



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 11, 2009

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Ocala Nursing Assistant Wins Statewide Essay Contest

Julia Ferrera, CNA, honored for her personal story submission about working with long term care residents

Tallahassee, FL – The Florida Health Care Association (FHCA) today recognized Julia Ferrera, a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) with Palm Garden of Ocala, as the 2009 winner of the Association's annual CNA Essay Contest. Julia's entry, which wins her \$500 in scholarship monies from FHCA, was a heartwarming submission focusing on this year's contest theme, "Human Moments." CNAs across the state were asked to share personal stories about how they create and use face-to-face interactions with residents, family members and/or staff to facilitate successful outcomes for residents and the workplace.

Ferrera's account of her experience with a former Palm Garden of Ocala resident, Lillian, told of how the little details she offered in caring for Lillian made a tremendous impact not only on how Lillian lived out her final days at the facility, but how Ferrera would view her role as a caregiver for our state's elders. Below is an excerpt from Ferrera's winning entry:

"In the fast paced world of long term care living, it is difficult for the CNA to take extra time with residents to learn what the extended needs of an individual are. I met a woman who forever changed the perception of the job that I do. Although she has passed this life, Lillian will forever remain in my heart and I will tell her story over and over... In giving my undivided time to Lillian, I learned a new way to communicate without words but with friendship, love, and laughter. In the last months of her life, I know that I gave Lillian what she needed to feel good and important. When she would lean over and bury her head in my shoulder and hold me, I knew she felt safe and she trusted me. These experiences I had with Lillian prepared me for future members I will care for and gave me confidence that I can make a difference in any type of resident's life."

FHCA's CNA Essay Contest asks Certified Nursing Assistants working in the Association's member nursing homes to submit up to 500 words about their personal experiences surrounding the designated theme. The program is held annually to help raise awareness about the work done by these invaluable caregivers, and the winning entries are announced in conjunction with Nursing Assistants Week, June 11-18, 2009.

Ferrera was honored as the first place winner for the 2009 CNA Essay Contest. Other winners included:

- **Second Place:** Renee Livernois, CNA, Woodbridge Rehabilitation and Health Center in Tampa, FL
- **Third Place:** Castel Anderson, St. John's Nursing Center in Lauderdale Lakes, FL
- **Honorable Mention:** Lucinda Moring, Macclenny Nursing and Rehab Center in Macclenny, FL

To read more from Ferrera's or the additional winning entries, visit the FHCA Web site at www.fhca.org.

ABOUT THE FLORIDA HEALTH CARE ASSOCIATION

The Florida Health Care Association (FHCA) is a federation which serves nearly 1,000 members and represents over 500 long term care facilities that provide skilled nursing care, short-term rehab, assisted living and other services to the frail elderly and individuals with disabilities in Florida. FHCA was founded on the premise that its members have a moral obligation to the residents they serve, and since 1954 the Association has worked diligently to improve quality of care and quality of life for the state's growing elder care population. For more information about the Florida Health Care Association, visit www.fhca.org.

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Representing the Florida Long Term Care Community

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