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National Nurses Week: Brianna Spak-Heichel

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By Patrick Kernan - pkernan@timesleader.com



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LaVerne Seidle is pushed by Brianna Spak-Heichel at the Highland Park Living Facility. Aimee Dilger|Times Leader - Aimee Digler | Times Leader



Brianna Spak-Heichel signs off on PCACHrissy Eltora's book at the Highland Park Living Facility. Aimee Dilger|Times Leader - Aimee Digler | Times Leader



LaVerne Seidle talks with Nurse Brianna Spak-Heichel at the Highland Park Living Facility. Aimee Dilger|Times Leader - Aimee Digler | Times Leader

WILKES-BARRE TWP. — At Highland Park Senior Living, it's important that the guests feel less like patients and more like family.

That's according to Brianna Spak-Heichel, one of the nurses at the center.

"These people are not just patients; we are working in their home," Spak-Heichel said as she talked over the phone with a Times Leader reporter last week.

Spak-Heichel, 29, says she's keenly aware of the importance of her role in her patients' lives.

"Not only do you do nursing, you're experiencing life with these people:

their happy moments, their sad moments," she said.

The nurse, who has been with the senior center for a year and a few months, is a certified dementia practitioner. She said that, while it's a "tough position," it's something she always wanted to do.

"I started off as a dementia nurse when I first graduated," she said. "It's just sort of where my heart

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was.”

Spak-Heichel works in the dementia unit at Highland Park. For her, the most important goal is to bring her patients even a little bit of happiness.

“They might not remember breakfast or yesterday, but as long as you can make them happy for a few moments, that’s what matters,” she said. “At least for that moment, they’re happy.”

For Spak-Heichel, that moment is supremely important, and she structures much of her day around how to make that moment happen.

She said her biggest hobby is crafting, saying that she loves doing crafting activities with the residents. She’s also recently organized a craft fair at Highland Park which directly benefited the Alzheimer’s Association’s Walk to End Alzheimer’s.

She also said it’s not unusual for her to take some of her residents’ clothing home if it’s ever in need of a hemming.

“I try to go above and beyond,” she said. “Families trust us with their family members. A resident is not a task; they’re human beings, and we want them to know that they can leave them with us and we will make it like home.”

Spak-Heichel described her work as one with a great deal of moral weight: she thinks that providing good care to her patients is exactly what society owes them.

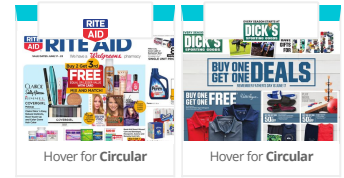
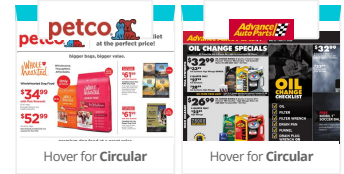
“The geriatric population is a pillar of our society,” she said. “They paved the way for us; the least we can do is make them comfortable and give them a little easier of a time for the rest of their life.”

But in addition to that, she also said working with that population is just really fun.



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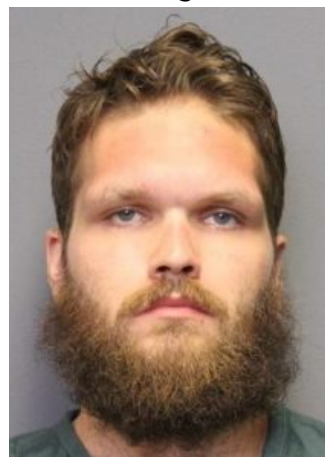
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“They’re so much fun,” she said with a laugh. “I have residents who are in their 90s who you would never expect to be in their 90s. You can learn so much from them; sitting and talking with them is fascinating.”

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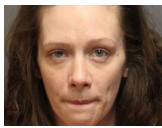


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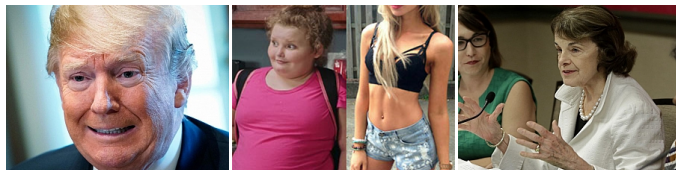
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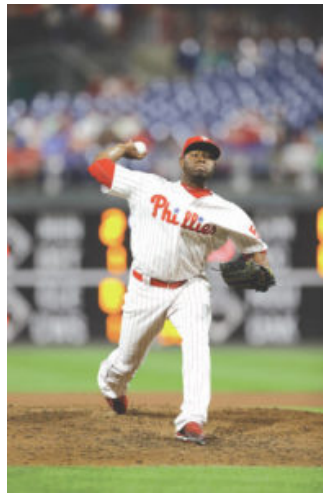
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Phillies demote reliever Hector Neris to Triple-A

PHILADELPHIA — The Phillies have optioned former closer Hector Neris to Triple-A Lehigh Valley and recalled lefty Austin Davis. Neris recorded his 10th save in 13 chances by tossing a perfect...



sighshakingmyhead • a month ago

Bless you Brianna for being you !

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A hospital will be built in Quakertown. A tenuous link to this article, granted, but the price of a hospital, one would think, is greater than the cost of building a high school.

Nope. \$100 million on the nose for a brand new, state of the art hospital, whereas WBSD's planned new school starts at \$110 or 120 million. If it hits \$150 million, no one will be surprised.

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