

Bio: Heather Szmigiel

“Center on the patient and all else will follow.”

Heather lives up to her above words. Even in this time of dynamic changes in the health care arena where many choices are about cutting costs and services, Heather focuses on patient happiness and her teams’ job satisfaction to arrive at superior outcomes.

With her two bachelor’s degrees (culinary arts and business administration) from Sullivan University located in Louisville, Kentucky, Heather finds the commonality of her education. “Cooking brings people together and so does an administrator,” she says.

Heather’s love of people shows up in many ways, but her mindset wasn’t reached through formal studies. It was rather more like an internal compass that points towards serving others.

“I am the neighborhood mom...the one where all the kids gather for food, conversation and comfort.” And when it comes to business, she instinctively provides the same dynamics.

One meeting with her and you’ll see her ease of communication and her knowledge of her career, in part, because it’s her DNA – her mother was a successful administrator. So, it comes as no surprise that Heather earned “Administrator of the Year” at one of her assignments.

In her 15 years, she’s also been endorsed by others in the industry that are highly adept in leadership and management. Within her facility, she gets stellar marks from her patients and residents for her efforts in reaching out to family and having a knack for uncovering an opportunity for fellowship and follow-up.

As she walks the halls of her facility, she’s sensitive to the needs of caretakers and nursing assistants. “If they lack a smile, I will give them a bigger smile,” says Heather, and eventually they’ll smile back.” It’s her way to ensure that there is a friendly home-like environment that is seen and heard.

“When you bring people together effectively, the differences fade, and hard edges soften,” admits Heather. Overall, it ignites a “can-do” spirit that puts others needs first and ultimately leads to patient and team happiness.

“When my team is happy, the patient is happy,” says Heather. She understands that business will take care of itself if patient needs are prioritized, and she considers that paramount for being great at patient care.

For Heather, being great at patient-centered care is a starting point, not an endpoint. Continually, she sets high expectations and climbs higher than industry standards with the simple but powerful goal of putting the patient first.