

**Comfort Keepers**

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**SINGLE MOM LOSES JOB BUT FINDS HER TRUE  
CALLING IN CARING FOR SENIORS**

*Gray Days Ahead May Not Be Such a Bad Thing,  
Especially When Your Business is Comfort Keepers*

(Connersville, IN) --- When Lisa Webb lost her nursing job back in October of 2001, little did she know then that her next job would be as franchise owner to the third-fastest growing franchise in franchise history – Comfort Keepers. Not only will she be putting her nursing skills to good use, Webb will also be working with a group of people that mean the most to her – seniors.

Comfort Keepers specializes in providing in-home, non-medical care for seniors, the disabled, new mothers and anyone else needing assistance with daily activities. The pre-screened caregivers provide companionship, meal preparation, grocery shopping, light housekeeping and transportation. Although Comfort Keepers' services are not limited to seniors, that is their primary demographic.

Before she bought her Connersville, Indiana franchise, Webb was an office nurse/quality assurance manager in a home health care agency. Webb assisted with referrals, scheduling, home care visits and Medicare billing. She knew the

company was having financial difficulties, but she stuck with them until the very end. When patients were being transferred to other agencies and her paychecks began to bounce, that's when Webb started to see the real picture.

Fortunately, a friend introduced her to Comfort Keepers. Webb researched the company on the Internet and spoke to other franchisees. She visited the corporate office in Dayton, Ohio shortly after, and was soon impressed with their level of professionalism and quality of care.

"I think God gave me the will to do this and it was meant to be," Webb, 37, says. "In the next thirty years, the population will double. There are so many people out there that don't understand Comfort Keepers or don't even know that it is available."

Since Webb lost her job and is a single mother to a ten-year-old son, it was difficult coming up with the money to buy her franchise. She took cash advances on credit cards and lived on unemployment checks until she opened the business in February of 2002. Until the business grew enough where she could hire a staff, she did all the visits herself, and worked a second job at a nursing home on weekends to make ends meet. When she finally landed a 24/7 case, she was able to hire a staff that now consists of 10 part-time employees.

These screened caregivers are required to have a high school diploma, a background in caring for the elderly and a genuine interest in their clients. Comfort Keepers does three background checks on their applicants that includes criminal, credit and driving inquiries.

Webb's clients have a variety of needs and it's usually the adult children who contact Comfort Keepers on their parents' behalf. The monthly costs vary on the amount of hours per week and not the services performed. Some clients use

caregivers for shopping and meal preparation, while others simply need companionship or someone to talk to.

“We have a lot of Alzheimer’s patients who will forget to eat if someone is not there to remind them,” Webb says. “But every client is different, just as their needs are different.”

Webb attributes her growing success to word-of-mouth referrals and her past and present association with the social workers at the local hospitals and nursing homes. She also sends letters out to surrounding doctors and senior citizen centers. She says her biggest challenge right now is just educating the public on what Comfort Keepers is all about.

“I get calls daily from people who don’t quite understand what the company does,” she says. “I put ads in the paper constantly, but I need to talk to them personally, so that I can explain the services.”

Webb would like to buy a second franchise in the next couple of years, possibly in Lawrenceburg, Indiana – about an hour away. In the next year, her main goal is to triple her staff, as well as increase her clients and hours billed.

“I learned a lot from my former employer’s mistakes. Webb says. “Mistakes that cost her the company. I put my staff first, clients second and finances last.”

Currently the company has 340 locations in 45 states and is growing at the rate of 10-12 new franchises per month. While aggressively pursuing growth in the U.S., the company is also exploring international opportunities and is currently in negotiations with Canada and Australia. Sales are expected to exceed \$225 million by 2005.