

Setting the Standard Award



Shirley Cort

Resident Aide/

Caregiver,
Life Enriching
Communities

Her sister, Winnie Allen, works in the same building and is also a recipient of a Setting the Standard Award in the 2025 McKnight's Pinnacle Awards program. Judges were unaware of their relationship.

In addition to her normal caregiving duties such as feeding the residents, she provides personalized care, including playing music.

Outside of work, she enjoys reggae dancing and waltzing, and cooking South American food.

As a resident-aide caregiver with nearly a quarter-century of dedicated service, Shirley Cort has set the highest standard of caregiving and compassion for the individuals she serves day in, day out.

She is a loyal staff member in the memory care unit of Life Enriching Communities' Wesley Ridge retirement community in Reynoldsburg, OH, where she has worked since 2001.

Caring for often bedbound or chairbound residents requires extraordinary patience and empathy, qualities that her colleagues say she embodies without fail.

"Her residents' faces light up when she walks into a room, a testament to the trust and comfort she brings," one colleague noted. "Whether reading the newspaper, giving hand massages, or simply watching TV with the residents, Shirley consistently prioritizes their well-being."

Her influence extends beyond her immediate responsibilities. In addition to caring for residents, she inspires her fellow employees through leadership, mentorship and expertise.

As a trainer, she shares her vast knowledge with her peers, offering insights into both best practices and the unique histories of each resident. And, despite her years of service, her supervisors say she remains adaptable and open to change if it benefits the residents and her fellow employees.

"For over 23 years, Shirley has exemplified the very best of compassionate caregiving, bringing warmth, dedication and an unwavering commitment to so many residents," says Life Enriching Communities CEO Scott McQuinn. "She not only enhances the lives of those she serves, but also inspires her peers through her leadership and expertise."



Setting the Standard Award

Winifred “Winnie” Allen

Resident Aide/
Caregiver,
Life Enriching
Communities

Her sister, Shirley Cort, works in the same building and coincidentally is also a recipient of a McKnight's Setting the Standard Award this year—judges were unaware of their relationship. The two share a close bond and similar hobbies.

Outside of work, she enjoys reggae dancing, waltzing and cooking.

Known as a mentor and relationship builder, she's considered the go-to person in her unit for new employees.

With a positive attitude, tireless dedication to her residents, and an ability to handle the toughest care plans, Winnie Allen is a shining example of caregiving excellence.

Throughout her 22-year career as a caregiver in assisted living at Life Enriching Communities' Wesley Ridge retirement community in Reynoldsburg, OH, she has cultivated deep, lasting relationships with her residents, making them feel truly valued and cherished.

Allen's influence extends beyond her residents. New hires consistently train under her guidance and she is a mentor to young employees. Company leaders praise her for leading by example, with patience, kindness and an unwavering commitment to her work.

Yet while many of her younger staff who train under her often go on to become excellent caregivers themselves, one sentiment is often heard from residents: "The new ones are good, but they're not Winnie."

She also goes above and beyond the call of duty when the needs of her facility and residents demand it. She has been known to work 20 hours straight, filling in for colleagues who call in sick. Staff members and managers say she is always willing to step up and go the extra mile to ensure residents' needs are met.

"Winnie Allen exemplifies the very best of caregiving — her dedication, compassion and unwavering commitment to so many residents sets a gold standard in our community," says Life Enriching Communities CEO Scott McQuinn. "For over 22 years, she has gone beyond providing care; she has built meaningful relationships, mentored new caregivers, and has consistently put the well-being of others first."