

Nursing & Assisted Living Facility Professional

“NEWS AND VIEWS YOU CAN REALLY USE”

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SENT EACH MONTH TO YOU AS A MEMBER OF THE HEALTHCARE HEROES

THE HAT ADVANTAGE by Rebecca Adelman THE GREATEST STORY NEVER TOLD



Preparing for arbitrations, trials, depositions, and hearings, reminds me that everyone has a story to tell; they may just not realize it. Listening to stories from witnesses about their life experiences inspires and motivates me. Their stories

increase my compassion and empathy. In our care homes, storytelling programs have been developed that improve lives of people with memory loss through creative engagement. For example, TimeSlips (www.timeslips.org and listed on the AHRQ Health Care Innovations Exchange) is a program designed to improve the lives of persons with Alzheimer's and related dementia through creative engagement. The structured weekly group setting, led by trained facilitators, encourages story telling through creativity and imagination and that can be shared with fellow residents and family members. Due to a rapidly aging population and an increase in Alzheimer's disease, long-term care has shifted its focus to person-centered care. The philosophy is conducive to creative programming, including storytelling, art, and music to enhance the health and social functioning of the aging and that promotes engagement with care providers and families. Always mindful of regulations, F-Tag 248 states that *"the facility must provide for an ongoing program of activities designed to meet, in accordance with the comprehensive assessment, the interests and the physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being of each resident."* Please consider developing or expanding existing programs. Deviating from the customary platform of providing legal, regulatory and risk management content, it is time for a story.

Covering a distance of 56.1 miles (90 km), in a subtropical region of South Africa, is the world's largest and oldest ultramarathon. The Comrades Marathon is run on "The Big Five" sets of hills, Cowies Hill, Field's Hill, Botha's Hill, Inchanga, and Polly Shortts, and between the capital of the Kwazulu-Natal Province of South Africa, Pietermaritzburg, and the coastal city of Durban. There were many reasons why I chose to run this race; ultimately, I knew that one of life's greatest adventure was ahead of me. Training for Comrades was a ninth-month commitment not only to myself, but also to fellow runners in the event. One early morning, I received an email from a registered participant, an experienced Comrades veteran. The race list of participants reflected contact information as well as birthdates. It was our shared birthday that caught his

attention and eventually began a long-distance friendship. He helped me with my training, offering helpful tips to prepare for the race and arranged for my night's stay in Pietermaritzburg, before the race. Finding hotel accommodations during Comrades, the pride of South Africa was near impossible, but through my friend's generosity, his brother (who was also running the race) and I spent the evening at a small farmhouse. Travel to the race the next morning was in the back of a chicken truck.

Part of my journey included the opportunity, and a source of inspiration, to help raise funds for a charitable organization. The organization chosen was the Ethembeni School located in Kwazulu. Ethembeni cares for 300 children with varying disabilities on campus, and they immediately became my South African family. I arrived with my 8-year-old son, our beloved nanny and that day, met my friend for the first time. We were leaving that afternoon to travel to Pietermaritzburg for the race start. I asked if he and his brother would join us at Ethembeni School for a tour and assembly with the children. When we arrived, the children were dressed in uniform, most of them blind, and had prepared dances, songs and meals for us as well as crafted beautiful African gifts. We were all overcome with profound emotion and gratitude. We spent the afternoon singing, dancing and celebrating.

That evening we arrived in Pietermaritzburg and settled in to watch a rugby competition and the farming family made us a delicious pre-race meal. I sat quietly in my room after the game preparing to run 56 miles through the hills of South Africa; one of only 150 Americans. In a few hours, I would travel the road that overlooks the valley of 1,000 hills where heroes from the Great War died in battle. I would run past the Comrades Marathon Wall of Honor serving as a permanent landmark to commemorate the achievements of Comrades runners who completed this epic journey. Most importantly, I would pass the school at mile marker 29 where I knew the children would be wildly cheering.

My friend and his brother are faster than I so we separated at 4:30 am to our starting points. What I haven't shared yet is that from the moment the starting gun sounds, runners have 12 hours to complete the course in order to receive the coveted Comrades medal. My training was designed to finish the race in 11 hours and 30 minutes. There I was alone, yet with 22,000 individuals from around the world each with their own personal story. The runners began singing Shosholozza, a miner's folk song meaning "Keep going. Move fast on those mountains." Then I heard it...the

Continued on page 3



Pathway to Rehabilitation Excellence

By Gina Tomcsik
Director of Compliance
Privacy Officer

The MDS Coordinator and Therapy Manager Relationship:

THE TEAM WITHIN THE TEAM!

