



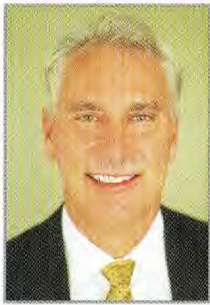
*“Cultivating Leadership”* at VITAS



2011 VITAS National  
Recognition Program Winners



# I'll Do My Best Today and Do Even Better Tomorrow



*“The winners of the National Leadership Council are indeed special, but none of them could earn such recognition if it weren't for each and every VITAS employee doing his or her part to help provide the highest-quality hospice care to patients and their families.”*

*—Tim O'Toole, CEO*

The theme of the 2011 Leadership Council was “Cultivating Leadership,” and we chose to represent that theme with images of trees because trees symbolize life, strength and endurance.

VITAS has endured as the nation's leading provider of hospice care because of its strong, life-enhancing employees. Everyone at VITAS works hard to put patients and families first, to find ways to provide high-quality hospice care ever more efficiently and effectively and to make a difference in the lives of those who are at the end of life.

Although the individuals selected for the National Leadership Council are special, none of them could have earned such recognition if it were not for each and every VITAS employee doing his or her part to help provide the highest-quality hospice care to VITAS patients and their families.

Congratulations to all of the 2011 Leadership Council winners, and thank you to everyone for your continued commitment to VITAS patients and their families!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy J. O'Toole". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Timothy O'Toole  
CEO



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# Clinical and Operations Awards

The winners in the Clinical and Operations portion of the National Leadership Council are selected based on peer nominations, which are submitted to the corporate office and are reviewed by a National Selection Committee.



## Giving a Voice to Patients

**Howard Homler, MD, FACP**

*Sacramento, Program 99 • Year Joined VITAS: 2010*

### VITAS Award for Outstanding Service—Team Physician

The 37-year-old patient insisted she had never abused alcohol, and yet, her medical records indicated otherwise. Because of this, she was denied a liver transplant. By the time she was admitted to VITAS, the patient's dignity was shattered. Her prognosis was terminal, her reputation was damaged and her family had stopped speaking to her "because they felt she could have avoided her disease," explains Chaplain Janice M. Hollowell.

"After listening to our team nurse and social worker talk about the patient's anguish, Dr. Homler called the patient's attending physicians," notes Janice. After many hours and many phone calls, it was concluded that a documentation error had occurred in the patient's records.

Today, the patient is no longer viewed as an alcoholic and her family relationships are on the mend. "She probably won't live much longer," laments Janice, "but her hope and dignity have been restored because someone heard her pleas and gave her a voice."

In addition to advocating for patients, Dr. Homler advocates for education, bringing articles, presentations and/or guest speakers to team meetings to talk about such topics as palliative sedation, the symptoms of death and dying and different cultural beliefs and attitudes regarding the end of life. "He is patient, thoughtful and never overly technical in his presentations," write members of Team 276. "And he treats everyone as equals."



## Guided by the Golden Rule

**Jocelyn Campbell, RN**

*Cincinnati, Program 51 • Year Joined VITAS: 2000, 2011*

### VITAS Award for Outstanding Service—RN

The VITAS Values are hardwired into Jocelyn's DNA. She enhances those four values, however, with a fifth: "I am always thinking, 'If it were me or my family member needing care, what would I want?'"

That question constantly ran through Jocelyn's mind as she tended to a 44-year-old patient with cancer who lived under poor conditions and had abused drugs.

"Jocelyn arranged for the patient's broken windows to be fixed. She gave the patient sheets, blankets and towels, and she brought her food," explains Linda Arnold, RN. But the most challenging aspect of the patient's care was keeping the patient comfortable while protecting her medication from pilferage; both the patient and her friends often raided the supply. Even a lock box proved ineffective when the patient's friends stole it and all of its contents.

Undaunted, Jocelyn asked the local police department if she could keep the patient's medications at the station. The police agreed. Before making one of her three weekly visits to the patient, Jocelyn picked up two days'-worth of medication from the station.

Because most of her VITAS territory is rural, Jocelyn drives great distances and works well into the evening to see her patients. And when she's not on duty, Jocelyn works as a VITAS Paw Pals® volunteer. "Jocelyn often gives of her personal time to make sure her patients' needs are met," says Linda.



**Nothing 'La-Z' about Carolynne!**

**Carolynne Cullerton, RN**

*Chicagoland Northwest, Program 31 • Year Joined VITAS: 2006, 2010*

**VITAS Award for Outstanding Service—RN**

Carolynne wasn't going to say anything, but when a colleague at the VITAS office noticed the La-Z-Boy® recliner stuffed into her car, she had to explain.

"She had purchased the chair at a thrift store for an impoverished patient who liked to sleep in a La-Z-Boy® rocker but whose rocker had broken, making it difficult to climb in and out," writes Patient Care Administrator Marilyn Colley. "She was hauling the chair in her car until she could deliver it to the patient."

When the same patient returned home after a week in the hospital, Carolynne noticed the patient had no food and only \$3 to her name.

"Carolynne stayed until after 9 p.m. to help," notes Team Manager Kellie Newman. "By the end of the night, the patient had frozen dinners and other food to sustain her until she had the money to buy more."

Despite covering an "exceptionally large" geographic area, Carolynne leaves no patient or family need unattended, adds Kellie—even if it's just to reminisce over a cup of coffee with a patient's grieving spouse. "The minute Carolynne walks in the door, she is completely in the moment with her patients and their families. You can't fake that kind of compassion," says Kellie.



**Honesty is the Best Policy**

**Kristen McKinley, RN**

*Delaware, Program 60 • Year Joined VITAS: 2010*

**VITAS Award for Outstanding Service—Admissions Nurse**

During her initial interview with a potential patient, Kristen learned his insurance policy covered additional home care hours only if he signed up with another hospice provider in town. Kristen thus recommended he meet with the other provider.

Days later, "the patient's daughter called us and said she wanted to sign her father up with VITAS because she 'respected and trusted Kristen's honesty and integrity,'" explains Director of Market Development Stephen Maiale.

