Howe just finished a month-and-a-half on nights and says that she's worked all three shifts. She states emphatically that she works hardest on the 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. stint. "At night the major problem is staying awake on the job," she said. "There's just not that much happening. But the day shift has baths to give and two meals to serve. You get the picture."

The day-shift picture includes frequent interruptions from patients who expect the aides to banter with or comfort them. During the noon-hour



Kaye Barton photos

IT'S "PILL TIME" when Jane Camp, "med aide," makes her rounds at St. Jude's Home. Camp has taken special training and received certification so she can administer the medicine prescribed by the patients' doctors.

kitchen line-up hungry patients cluster about the aides. Marie Howe assures a woman that the meal is almost ready. Worley exchanges jokes with a male patient.

The aides' day charge nurse is Ruth Wilson of Brightwood, who offers praise for her staff. "We have a special group here," she comments. "They really do work hard." And she advises that a visitor trying to keep up with the aides

ought to wear tennis shoes "because they move fast!"

Since July 1, nurse's aides in Oregon must be certified to work. All the aides at St. Jude's have gone through an orientation session involving 60 hours of classroom and clinical training. Louise Smith, St. Jude's director of nurses estimates that becoming an aide involves approximately three months of preparation. The pay is around three

dollars per hour depending on the length of employment.

Perhaps Marie Howe best explains why she and her co-workers stay at their present job in spite of the difficulties. "We've all had jobs that didn't provide much challenge," she comments. "It didn't take much to do some of the jobs I've held, but it takes a lot to be a good nurse's aide."



LOUISE WORLEY helps a patient from his wheelchair as he grasps the parallel bars, part of therapy program she carries out to restore his mobility. Worley is a nurse's aide at St. Jude's Home with a specialty in physiotherapy.

Camp is offered

Going away to camp is something boys and girls with asthma can do this summer thanks to Camp Christmas Seal. On Aug. 20-26, this special camp for children ages 9-13 who suffer from asthma and/or other respiratory allergies will be offered by the Oregon Lung Association.

There are still some openings for camp and some campships left for children who families cannot afford the fee. Camp Christmas Seal provides youngsters with a normal camping experience, not a therapy session. However, highly qualified staff or volunteer physicians who specialize in pediatrics and allergies will be on hand to handle any medical problems that arise.

Applications and information about Camp Christmas Seal may be obtained by calling or writing to the Oregon Lung Association at 1020 SW Taylor, Portland, 97205.

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Questionnaire okayed

The Oregon State Bar Board of Governors has unanimously approved a questionnaire on wills to be made available to low-income older citizens throughout the State of Oregon.

Written by the Legal Services Development Program for the Elderly in Portland, the questionnaire is designed to help individuals communicate more easily with their attorneys.

The questionnaire is not a

valid will; it is an informational tool the individual can use which will be of assistance to the attorney who draws up the will. Areas covered in the questionnaire include names and addresses of children, disposition of estate, the naming of a personal representative, direction for funeral and burial, and special instructions.

The questionnaire was presented to the Board of Governors after its merits were evaluated by the Public

Service and Information Committee of the Oregon State Bar.

Copies of the questionnaire can be obtained free from area agencies on aging throughout Oregon.

Persons now able to locate the questionnaire in their communities can send a stamped, self-addressed envelope directly to Legal Services Development Program for the Elderly, 2328 NW Everett St., Portland, Oregon 97210.

Cycle safety taught

Registration is open for a three-week motorcycle instruction and safety course to begin Aug. 8 at Clackamas Community College.

The course, sponsored by the Four Seasons Motorcycle Rider School of Boring, will include 22-24 hours of classroom and on-bike instruction.

The course is open to riders 15 and older. Persons under 18 will need written parental consent.

The course will be taught by instructors certified by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation. Motorcycles will be provided for the students by the instructor.

Classes will be held Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights from 7-9:30 p.m. for three weeks.

For further information on the course, call 646-0769 or 658-3485 nights, or 655-9117 days.

Shrubs may go

Property owners with shrubbery and trees which block the view of motorists on Clackamas County roads will be asked to remove the traffic hazards if an ordinance is adopted July 27 by the county commission.

Land owners will have 10 days after notification by the county in which to remove the hazards or appeal to the commission if commissioners approve the rule.

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