John C. Maxwell said it well with he said, "Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."¹

Relationships in healthcare are vital to the success of quality patient care. Without strong working relationships, systems will break down and the ones who ultimately suffer are the resident.

We must value and embrace loyal, mutual, long-lasting relationships with customers, residents and each other to achieve quality patient care through a cohesive team approach. Fostering an environment where solid relationships are expected will produce magnificent results!

One of the most essential relationships in the skilled nursing facility is the relationship between the MDS Coordinator and the On-site Therapy Manger.

"The MDS Coordinator is a valuable organizational resource whose input would improve organizational decision making."² The MDS Coordinator role is "intrinsically integrative," with potential to impact quality of care. However, the potential of the MDS Coordinator to influence important care processes such as assessment, decision-making and care planning may be moderated by the quality of their relationship patterns across the organization. Maximizing that potential by attention to relationships patterns among staff can help to unlock that capacity of the MDS Coordinator to positively influence care processes and improve quality of care."²

The Therapy Manager has the key role of effectively coordinating within the interdisciplinary team to manage and assure resident therapy needs are met and simultaneously function within the confinements of the MDS and PPS systems. In order to effectively coordinate care and manage the MDS and PPS systems, the Therapy Manager must create, preserve, and grow their relationship with the interdisciplinary team but with an emphasis on the MDS Coordinator partnership.

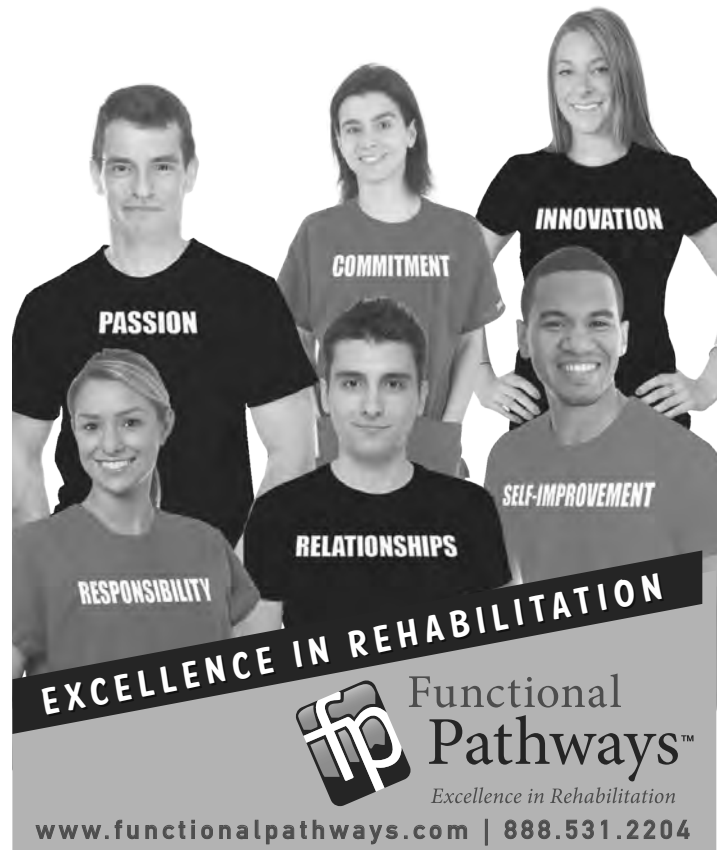
The Finale

The scrutiny that health care providers are under leaves us little room for error and we are under extreme examination from government agencies. These examinations can be burdensome, stressful, and downright terrifying. Having sound relationships in the skilled nursing facility environment are crucial.

The Signposts

Healthcare providers understand that the key to success is

OUR PEOPLE. OUR VALUES.



dependent on the quality of the people caring for the people. Quality healthcare providers possess a caring sense of compassion, a winning attitude, they continuously look for ways to improve, and they build up and support their teammates for success.

The Takeaway

Improving relationships in the skilled nursing facility are vital to the quality of resident care and outcomes. Ensuring your systems are strengthened, policies and procedures are followed, and constructive open communication is encouraged will improve your overall outcome. Have you seriously examined the relationships in your facility lately?

VALUE IN RELATIONSHIPS

These two critical roles work together to ensure regulations are adhered to and reimbursement is sustained. Five tips are listed in the following grid to increase awareness on the partnership between the MDS Coordinator and Therapy Manager.