When a patient with another hospice was actively dying in a hospital, the patient's husband asked that she be transported to their assisted living facility to be with him. "The patient's hospice refused, stating she had to go to their inpatient unit," says Stephen. "The ALF called VITAS, and with a few minutes left in her shift, Kristen went to the hospital to assess the situation and to request the patient's transfer to VITAS."

Although the other hospice was uncooperative, Kristen persisted, driving back and forth between the ALF and the hospital to get the transfer papers signed, and securing oxygen and ambulance transport for the patient.

"The patient died the moment she got home, but the husband was so grateful," recalls Stephen. "Kristen made the transfer happen because she worked late and she didn't take 'no' for an answer. She exemplified the VITAS Values that night."

**"A good leader inspires people to have confidence in the leader.  
A great leader inspires people to have confidence in themselves."**

—Eleanor Roosevelt





“Absolute identity with one’s cause is the first and great condition of successful leadership.”

—Woodrow Wilson



### Rain or Shine, Car or No Car, Debbi is There

**Deborah “Debbi” Sands, LPN**

*Palm Beach, Program 16 • Year Joined VITAS: 2009*

#### VITAS Award for Outstanding Service—Licensed Practical Nurse

While Debbi is “in disbelief that I am being honored for performing a job that I truly love,” Patient Care Administrator Kathleen Macaluso knows exactly why Debbi was selected for the Leadership Council.

“I schedule Debbi as often as I can with patients who have challenging family dynamics, because she always knows what to do,” writes Kathleen. “Debbi’s first priority is her patient. In one case where the family dynamics were very intense, Debbi gathered everyone around and skillfully and professionally explained how their commotion could be affecting the patient.”

Always prepared, “Debbi took out toys from her bag and gave them to the children so they could play quietly, and then she explained the death and dying process to the adults,” continues Kathleen.

The family begged for Debbi to take care of their loved one every day. “Even when her car broke down, she walked in the rain—for three days—to the patient’s house,” notes Kathleen. “That alone shows that Debbi goes above and beyond the call of duty for our patients and their families.”



### The Calm *During* the Storm

**James “Jim” Adams, MDiv**

*Collier County, Program 19 • Year Joined VITAS: 2007*

#### VITAS Award for Outstanding Service—Chaplain

Late one evening at the VITAS Inpatient Unit at Physicians Regional Medical Center, where Jim is team chaplain, a patient’s devastated spouse went into the patient’s bathroom, locked the door, pulled out a gun and shot himself.

The patient’s son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren were in the room; the son collapsed on the floor trying to beat the door down. The IPU staff expertly handled the situation, calling all necessary emergency personnel. “But when all was said and done, our staff was severely traumatized,” wrote Joyceann Cleary, RN, who nominated Jim for his award.

“Jim came in immediately and offered support and words of encouragement and just let everyone talk,” says Joyceann. “He made himself available day and night for days and weeks after the incident. His support was of the highest value to our staff.”

A quiet, patient man, Jim brings a sense of calm and clarity to emotionally charged situations, which are common in hospice care. In short, he brings a deep understanding of humanity.

“A leader is one who never loses sight of the big picture and who communicates that picture through patience, encouragement and setting an example,” says Jim. “I carry out that vision of a leader by being true to myself—and by never taking myself too seriously.”

“Our chief want is someone who will inspire us to be what we know we could be.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson



**Facilitating Happy Endings**

**Frank Zwirlein, MSW**

*San Diego, Program 95 • Year joined VITAS: 2010*

**VITAS Award for Outstanding Service—Social Worker**

Despite his VITAS team’s high patient census—at one point, it had 118 patients—Frank always promptly files his initial comprehensive assessments, and he offers to help other social workers when they are stressed. “And he always calls to ask if I need anything,” adds Team Manager Sheilah Doyle.

When a patient told Frank that he had “no family, only a few friends,” Frank did some research and found an ex-wife, brother and daughter, all of whom lived in Boston and all of whom wished to reconnect with the patient.

Frank arranged for the estranged family members to visit the patient before he died. He also worked with Medi-Cal (California’s medical assistance program) to secure payment for the patient’s stay at a nursing home, so his family would not have to pay.

“The patient was declining rapidly, but the day before his family members were to arrive, he perked up and felt excited,” says Sheilah. “They all had a great visit, which Frank facilitated, and the patient died peacefully the next day.”

Described as a “calming influence,” Frank also facilitates a VITAS Alzheimer’s caregiver support group. “After he ‘subbed’ once, the group asked him to be their permanent facilitator,” remarks Sheilah. “Since then, the group has continued to grow.”



**Love Conquers All**

**Laurette Altidor, CNA**

*Dade-Monroe, Program 11 • Year joined VITAS: 2001*

**VITAS Award for Outstanding Service—Hospice Aide**

Known for her sweet smile and gentle manner, Laurette, who is Haitian, always finds a way to “break through barriers” while caring for her patients and their families.

“Even if she comes upon a situation where it is difficult to communicate due to language, she finds a way through with compassion, love and respect,” says Continuous Care Team Manager Adriana Infante, one of Laurette’s supervisors.

In one case, a 55-year-old male was, according to the staff at the nursing home where he lived, “not easy to care for,” writes Adriana. “But you would never know this by watching Laurette bathe, shave and care for him. The nursing home staff recognized this and commented on the ‘real hospice care’ that she was providing.”

To Laurette, providing “real hospice care” means striving to provide whatever her patients and their families need. When a patient told her he loved fruit but could not eat it because it was hard for him to swallow, “Laurette, who rides the bus to work, brought her own blender to the patient’s house to make him smoothies,” explains Adriana. “Laurette’s spirit of generosity surpasses her own needs. She puts the needs of others first.”





## Making a Lasting Impression

**Rocio Zamora, CHHA**

*San Francisco, Program 98 • Year Joined VITAS: 2007*

### VITAS Award for Outstanding Service—Hospice Aide

The moment Rocio meets a new patient, she hands him/her or the family caregiver a business card.

