

A Salute to Certified Nursing Assistants *All Heart*

Sheila Olinger, CNA

Unsung Hero's

Sheila has been a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) for over a decade. She works in the Memory Care Neighborhood at St. Paul Elder Services, Kaukauna, WI. CNAs are part of a critical direct care workforce (home care, nursing home, and residential care homes) serving those living with Alzheimer's and dementia. Sheila is a gifted and dementia-capable CNA who has often been praised by residents and their families for the care and love she gives. "The best part of my day is when I can make residents happy and make them smile," Sheila shared. "The worst part is just the opposite, when I can't bring a smile to someone's face."



All Heart

CNAs are frontline workers who handle day to day care for an extremely vulnerable population. "It takes a lot of heart to do it right," Sheila shared. "It's hard work and difficult to work with people who don't remember you day to day. And when some residents have behavioral outbursts, you have to sympathize and not get upset. If you don't have the heart, then you won't put all you have into it, which is what I do." The role of the CNA has become increasingly critical during the COVID-19 pandemic, when many families have been unable to see loved ones.

As a Black woman, Sheila also represents the 20% of direct care workers who are people of color. This demographic skews disproportionately high when considering that Blacks make up only 13.4% of the U.S. population.



The Alzheimer's Association salutes Sheila and all CNAs serving those living with Alzheimer's and dementia. Her dedication to delivering person-centered care is appreciated by families in Wisconsin.

Congressman Mike Gallagher presented Sheila Olinger with a service award for being an "unsung hero" during National CNA Week.