“CELEBRATING THE SHINING STARS”

SPEECH FOR

JESSICA HERMANN

Hello everyone and welcome to this year’s “star studded” celebration. I would like to thank all of you for being here and participating in this wonderful evening, and before we get to the festivities and entertainment, I wanted to share a few thoughts. (**If there are any people who helped coordinate the event, you can acknowledge them here**) First, I would like to thank \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for doing such a great job in organizing tonight’s event. Your special touches make this evening even more magical! This time of year is traditionally awards season throughout the entertainment industry, and although we’ve all been trained to **oooo** and **ahhhh** as we see the glitter and glow of celebrities as they work their magic on the red carpet, honestly speaking, **YOU** are the stars!! You brighten our days and it’s no wonder this place is so “incandescent” tonight! This room is glowing with excitement!! The love and support and true, heartfelt care that each one of you gives so selflessly to others who really need it is the real inspiration, and the devotion you give day in and day out make each one of you shining examples of what it means to be a good and giving person. A man named Og Mandino said, “I love the light for it shows me the way, yet I will endure the darkness because it shows me the stars.” Each one of you lights the way in what would otherwise be the darkness that our patients and clients have to endure, and to spread that light where it is needed most is a rare and true gift.

Although I am not a scientist, we have learned many lessons from them. They have taught us that stars are actually the result of a mixture of gases created millions of years ago. What we see in the night sky has existed long before we even are aware of the light it shines down on us. In much the same way, all of you, our employees, and especially this year’s honorees, have spent many years and lots of selfless devotion and hard work caring for our clients and their families, tending to our facilities, and ultimately making life more comfortable and bearable for all of us. And like those stars in the night sky that inspire us and guide us, each one of you has managed to “work your magic.” You began to refine your skills long before you even came to work with us at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**please use the name of your company**). The positive impact each one of you makes on every facet of this company, its employees, clients, and facilities allow us to grow and make an even greater and more positive impact on our community and those who really need our services. Without the unique light that each one of you shines on our mission, we literally would not be the same.

The racecar driver Mario Andretti once said something that really stayed with me. He said, “Desire is the key to motivation, but it’s determination and commitment to an unrelenting pursuit of your goal, a commitment to excellence, that will enable you to attain the success you seek.” I want to acknowledge each one of you for your desire, motivation, determination and commitment to your responsibilities and to our facilities and most importantly our patients. Your dedication to the mission and goals of this organization allows it to be great and to grow, and so to enable us to serve more people who really need us and the services we provide. In an era when everyone’s lives are becoming increasingly more complicated and involved, you provide an oasis of care and support, and the benefits of that irreplaceable human touch are really immeasurable. People heal and survive because someone cares, and that “someone” is **YOU**.

I think we are all fairly aware that although all of us are getting older, we face an unprecedented trend now that the first “Baby Boomers” have begun to turn 65. The near future is going to see those boomers “rock and roll” into their senior years and although we know our friends and family in that age group are younger in spirit and more vital than any generation that has preceded them, they too, will soon be faced with the option of choosing whether or when to enter long term care facilities. Predictions for the future of long term care tell us that the senior population is increasing dramatically and statistics show us that in less than 20 years, the older adult population will be double what it was in the year 2,000. People are living longer and so there will be more people to care for. I am proud to say that all of you are doing fantastic jobs at setting precedents, laying strong foundations, and leading the way for even greater opportunities in the health care industry well into the future!! We are so proud of all of you!

Someone once said, “Dedication is not what others expect of you, it is what you can give to others.” For each one of our honorees, it is clear what is expected of them. Each one was hired for the job he or she holds. Each one has a job description and a manager to report to. Life would have been simple and a lot easier had each one of these fine colleagues done their jobs, gotten their pay, and went home to relax, but that is not the case with our STARS. Without exception, each one of our STARS invests the most precious commodity they possess, and that is their heart and soul into the jobs they perform every day. And it doesn’t matter if one is washing the floor, or the other is preparing meals for the patients, or someone else may be folding blankets, all of you perform your job with pride and compassion, knowing that what you do makes a tremendous difference in the lives of our patients and our co-workers alike. I call that TRUE dedication!!

The famous football coach Vince Lombardi taught us, “The quality of a person’s life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor. It is clear to us that you STARS, have earned your “stripes.” The level of commitment that each one of you demonstrates on a daily basis is the real light that guides **us** and makes **you** so unique.

In preparing for this evening, I’ve been thinking a lot about the word, “star”- its shape, its symbolism, and what it means to us. We know it’s an essential component in our national flag. A star has angles and points and people are naturally drawn to the symbolism of a star. We associate stars with excellence, vision, and distinction. Every star is unique unto itself, and the stars in Hollywood exemplify an ideal of beauty, talent and that certain undefined “something.” As I thought about this, I realized that every definition of the word “star” really does define each one of you. It is because of this that I wanted to create a new definition (or acronym) for the word STAR. In honor of tonight’s celebration and honorees, I’d like to propose that to us, from now on, when we think of the word “STAR,” it will mean:

**S**UPPORTIVE

**T**RUSTWORTHY

**A**LWAYS

**R**EADY

With you on our team and by our side, may we all go forth into the future and serve our patients, their families, and our community with enthusiasm, commitment and compassion. Thank you all for all that you do, and may 2013 be the best year ever for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_!! Congratulations!!

Thank you all!