“She wants our patients and their families to know they are not alone in their journey and there is always a way to reach our team,” writes Team Manager Carmelita Ramas.

Communication is paramount for Rocio. She talks to her patients constantly, letting them know what she is about to do—brush their teeth, change their sheets—and inquiring as to how they are feeling, “so they get accustomed to her voice and they feel calm and comfortable,” says Carmelita.

With patients who cannot speak, Rocio is skilled at reading facial expressions and mannerisms. “Facial expressions speak volumes,” she says. “Even if a patient seems fine, for instance, because he or she is clean and seems comfortable, if I notice anything unusual in the eyes or body, I stay until I find out where the patient’s discomfort is.”

Not only are Rocio’s patients comfortable, “but their beds and their surroundings are left neat and tidy,” says Carmelita. “This work ethic is a reflection of Rocio—and of VITAS as a whole.”



## The ‘Very First Voice of VITAS’

**Tammy Rangel**

*Admissions Call Center, Midwest Region—Texas • Year Joined VITAS: 1994, 2008*

### VITAS Award for Outstanding Service—Admissions Coordinator

In Tammy’s world, VITAS patients and families come first—but so do referral sources.

“Tammy has a great rapport with our referral sources, who know her to be extremely efficient, thorough and detail-oriented,” says Customer Service Supervisor Amy Brown. She adds that Tammy recently participated in a meeting at the Dallas Veterans Administration, where she made face-to-face connections with the case managers with whom she speaks on a routine basis, thus establishing herself as their main—and most reliable—contact.

Tammy is known as the most seasoned VITAS admissions coordinator in Dallas. When the office experienced some turnover, she worked extra shifts, rearranged her vacation plans and trained five new admissions coordinators.

Describing Tammy as “the first voice of VITAS,” VITAS Representative Connie Morgan says, “She embraces her role with every call. Because of her knowledge about hospice care, families are immediately comfortable in talking to her about their loved ones.”



“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”

—Anne Frank



**He Knows When to 'Get Out of the Way'**

**Robert "Bobby" Grayson**

*Manager, VITAS HME Solutions®, San Antonio • Year Joined VITAS: 2009*

**VITAS Award for Excellence in Management**

VITAS in San Antonio had a problem. With a high volume of patients with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), or Lou Gehrig's disease, it was spending a great deal of money renting Bi-Level Positive Airway Pressure (Bi-PAP) units and contracting a Respiratory Therapist (RT) to install and demonstrate the units when needed.

VITAS wondered if it could operate more time- and cost-effectively if it bought its own Bi-PAP units, and if HME trained its Medical Service Technicians (MSTs) to set up and demonstrate the units, thus providing support to the RT. Bobby developed a pilot program to test the idea.

The pilot program yielded significant savings for VITAS in San Antonio, plus it enhanced VITAS' service to patients and families, says HME Director of East Coast Operations Rita Carroll. In fact, because of the pilot program's success, HME is rolling it out nationally in 2012.

Known for consistently coming in well below his quarterly operating budget, Bobby is often called upon to train and support new managers at other HME service centers. He does this while still putting VITAS patients and families first.

Bobby says of leadership: "A leader is defined by the people around him or her. He or she should teach, inspire and be a great communicator, listen and provide support—then know when to get out of the way."



**A Trusted and Valued Resource**

**Laura Raymond, Medicaid Case Worker\***

*Waterbury & Fairfield, Programs 41 & 43 • Year Joined VITAS: 2009*

**VITAS Award for Outstanding Customer Service**

Any VITAS job is challenging when done well, but taking on a newly created position to help navigate a new state law can be downright *hard*. Laura was up to the task.

When Connecticut passed a new Medicaid law in 2010, the rollout was "bumpy," remarks Waterbury Business Manager Lauri DeRiu. Confusion over the state's Medicaid documentation requirements resulted in lapses in service reimbursements. Meanwhile, VITAS had to—by law—pay its referral sources on a monthly basis for all Medicaid patients referred to it.

"We were making our payments, but our referral sources didn't understand the documentation procedures, so we weren't getting reimbursed," explains Lauri.

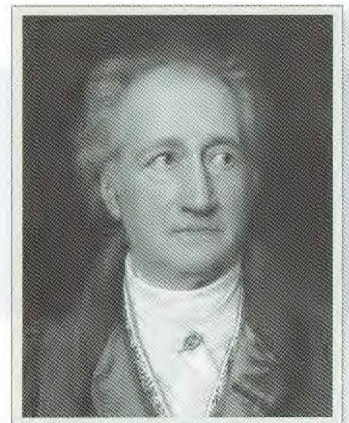
Laura, who had previously worked in accounting, got to work talking to VITAS' referring facilities, researching the state law, digging through hundreds of files and investigating hundreds of claims. In the end, she recovered all the Medicaid funds that VITAS had earned.

"Laura became a trusted and valued resource for both VITAS and our referral sources on issues related to the new state Medicaid program," says Waterbury General Manager Theresa Bacchuber.

*\*During the time between being nominated for and winning her award, Laura became the Business Manager for VITAS in Fairfield, Connecticut.*

**"A great person attracts great people and knows how to hold them together."**

*—Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe*





## She Doesn't Even Blink an Eye

### Anne Leermakers

*Central Florida, Program 17 • Year Joined VITAS: 2009*

### VITAS Award for Volunteer Achievement

Volunteer Manager Linda Marcantonio says the phrase “she didn’t even blink an eye” comes to mind when she thinks of how Anne skillfully manages one uncomfortable situation after another in her many patient and respite care assignments.

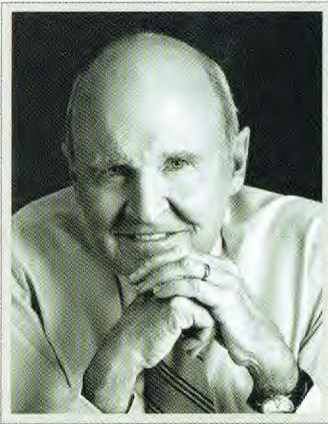
Anne has walked in on patients regurgitating, suffering from bloody noses, experiencing shortness of breath and ingesting inappropriate items (i.e., a napkin). In one case, “a cat jumped on her head and clung on for dear life,” says Linda, while in another, Anne sat—at a moment’s notice—for 13 hours with a patient who was actively dying and had no loved ones to sit with him.

