

I've worked as a support staff my entire adult life in some capacity. Almost 20 years! I've been blessed to spend the last 14 with the people that call Polk Center their home. I spent six years in a nursing home and this is not meant to bash nursing homes, but Polk Center is amazing! I can confidently say in a matter of seconds that if I had to place a loved one it would be at Polk Center if that were an option. It's hard to work in someone's home 8 plus hours a day, often times spending more time at a "job" than at home with my other family, and not love them like family. So as a self-appointed family member to many I need to be their voice. Why on Earth would you take someone away from the life that they love, the home that they love, to place them somewhere you think is better suited to their needs. Especially since you've not taken the time to sit down with them and let them be included in this major life decision. We've been taught to always offer choices! Where's that option now?

The staff at Polk Center are very well trained. Training you don't get elsewhere is offered and given so often. Countless hours are spent receiving training to always make sure staff are up-to-date on the policies and procedures, CPR, how to use adaptive equipment, lifts, safety mechanics, how to best serve people with dual diagnosis as well as how to best serve the folks that live in our center. Our folks receive so many services that will not be afforded to them elsewhere. They have access to 24/7 doctors care as well as nurses. They have physical and occupational therapy. They have access to speech and language specialists as well as an audiologist. There are dieticians and psychologists all at their fingertips without ever having to leave the campus. Let's talk about leaving the campus, everyone is required to get out at least once a month. There are countless opportunities to go to ball games, zoos, aviaries, museums, amusement parks, shopping centers and out to eat just to name a few. They are very much a part of this community they do business with the locals, their jobs benefit many and wherever there are big events who do you see there, you are guaranteed to see somebody who calls Polk Center home! To say that they are not already a huge part of this community, their Community is a very false statement. This is their community where they live their everyday lives.

The care and compassion shown to each other at Polk is another thing. It really is a phenomenal place to be. When someone is sick or just plain down and out, in a true fashion of friendship we rally to support each other. Whether it's cooking someone's favorite foods, staff getting a parade of someone's favorite vehicles, or something as simple as getting someone their favorite decorations to brighten their day, you see that happened here. It really is one of the greatest communities to be a part of.

I know life isn't fair, but I'm just not sure how removing someone from their home when they don't want to leave is fair or right. It's a huge disservice to someone to remove them from a life that they are thriving in and love. Please don't take this decision lightly, look at the people and know that they are not just numbers. They are not dollar signs they are loved and cared for very much.

Thank You!

Nicole Oniboni