



A Successful New Approach to Training and Hiring CNAs

By Wendy Nelson, Administrator, Prairie View Home

Prairie View Home is the skilled nursing facility for Prairie View Campus. We have provided a continuum of healthcare services for a small town of 1,200 people in northeast Iowa since 1966. Today, Prairie View Campus has over 120 employees who work in its four facilities: Prairie View Manor, Prairie View Inn, Prairie View Home and Kuiper Villa. Like many other aging care facilities, we are in need of high quality clinical personnel. This, of course, includes certified nursing assistants, or CNAs.

In December 2017, we began using a new, blended training program offered through the American Health Care Association and CNAonline.com. The course uses AHCA's curriculum, *How to Be a Nurse Assistant*. The didactic portion of the class is offered completely online, even with an audiobook, and can be accessed by a smartphone. There are two instructors in the course. One from CNAonline.com who assists the students as they go through the various modules, and our own, in-house instructor, Danelle Crist, who teaches the hands-on, clinical skills portion here at our Prairie View Home facility. We are so lucky to have her!

The course is flexible and can be offered from two weeks to six weeks. We opted for a three-week schedule, where the first two weeks include the didactic portion Monday through Thursday with labs on Friday. The last week is devoted to clinicals here at our facility. During the three weeks, students only have to be here for 15 hours of lab and 30 hours of clinical training. They get paid for the 45 hours of training while they are inhouse.

We have been very pleased with the results of using CNAonline.com's blended approach for several reasons. For starters, we can get students through the course, licensed, and employed much faster than we've been able to in the past. Relying on local community colleges to train students as CNAs has historically been problematic for us. We were limited to when the community colleges would hold their classes, which were about six weeks apart. And then, if they didn't have enough students sign up, they would cancel the class, so we'd have to wait another six weeks until the next class.

In addition, the people we were getting didn't have a good handle on their skills. We were having to retrain people who had just gotten out of a class. With the CNAonline.com approach, we can teach them our way, and the right way, from the very beginning. This saves time and money in the long run for us.

We are paying the same fee as we would pay a community college but getting better quality outcomes. We are able to hand pick the students from the beginning and train them our way from the get-go. And we like the fact that when they show up for labs and clinicals, we see that we won't have an attendance issue.

We have met kind, considerate, beautiful people who may not have had many opportunities in their lives through this approach. The CNAonline.com course allowed them to start a career path in the healthcare field. And they did great because of Danelle's support. The instructor makes a huge difference in the success of the class.

We are excited to continue to offer this type of blended training as a way to build up our staff of CNAs and we look forward to continuing to work with CNAonline.com.

For more information, contact Wendy Nelson at wnelson@tcaexpress.net or www.cnaonline.com.