“Anne has stayed committed in situations that would have sent others running,” says Linda. “She is that dedicated to our patients and their families.”

As an End-of-Life Specialty, Veterans, Paw Pals\*, Telephone Assurance Program (TAP), and patient and respite care volunteer, Anne is busy, having worked more than 900 hours in 2011.

“She also brings her patients little gifts such as hand lotion or baked goods, and she once bought school clothes for a patient’s three teenage sons,” says Linda.

Asked why she volunteers at VITAS, Anne, a retired real estate agent, says, “I felt it was time for me to give back rather than take.” We suspect Anne has accomplished her goal. Thank you, Anne!



“Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others.”

—Jack Welch

# Management and Sales & Marketing Awards

The winners in the Management and the Sales & Marketing portions of the Leadership Council are selected based on a number of different criteria, including overall program and/or team performance, as well as their achievement of specific goals and objectives. The thoughts the winners in these portions share reflect their responses to the question: **How do you define leadership?**



**Sheila Clark, Senior General Manager**

*Sacramento Valley, Program 99 • Year Joined VITAS: 1998*

*“A leader is a person who guides staff towards specific goals, showing the way by example and creating an environment in which others feel they are contributing to the overall ‘journey.’ I am but a reflection of the people I work with. I could not do my job without them!”*

Sheila credits her “wonderful team” for its double-digit growth in 2011. “We just do our best every day. If we have a setback, we pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off and move forward.”

One reason for the program’s steady success since it started in 2004 is its commitment to adapting to the community’s needs. When it became apparent three years ago, for example, that Sacramento needed more high-quality pediatric hospice care, Sheila formed a special “team within a team” to focus on providing that care. Today, the Sacramento program is the “go-to” resource for the community’s pediatric hospice patients and their families.

“There are challenges almost every day,” says Sheila. “We just work as a team to get to the solution.”



**Brian K. Davis, RN, CHPCA, Senior General Manager**

*San Francisco Bay, Program 98 • Year Joined VITAS: 2004*

*“I personally believe there is no room for mediocrity, only excellence. I therefore constantly ask myself if there is room for improvement, and if there is, a plan is developed and carried out to raise the bar.”*

In 2011, the San Francisco Bay program experienced a number of personnel changes at the senior management level. Knowing this could affect his 300-plus employees’ morale, “I worked to ensure that communication to all team members increased and that the remaining managers felt supported,” Brian explains.

“All of our team managers increased their time in the field to make sure everyone was receiving what they needed to carry out our mission of putting patients and families first,” he continues. “We got through that trying time, and now we have a stronger senior management team and program than ever before.”



**Carmen S. Demos, RN, MSN, MBA, Senior General Manager**

*Central Florida, Program 17 • Year Joined VITAS: 2003*

*“In the words of Lao Tzu, ‘Go to the people. Live with them. Learn from them. Love them. Start with what they know. Build with what they have. But with the best leaders, when the work is done, the task accomplished, the people will say, ‘We have done this ourselves.’”*

Central Florida faced many challenges in 2011, including that of a large referral source starting its own hospice company. “It was a whirlwind year! We had to reinvent ourselves a few times,” says Carmen.

The program created two new marketing positions: one dedicated to talking to physicians who either had never referred patients to VITAS or who had not done so in many years, and one to reach out solely to the 55-plus population.

No matter the challenge, Carmen looks to Lao Tzu, the father of Taoism, as her guide. “Getting my staff to visualize and achieve our goals requires skill to assist them in changing, dedication to keep them motivated and humility to recognize that the achievement is theirs, not mine. I just point the way.”



**Maureen Knips, RN, BSN, Senior General Manager**

*Dade-Monroe, Program 11 • Year Joined VITAS: 1986*

*“I believe in leading by example. I should know how equipment is ordered or how medications get to a patient’s home ... and I should always be open to learning. There’s an expression, ‘The fish rots from the head down.’ If our program is not looking good, I know who is responsible. I get out there and see that we get back on track. I own it.”*

Even as VITAS’ oldest and most established program, “Dade-Monroe continued to grow in 2011, even exceeding its projections for the year,” says Maureen. This occurred despite two competitors coming under new management and retooling their marketing campaigns.

“We made sure everyone from sales to patient care understood our overall strategic plan and worked together to continue to provide the highest quality care to patients and their families,” explains Maureen. “In presenting our strategic plan to our patient caregivers, we emphasized customer service and constant communication to make sure our patients’ and their families’ needs are met.” And it worked.



**Beatriz “Betty” Bel, RN, MHS, General Manager**

*Dade-Monroe, Program 11 • Year Joined VITAS: 2003*

*“Leadership is not about a position—it’s about relationships. Would I be able to call on my team at a moment’s notice and get our program’s needs met? Do I motivate my team in a positive way? I constantly ask myself these questions as a measurement of the job I’m doing.”*

Before joining VITAS, Betty thought she had “retired” from healthcare. The previous owner of several healthcare companies—none of which were hospice-related—had opened and was “happily” running a home décor shop. A headhunter then called her about a Patient Care Administrator position at VITAS.

“I took the job, but I thought I would just learn something new then go back to my store,” admits Betty. “My inspiration really came once I saw what VITAS is all about.” A year later, Betty sold her store.

“The years 2010 and 2011 were both years of growth for us,” says Betty. “I feel we have become ‘a well-oiled machine,’ which has allowed us to provide even better care for our patients and families while becoming more cost-effective and conscious of our resources.”