¹Teamwork Makes The Dream Work, by John C. Maxwell; 2002 by Maxwell Motivation, Inc.; Published by J. Countryman®

² National Library of Medicine (NLM), MDS Coordinator Relationships and Nursing Home Care Processes
Mary L. Piven, PhD, RN, Post-Doctoral Fellow, Donald Bailey, PhD, RN, Assistant Professor of Nursing, [...], and Ruth A. Anderson, PhD, RN, FAAN, Associate Professor of Nursing <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1472871/>

For more information, please contact Gina Tomcsik, Director Compliance Functional Pathways at gtomcsik@fprehab.com or call 865-531-2204. You may also discover more at www.functionalpathways.com

Chariots of Fire theme music. I had been dreaming about this moment for what seemed like all my life. Then the cock's crow. This Comrades tradition came from a local runner 60 years ago who was standing nervously at the line and needed to do something, anything, so he filled his lungs and let out a rooster crow. Cockadoodle starts the Comrades marathon. I had tears streaming down my face and an American flag sewn to my shorts. Next to me stood an elder with a gentle smile, who I knew had run over 30 Comrades by the color of his bib. He wiped my tears and said "Just run to Durban today. That's all you have to do is run to Durban."

That's what I did. I ran and ran and ran and talked to people and fell in love with the rolling grassy hills and the sights, sounds and smells. I watched the sun rise with each passing mile and came closer to Durban and Kingsead Stadium where I would make the final lap before finishing the ultimate human race.

My approach to Ethembeni School was exciting as I could see the children lined along the road looking for me as earnestly as I was looking for them. They pulled into a massive huddle and raised me from my feet. Carried 25 yards by the heroes. I ran up and down the hills carefully watching my time. As the day passed and the evening grew near, I was slightly behind my time by about 10 minutes. I knew if I continued even at a slightly slower pace, I would make the 12 hour cut-off.

How did I feel? Hurt, tired, humble, stripped. Then, I saw them. The lights of Durban. I was less than 5km from the victory lap. By this time, I was shuffling along with the other runners. Then, the unexpected, *I fell*. I ran into a small reflective marker on the highway. It took me down. It was dusk so it was difficult to see if I was hurt as I could not feel my feet or my legs. I saw blood on my shorts and on my shoes and then realized my knees were cut. Runners passed me, but they too were just running to Durban. It took me nearly 10 minutes to stand up and another 5 minutes to move my legs forward. Some spirit moved me to keep going the last 5km to Durban. I didn't dare look at my watch, but just kept moving forward, shuffling, crying, and heaving. As I entered the stadium to run the last 400 meters, it was filled with fans cheering wildly. For a moment, I thought they were cheering for me, but they were screaming loudly as the clock ticked down 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 BANG! With 250 meters left to finish the race, the final gun of the Comrades sounded and I missed the 12 hour cutoff finishing the race in 12 hours 2 minutes.

The coveted medal... I crossed the finish line and my son and nanny were there, placing a homemade medal about my neck. I'd finished it, the greatest foot race in the world. But the adventure wasn't over.

I met up with my friend from South Africa in Cape Town. I met his wife and children and we ran together and shared pictures and stories for a few days. Then we said our good-byes unsure when our paths would cross but committed to connect at least on our shared birthday. On our last night in Cape Town before returning to the United States, I noticed a wrapped present on my bed. Thinking my son left me this prize, I thanked him in advance of opening it. He denied knowing anything about it. I opened the card and it was from my friend. He explained how our friendship had expanded his

SAVE THE DATE

we'll see you in



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life and his eyes and heart were opened at the school. Our chance meeting by having been born under the same star delivered to us both great gifts. In his note, he expressed to me that he felt I was an example of the Comrades spirit. The gift? His Comrades medal beautifully mounted and framed.

At that moment, I embraced this odyssey, this spiritual quest. What is it I learned? What was revealed to me and about me? Ubuntu. Ubuntu is a Bantu term meaning "human kindness." The South African region of KwaZulu-Natal embraces the idea of Ubuntu "human-ness" and "humanity toward others." Philosophically, it means the belief in the universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity. It's about our interconnectedness.

As we celebrate this springtime season and the special holidays, it is a special time to encourage storytelling and other creative ways to connect with each other and our residents and family. What's your greatest story never told?

Rebecca Adelman, Esq. – Ms. Adelman, PLLC is a shareholder of Hagwood Adelman Tipton and practices in the Memphis, Tennessee office. For over 20 years, Rebecca has concentrated her practice in healthcare law, long-term care assisted living and medical malpractice defense litigation. Her expertise and her scope of practice involve all insurance defense litigation areas including premises and product liability as well as employment law. Please feel free to contact her at radelman@hatlawfirm.com.

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