

Catholic Charities

Diocese of Joliet



"Love works miracles every day"

Marguerite DeValois

Miracle Moments . . .

Diane had always cared for others. As a Certified Nursing Assistant, she devoted herself to her patients. After twenty years of caring for her patients, Diane felt it was time to make a change.

She found a job at a family-owned restaurant and worked there for five years. In addition to her restaurant duties, she became a mentor and confidant to the younger employees she worked with; some even called her "Grandma" because she was always there to listen and give advice. Again, she was caring for others. Then the economy took a turn for the worse and the owner of the restaurant had to make cuts – Diane lost her job. Soon she lost her home. "I was scared and homeless. I lost my job and my home and I had to look for somewhere to go."

Diane found out about Daybreak. She arrived feeling scared and uncertain about what she would find. What she discovered were people who were kind and helpful – she felt comfortable there. She also found programs and workshops that could help her look for a job and get back on her feet. She was enthusiastic about the workshops and classes. "Anything that Catholic Charities offered - I took it!" She discovered Daybreak's Employment Program run by Employment Center Coordinator, Vernon Riley. "We give the residents the tools they need to prepare themselves for finding a job."

Daybreak's Employment Program offers workshops and discussion groups each week that cover everything from interviewing skills and how to write a resume to money management and workplace ethics. Vern also conducts a one-on-one assessment of each client to determine what they need to succeed in finding and keeping a job. These things include appropriate clothing for an interview, work clothes and shoes needed once they find a job, as well as bus passes or gas for one week once they start a new job. Discussion groups allow for clients to talk about barriers to employment they may be facing in searching for work or on-the-job issues that they have questions about. It allows people to talk and learn from each other, while providing a support system for each other.

Vern Riley has also created "Job Rallies" to kick-start the week. Every Monday morning, residents scan the newspaper for job openings; follow up on leads they may have picked up on; and use the local library to research job openings. Then Vern takes everyone out in the "Application Express" van, owned by Catholic Charities, to go to businesses and fill out applications. This program has been successful for many residents, including Diane.

"Finding a job was difficult. I would get depressed because no one called me back." But she stuck with it, and with the help of Daybreak's Employment Program, Diane was able to find a stable job at a local restaurant. "I love my new job. Everyone there is so nice!" Diane has turned her life around and looks forward to the future. She looks forward to saving some money, buying a car, and finding a home she can call her own.