**Jennifer Nygaard, General Manager**

*Volusia-Flagler, Program 10 • Year Joined VITAS: 1997*

*“I try to lead by example. I never ask anyone to do something I would not do myself. From answering phones and taking referrals to stocking the supply room or cleaning the kitchen, we all pitch in—starting with me—to ensure our office is a welcoming place.”*

Jennifer started at VITAS as a weekend and evening Admissions Coordinator. After stints in the Southeast and West Coast regional call centers as Customer Service Supervisor then Director of Customer Service, she was promoted in 2007 to oversee Florida’s Volusia/Flagler program.

Perhaps because of her call-center training, one of Jennifer’s priorities is “returning calls to patients and their families, following up on Telecare tickets or service comments and sending hand-written notes,” especially if a patient or family has expressed a concern.

“I also try very hard to interact with all employees, attending team, sales or facility meetings and riding along with staff ... so everyone feels comfortable talking to me,” she says. “Members of my team often tell me they look forward to coming to work every day, and I understand this because it’s how I feel, too.”



**Lisa Wheeler, RN, BSN, CHPN, General Manager**

*Delaware, Program 60 • Year Joined VITAS: 2004*

*“A leader is not afraid to roll up her sleeves and get her hands dirty. As a general manager who also happens to be a nurse, I never ask any of my staff to do something I am not willing to do myself. If the program is two admissions short on the last day of the month, you can expect to see me in the field supporting the sales team!”*

When Lisa’s program recalculated, and significantly increased, its admissions goals midway through 2011 to reverse a growing Medicare cap accrual, she personally visited referral sources in a territory left vacant by a VITAS representative who was on leave. At the same time, the rest of her staff—even a volunteer—worked additional hours and weekends to spread the word about VITAS.

“Our new goals were a little intimidating, but with everyone’s collective efforts, we reversed the cap and met our monthly goals,” says Lisa, who started at VITAS as her program’s first team manager. “Everyone was exhausted, but we were also left with a great sense of pride and accomplishment. We met the challenge head-on, and we emerged as a stronger team because of the experience.”

“Never give up, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn.”

—Harriet Beecher Stowe





**Patricia Ladisa, MD, MPH, AAHPM, Medical Director**

*Northern Virginia, Program 63 • Year Joined VITAS: 2009*

*“At VITAS, our goal is to always give each patient the best quality care that we can, treat every case with respect and listen to our patients’ and families’ needs. I try to help my team in that endeavor by providing guidance and encouragement and by listening.”*



**Mohan Shah, MD, Medical Director**

*Brevard, Program 18 • Year Joined VITAS: 2008*

*“As stated by John C. Maxwell, ‘A great leader’s courage to fulfill his vision comes from passion, not position.’ It’s not the position of being Medical Director that makes a difference. It’s the passion of following the VITAS values in my day-to-day activities.”*



**Edith “Edie” Beroldi, RN, Patient Care Administrator**

*Broward, Program 14 • Year Joined VITAS: 1993*

*“A leader is defined by knowledge, ability, compassion, flexibility and strength of conviction. I come in to work every day trying to do my best, and I encourage and help my team to find the best in themselves as well. This way we know we are all giving our best to patients and their families.”*



**Susan Boucher, RN, CHPN, Patient Care Administrator**

*Sacramento Valley, Program 99 • Year Joined VITAS: 2008*

*“When patients and families receive the high-quality care they deserve—and we strive daily to provide—this increases admissions and helps VITAS maintain a high profile in the community. Word-of-mouth referrals are priceless. I love it when I hear that a patient or family is requesting us as their hospice provider because another friend, family member or neighbor previously had our services and recommended us.”*



**Teresita “Tery” Mesa, RN, Patient Care Administrator**

*Dade-Monroe, Program 11 • Year Joined VITAS: 1999*

*“True leaders aren’t leaders for the title; they are leaders because they believe in their work and they believe in those they lead so together they might reach a goal. At VITAS, I have an open door policy. I am happy to help, guide, teach, assist or just plain listen to anyone who is in need of assistance, whether they report to me or not. The best feeling for me is when I teach someone something and they grasp it and use it. That’s validating.”*



**Dana A. Reedy, RN, CHPN, Patient Care Administrator**

*San Gabriel Cities, Program 96 • Year Joined VITAS: 2002*

*“As PCA, I am responsible to our patients, referral sources and our employees. This requires a high level of participation on my part and being available to all. It also requires communication and the sharing of our successes and mistakes at all levels. I’ve also learned to say ‘thank you’ frequently, be flexible, to laugh at myself and to be humble.”*



**Diana Smith, RN, BSN, Patient Care Administrator**

*Palm Beach, Program 16 • Year Joined VITAS: 1993*

*“A leader listens, communicates well, is trustworthy, has a clear sense of direction and is able to influence others to accomplish an objective. On a daily basis I help guide my team to understand the company’s overall business strategy and show them how important they are in the achievement of those objectives.”*



**Elizabeth “Betty” A. Bartus, RN, BSN, Team Manager**

*Philadelphia, Program 61 • Year Joined VITAS: 2001*

*“As a leader of my team, I show respect for each team member, recognizing each person’s knowledge base and life experiences as part of what they bring to the care of our patients. We collaborate as a team in providing the best care we can for our patients and their families. We all help one another as we meet our patients and their families’ needs. As the manager, I mentor staff on a daily basis.”*



**Sheilah G. Doyle, LVN, Team Manager**

*San Diego, Program 95 • Year Joined VITAS: 1993*

*“Our team has carried a load of more than 100 patients for a year, so it’s been a challenging time! We recently gathered for a barbecue, just to relax and replenish our batteries. I made sure each person was recognized for his or her accomplishments, because I believe this is important. If it weren’t for my supportive team—and a sense of humor—I would not have made it this far.”*



**Donna Fischer, RN, Team Manager**

*Central Florida, Program 17 • Year Joined VITAS: 2001*

*“A leader is someone who is available, open-minded and even-tempered. My goal is to always listen to my team and our patients and their families. My first team manager at VITAS was always available and provided invaluable guidance, often with a lot of humor. She actually made this job look easy ... boy, was I shocked!”*





