

Michelle's Story

“A lamp is not set under a basket, but upon a lampstand and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light shine before men, that they may see you good works.” Matthew 5:15, 16.

At one time in the not so distant past that would have been the eventuality of some of our clients, hidden away, removed for mainstream society. Life has improved. They are letting their lights shine.

I have worked at McLaughlin House as a licensed practical nurse since 2005. As a healthcare professional, I consider mine to be the role as caretaker, teacher, counselor and other functions as needed. In working with our eight residents, I realize that there are times when our roles are reversed.

Those are the moments that we both come to see the abilities our clients possess. On many occasions they might not realize the impact they make on the lives around them. In other cases, they are acutely aware of the gifts they have to share.

One gentleman adds flavor to his community through his outgoing personality and humor. Everyone in town seems to know him. In addition, he is an artist working with the group Outside the Lines. He has a tendency to speak very slowly.

I learned one morning not to relate that with thinking slowly. He had come out to tell me he had ants in his room. When I entered his bathroom, ants had been attracted to the type of paint that he had stored improperly. As we started cleaning, he stated with his dry wit, “These ants have a ‘taste’ for art”.

When I started working at McLaughlin House there was a fascinating resident. At the time, all I knew was that she spoke several languages and had suffered a CVA (stroke).

Over the years, I came to learn that she played in symphonies internationally, studied under Piaget and served as a professor at a university. She seemed to have lived a rich, fulfilling life.

Again, mistakenly, I thought she “had” lived a full life. Recently, as a volunteer, she has entered into the teaching profession again, assisting elementary students with reading challenges.

These are just two small accounts of people that are letting their abilities shine. Between our consumers at McLaughlin and Warren House we’ve had volunteers giving back at hospitals and churches.

Others are part-time employees contributing to the local economy. They have shown how much they enhance society, not only educating the general community, but those who work directly with them in the healthcare field. They continue to educate, entertain, inspire and let their abilities shine.