**Cynthia S. Lezama, RN, CNM, Team Manager**

*Dade-Monroe, Program 11 • Year Joined VITAS: 1999*

*“I strive to develop trust among my team’s members through open communication and by encouraging the use of ‘we,’ not ‘you’ or ‘me.’ I also try to develop leadership skills among the staff so as to decrease attrition and increase productivity. I strive to effectively resolve issues, solve problems and create optimal outcomes for the organization.”*



**Teresita “Terry” Miranda, RN, BSN, Team Manager**

*Orange County, Program 93 • Year Joined VITAS: 1998*

*“Our program supports each other and lives by the VITAS Values. We take care of each other and do our best today and even better tomorrow.”*



**Jean M. Ortiz, RN, Team Manager**

*Milwaukee, Program 39 • Year Joined VITAS: 1998*

*“A leader is a person with a strong work ethic who leads by example and guides his or her staff to be leaders in their own right within their scope of practice. Every day, I make a commitment to the staff I manage and to the patients we take care of to give the best care and support we can.”*



**Karen Preston, RN, Team Manager**

*San Gabriel Cities, Program 96 • Year Joined VITAS: 1994*

*“Almost everyone needs some recognition for the efforts they put forth every day. Each employee should be respected for the strengths they bring to the team and assisted in improving their weaknesses.”*



**Diane Robbins, RN, Team Manager**

*Chicagoland South, Program 37 • Year Joined VITAS: 1994*

*“A leader is a teacher who takes time to instruct others. A leader is a team player, always willing to help others, and a leader drives the team with a positive attitude.”*



**Carla Schut-King, RN, Team Manager**

*Broward, Program 14 • Year Joined VITAS: 1994*

*“A good leader must be fair, listen and be compassionate, but also know when to draw the line. There should be room for growth for employees. Mistakes should be treated with importance but also be used as training tools, as this helps people learn. I also believe in giving praise when it’s deserved.”*



**Lisa Vershaw, RN, Team Manager**

*Dallas, Program 21 • Year Joined VITAS: 2001*

*“A leader is someone who gives his or her staff the tools they need to do their job on a day-to-day basis. I carry this out by continually educating my staff so they are prepared for the challenges they might face every day.”*



**Sherri Taylor, RN, Senior Director of Market Development**

*San Gabriel Cities, Program 96 • Year Joined VITAS: 2001*

*“As a leader, my job is to cultivate success and encourage my team to grow in ways they may or may not have thought possible. I envision what can be, not just what is. At VITAS, we raise the bar and set the standard (for hospice) in our community. We are a mission-driven company that never loses sight of ‘Patients and families come first.’”*



**Judy Wallace, Senior Director of Market Development**

*Dallas, Program 21 • Year Joined VITAS: 1995*

*“A leader inspires others to achieve goals beyond what they thought they could. I daily try to live this by listening to my representatives, treating them like my customers and helping them find creative solutions to obstacles. I am responsible for empowering my representatives to spread the message of hospice. Instilling this passion in my representatives is what keeps me motivated after 17 years with VITAS.”*



**Nancy Boulter, Director of Market Development**

*Palm Beach, Program 16 • Year Joined VITAS: 2009*

*“With a sales team of high achievers and Type A personalities, my job has been to generate the kind of passion that leads each one of them to wake up every day with a mission: helping one patient and one family through one of the most difficult times of their lives. If they live with this passion 24/7, the numbers will follow.”*



**Ursula Cutler, RN, Director of Market Development**

*Central Florida, Program 17 • Year Joined VITAS: 2004*

*“It is important to encourage, motivate and inspire while promoting a cohesive team that works together as just that—a team. Eighteen great minds working together for the success of the program are much more powerful than one. At VITAS, we are ‘selling’ the promise to be there at the most difficult time in people’s lives, and we are asking them to trust us with their loved ones. It is an honor to bring this invaluable resource into people’s lives.”*



**Jay Henderson, Director of Market Development**

*Sacramento Valley, Program 99 • Year Joined VITAS: 2009*

*“It takes a uniquely gifted individual to care for those who are dying, and yet, our caregivers do it every day—with care, compassion and humanity. I get to talk about these amazing people all day, every day. I have the distinct honor of representing a very special group of people and the service they provide. When our efforts result in someone getting admitted onto hospice and benefitting from the care our people provide ... Well, it just doesn’t get any better than that.”*



*“The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionably integrity. Without it, no real success is possible, no matter whether it is on ... a football field, in an army or in an office.”*

*—Dwight D. Eisenhower*



**Eileen McDermott, RN, Admissions Manager**

*Broward, Program 14 • Year Joined VITAS: 2000*

*“I worked in the field for 10 years, so I understand what the admissions nurses go through daily. I can therefore be a good resource for them. My staff is wonderful; they help the public see the quality of care that VITAS can provide. A bit of humor never hurts, either!”*



**Daron Darnell, Senior VITAS Representative**

*Dallas, Program 21 • Year Joined VITAS: 2008*

*“In my mind, true leaders go out of their way to boost the confidence of everyone around them. If people believe in themselves, it’s amazing what they can accomplish. While part of my job is about hitting certain ‘numbers,’ I could not accomplish that without really believing in the service we provide. I truly believe I am bringing peace of mind to all involved in hospice care, from referring physicians to patients and their families.”*



**Meredith Kelley, Senior VITAS Representative**

*Atlanta Metro, Program 70 • Year Joined VITAS: 2007*

*“My job is unique because I have the opportunity to bring hope to providers, families and patients in the midst of a very trying time. I see my job as a ministry. Every new challenge brings forth another chapter in someone’s life, and I am honored to be a part of that.”*



**Heather Mullally, Senior VITAS Representative**

*East Bay, Program 91 • Year Joined VITAS: 2005*

*“I was inspired to work in hospice care from a personal experience. It’s very rewarding to support patients and families during the most important time of their lives. Working for VITAS is not just a job, but a chance to support and comfort patients and families.”*



**Concepcion “Conchita” Tovar-Bas, RN, Senior VITAS Representative**

*Dade-Monroe, Program 11 • Year Joined VITAS: 2002*

*“I am never satisfied with just what is expected; I push myself to the next level. A leader develops and adapts ‘best practices’ from around him or her, taking what works and getting rid of what doesn’t. In hospice, we say, ‘Every day is a gift,’ but actually, I am on the receiving end of that gift. That is why I love what I do.”*



**Toni Abad, RN, BSN, VITAS Representative**

*San Diego, Program 95 • Year Joined VITAS: 1998, 2010*

*“Leadership is about finding value in your team, encouraging communication, brainstorming daily with case managers and being open. I lead by example. Also, being passionate about what I do and believing in what I sell is critical to me. I am there for my VITAS team through thick and thin, and they know they can call me any time.”*



**Raya AbdulBaki, VITAS Representative**

*Houston, Program 27 • Year Joined VITAS: 2010*

*“My job at VITAS is not to ‘sell’ hospice but to create a change, a shift in the paradigm of care for those with terminal illness, so they have a choice in the quality of their lives at the end of life. In that way, we are all leaders taking on a challenge and trying to inspire change around us.”*



**Jodi Anderson, VITAS Representative**

*San Fernando-Ventura, Program 97 • Year Joined VITAS: 2009*

*“Many times I have heard the statement, ‘It takes a special person to do your job.’ My response has always been, ‘I feel I was made for this position and take solace in knowing I am helping to bring clarity, comfort and support to patients and their families when they are thrust into the uncertainty that comes with the end-of-life journey.’”*



**Jay Barnett, VITAS Representative**

*San Fernando-Ventura, Program 97 • Year Joined VITAS: 2008*

*“If my job was only about making numbers, I would not be here. My heart breaks when a patient is admitted to another hospice because the referring physician has a vested interest in that hospice. I serve people. It makes me tremble when I see a lack of care, compassion or commitment by other agencies. VITAS isn’t numbers-drive—it’s care-driven. I believe that with my whole heart.”*



**Phyllis Blackmore, VITAS Representative**

*San Gabriel Cities, Program 96 • Year Joined VITAS: 2010*

*“Being open to new thoughts and strategies allows me to help VITAS meet the needs of those we serve. Many of the people I work with assume I don’t have admissions goals to obtain. That’s how effectively VITAS has proven it puts patients and families first—not quotas. Our focus is on quality care and doing the right thing. When that happens, everything else falls into place.”*



**Makia Burgess, VITAS Representative**

*Waterbury, Program 41 • Year Joined VITAS: 2009*

*“As one who saw the benefits of hospice when my father was sick, I think of a Maya Angelou quote: ‘You can only be truly accomplished at something you love. Don’t make money the goal. Instead, pursue things you love ... All the other tangible rewards will come as a result. At VITAS, our purpose is not to ‘make numbers,’ but to work hard to help as many families as we can because of the gift hospice provides.”*



**Erlinda V. Calapini, RN, VITAS Representative**

*San Fernando-Ventura, Program 97 • Year Joined VITAS: 2003*

*“Good leaders must have an understanding of who they are, what they know and what they can do. I daily implement my vision of leadership by maintaining a clear sense of my own personal values—giving first with no expectations of getting in return. With or without a quota to meet, I deal with patients and families with that value as my guide.”*



**Jomel Duldulao, VITAS Representative**

*San Gabriel Cities, Program 96 • Year Joined VITAS: 2010*

*“Not all hospices are created equal. When I meet with a physician, case manager or social worker, I paint a picture as to how VITAS is a partner in meeting their patients’ primary needs in comfort care. I make it a point to share how VITAS differs, how we help everyone involved in the end-of-life care process.”*



**Larry Endacott, VITAS Representative**

*Sacramento Valley, Program 99 • Year Joined VITAS: 2009*

*“As a senior sales representative, it is my responsibility to help train and educate my sales colleagues. As sales people, we are driven to succeed and meet our goals. When we are successful, our program is successful. But more importantly, our patients and their families are the true beneficiaries.”*



**Kathy Evans, VITAS Representative**

*Central Florida, Program 17 • Year Joined VITAS: 2009*

*“A leader is positive, driven to succeed despite barriers and leads by example. I feel blessed to be able to provide education regarding services that patients and families need. Having lost a loved one who was not on hospice care, I feel I could have benefited from our kind of service. It’s an honor to help each and every patient and his and her family receive quality end-of-life care.”*



**Sarah Masternick, VITAS Representative**  
*San Diego, Program 95 • Year Joined VITAS: 2009*

*“Reaching my goals at VITAS comes naturally, as I am committed to serving as a resource for my healthcare partners in the community. To many, I am the face of VITAS, a solution-finder, a hand-holder, an educator and a warm smile. When I’m introduced to a patient or family, my job feels less like sales and more like philanthropy, because I believe hospice services contribute to humanity’s greater good.”*



**Ida McQuilliams, VITAS Representative**  
*San Francisco Bay, Program 98 • Year Joined VITAS: 2005*

*“Both of my parents were on VITAS’ service, which allowed me to experience firsthand the complete circle of compassion that end-of-life care provides to patients and their families. I really do have the answer for those who are desperate to help their loved one’s journey be comfortable and peaceful.”*



**Angelia P. Moore, VITAS Representative**  
*Dallas, Program 21 • Year Joined VITAS: 2009*

*“While ‘numbers’ play a role in my job, they also paint a picture—of how many lives I have touched and how many distressed patients and families I have helped. Knowing that I have helped someone each and every day is fulfilling to me. I see myself as an ‘ambassador’ for hospice and for VITAS.”*



**Wrendi Morris, VITAS Representative**  
*Palm Beach, Program 16 • Year Joined VITAS: 2008*

*“What drives my motivation at VITAS is my own past experience in refusing hospice care for my father. I did not understand it because the hospice benefit was not explained appropriately, and I felt no warmth during the meeting with the director of nursing. I carry that memory with me every day.”*



**Rita Marie Nunez, RN, VITAS Representative**  
*Dade-Monroe, Program 11 • Year Joined VITAS: 2010*

*“A leader understands a goal, clearly and effectively communicates that goal to the team and instills ownership of the goal through appreciation and recognition. Though ‘meeting our numbers’ can be stressful, the task is made easier knowing we are helping patients and families with such quality end-of-life care.”*



**Margaret "Meg" Sheetz, VITAS Representative**  
*Chicagoland South, Program 37 • Year Joined VITAS: 2006*

*“Working at VITAS is a privilege for which there is no measurement. While I am always aware of the ‘numbers’ in my job, reaching more patients and educating more people is what really drives me. I was raised by a VITAS nurse, so I was raised to believe that a life of service is an expectation. Working at VITAS allows me to live that value.”*



**Diane Slabaugh, VITAS Representative**  
*East Bay, Program 91 • Year Joined VITAS: 2007*

*“A leader is a person with a ‘let’s figure out a way to get this done’ attitude. While my job requires that I meet certain objectives, it is so much more. I help patients and families every day. I teach physicians, case managers and social workers how to make a very difficult time as good as possible. Hospice is a gift I want people to know about. We don’t sell widgets—we provide a lifeline at a profoundly difficult time.”*



**Mark Sorensen, VITAS Representative**  
*San Francisco Bay, Program 98 • Year Joined VITAS: 2010*

*“I share my ideas and successes with my team to help cultivate success throughout the entire office, not just for myself. I don’t think about ‘making numbers’ as much as making sure the people in our community learn about VITAS and understand the options they deserve. Working for an organization where everyone strongly believes in its services is a great feeling.”*



**Evelyn Subido, VITAS Representative**  
*San Francisco Bay, Program 98 • Year Joined VITAS: 2007*

*“A leader to me is someone who exudes success but also shows humility. A leader is someone who shows initiative, cultivates innovation ... draws a team together and takes personal responsibility, even if mistakes occur. People who think my job is about fulfilling quotas do not fully understand the benefits of hospice—not just for the patient, but for the families who need the spiritual and emotional support it provides.”*



**Patricia "Tricia" Ulrich, VITAS Representative**  
*Sacramento Valley, Program 99 • Year Joined VITAS: 2010*

*“Being a leader in sales and marketing means being a jack of all trades. Leading means gathering information from several sources, calling upper management for insight and finding a solution. Leading means staying calm and focused in some situations and responsive and supportive in others. Years of developing the ability to ‘hear’ the customer has helped me approach each situation individually.”*





**Wendy Walsh, BSW, VITAS Representative**  
*Central Florida, Program 17 • Year Joined VITAS: 2004*

*“A true leader is someone who gains respect from external and internal customers by consistently displaying integrity and a high standard of ethics and compassion. Practicing with integrity and compassion wins over the toughest of customers ... and VITAS consistently displays these values.”*



**Alice Zirolu, VITAS Representative**  
*San Gabriel Cities, Program 96 • Year Joined VITAS: 2009*

*“My mission is to educate and share the value of hospice for patients and their families. Nothing gives me more satisfaction than when a family writes a letter to VITAS saying they really felt hospice was the best decision they made for their loved one. I am proud to work for VITAS and to be part of such an amazing company.”*



**Justine Bailey, Community Liaison**  
*Volusia-Flagler, Program 10 • Year Joined VITAS: 2008*

*“As a public safety liaison, I work closely with local emergency services personnel (emergency medical techs, paramedics and firefighters), educating them about hospice and VITAS. Through the relationships I have forged, VITAS has become a leader in the community, not only in end-of-life care but as the ‘go-to’ partner in senior care. I have the best job at VITAS!”*



**Patrick D. Bullocks, Community Liaison**  
*Dallas, Program 21 • Year Joined VITAS: 2007*

*“A leader is driven to affect lives in a positive way. When I first started at VITAS, I proposed reaching out to segments of our diverse community through a heritage gospel radio station. Three years later, VITAS is the only hospice provider in the community with its own health show, drawing more call-ins than any other health segment the station has ever had. Using innovative ways to reach out has helped make VITAS the most trusted hospice provider!”*



**Carole Quackenbush, RN, Community Liaison**  
*Cincinnati, Program 51 • Year Joined VITAS: 1993, 2006*

*“I carry out leadership at VITAS by educating our patient care staff about the unique needs of military veterans at the end of life and the ways we can better meet those needs. My mission is to ensure that every veteran I encounter receives the benefits he or she deserves. VITAS is unique because we are allowed to think outside the box in meeting our patients’ and families’ needs.”*

# 2011 Gold-Level National Leadership Council Winners

## **VITAS Award for Outstanding Service—Team Physician**

Sara Abruzzi, DO, Philadelphia, Program 61  
Susan Weathers, MD, Fort Worth, Program 24

## **VITAS Award for Outstanding Service—RN**

Jean Perillo, RN, New Jersey Shore, Program 65  
Daisy Valdes-Figueroa, RN, Broward, Program 14

## **VITAS Award for Outstanding Service—LPN/LVN**

Lino Galdo, LPN, Chicagoland NW, Program 31

## **VITAS Award for Outstanding Service—Chaplain**

Daniel Situka, MDiv, Houston, Program 27

## **VITAS Award for Outstanding Service—Social Worker**

Benito Salinas, LCSW, San Fernando/Ventura, Program 97

## **VITAS Award for Outstanding Service—Hospice Aide**

Jennifer Lindsay, Broward, Program 14  
Ruth Ann Robinson, CNA, Brevard, Program 18

## **VITAS Award for Outstanding Service—Admissions Nurse**

Jaclyn Morgan, RN, SE Michigan, Program 53

## **VITAS Award for Excellence in Management**

Patricia Adams, Volunteer Services Manager, Volusia-Flagler, Program 10

## **VITAS Award for Outstanding Customer Service**

Amanda Olson, Patient Care Secretary, Pittsburgh, Program 62

## **VITAS Award for Volunteer Achievement**

Ingrid Evans, East Bay, Program 91



VITAS Values

*Patients and families come first.*

*We take care of each other.*

*I'll do my best today and do even better tomorrow.*

*I am proud to make a difference.*

