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- > Companions
- > Home Health Aides
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## Company News

### Congratulations....



On April 14, 2005, Natacha Paul a Ft. Lauderdale Home Health Aide, was awarded a scholarship from the Broward Coalition on Aging in the amount of \$1000. Natacha will use the scholarship to pursue her Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) education. Natacha has worked for our company since 2002, and has been an extraordinary caregiver and employee. We are very proud of Natacha, she is our 4th employee to receive this scholarship.

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### Advance Directives for all People: 10 questions - Plain English Answers *By Carla Albano, Esq., Administrator*



Earlier this year the media spotlight again focused on Florida. All of America became privy to the personal and normally private circumstances surrounding the death of Teri Schaivo. While each and every person I talked to had their own personal views on the subject, a resounding consensus evolved in our community:

**"I don't want this to happen to my family and loved ones" and "I don't want the privacy of my family invaded."**

The following article shall examine 10 questions and answers regarding the topic of advance planning. If you wish to spare your family the possibility of anguish or pain, please read this article carefully, and take the time to take action if required.

#### *1) Could the Teri Schaivo situation happen again in America?*

Anything is possible. For those of us who work with the elderly or infirmed, we frequently come into contact with family members who do not have clear directions from their loved ones, or who disagree about care. In fact, this situation happens daily in America, dividing families, while also imposing anguish and suffering upon all. The person who is ill is just one component; the entire family is affected.

#### *2) Could it happen to me?*

It can happen to anyone who has not done proper planning. Teri Schaivo did not plan to become ill. She was a young, vital woman. Every time you get into your car, or cross the street, there could be an accident, and it could happen to you. We are all at risk.

#### *3) I have told my family what I want, is that enough?*

In some cases yes. In many states oral evidence so long as it does not contradict or conflict with written instructions (**or state law**) may be adequate. However, your loved one's may need to go through the

*continued on inside...*

## Editors Note:

This month we address a very timely and important topic, Advance Directives. As professionals, we deal with this situation quite frequently, and we have seen good situations and we have seen situations which have brought pain to many families. I hope you enjoy our article.

**George Cann**  
Editor

Newsletter

# Spotlight on the Caregivers

## Fort Lauderdale

### March 2005



**Monica C.** has been with the Alternative Home Health family since August, 2001. Monica began to take care of Mrs. I. shortly after beginning with the agency. She has not left her side since that time. Monica treats Mrs. I. as if she were her own family. She provides her assistance with all her activities of daily living, as well as giving her much needed love. Monica is always kind, caring and professional. Mrs. I's guardian states that Mrs. I. has thrived because of Monica's dedication and good heart. Mrs. I. will be moving away this month, but we are sure that Monica will be with her in spirit. Congratulations and thank you.

### April 2005



**Mavelin B.** has been with Alternative since October, 2004. She is extremely enthusiastic, caring, and kind. Mavelin always has a smile on her face, no matter what time of the day. Clients are quick to compliment her work ethic. She is very reliable and flexible to go to wherever the cases are. The schedulers refer to her as the "walking map" because she is so good with directions. Congratulations and thank you.

## Fort Myers

### March 2005

**Nancy R.** joined the Alternative team in June, 2003. This past March, Nancy demonstrated the "whatever it takes" attitude when she agreed to provide live-in service to a retired physician on Sanibel Island. The Dr.'s Case Manager thought it would only be a few days before she arranged a new residence for him. Instead, Nancy cared for this confused, anxious client for 10 days, accompanying him to an area hospital for testing and providing him with compassionate support until his new skilled facility room was available. The Case Manager told us that Nancy was a wonderful caregiver who made this difficult job much easier. Thanks Nancy for caring for "The Doctor" and all of the other clients you are so willing to help whenever we ask.



### April 2005

**Raphael D.** became an Alternative team member in December, 2004. Shortly after joining us, Raphael took an assignment with a gentleman whose life had been dramatically changed by a severe stroke. Raphael began his care-giving as a live-in. He worked repetitively with the client, encouraging him to regain as much independence as possible. His hard work allowed the client and spouse to gradually reduce the hours with our agency. Raphael has pledged to remain an important part of this man's life. Thanks for your commitment, perseverance and dedication Raphael.



## Employee Anniversaries:

### Fort Lauderdale

<b>7 Years</b> Francie H. Iris M.	<b>2 Years</b> Claire D. Keisha G. Georgie J. Zadie L. Claudette N. Fronia P. Naomi R. Marie R.
<b>6 Years</b> Mercie D. Ellen D. Betty P. Tina S.	
<b>5 Years</b> Olive M. Helen N. Maria V. Sandra W.	<b>1 Year</b> Orlaine A. Botania A. Denise C. Loy G. Paulette G. Janet H. Sasha H. Sophia J. Veda M. Norma M. Nadine M. Marvia R. Youselyne S. Jeanette S. Paulet S. Judith W.
<b>4 Years</b> Joan F. Carla M. Marie-Rose P.	
<b>3 Years</b> Sonya B. Lourdes G. Icilda G. Vilma L. Rosanne L. Beverly M. Paulette W.	

### Fort Myers

<b>2 Years</b> Janet C. Joyce J. Maria T.	<b>1 Year</b> Gilberthe C. Frelucia D. Mahadai D. Tozia F. Virginie J. Patricia L. Angela Mc. Robert M. Cheryl G.
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## Advance Directives for all People: 10 questions and Plain - English Answers

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court system, at a considerable expense and often slow pace, to eventually accomplish your wishes. Also, we all listen with different processes of comprehension. Therefore, different members of your family may have different recollections of conversations years later. While this method of advance planning can work, it's not the most effective.

### 4) How do you prevent this from happening?

Two words: **ADVANCE DIRECTIVES**. The laws of virtually all states prefer written documents. State laws govern Advance Directives, so procedures and formats can vary slightly. However the concept of Advance Directives is to write down your desires, should you become unable to make a decision about your care.

### 5) What if I change my mind?

Advance Directives can always be changed. You are in control of the documents, and it is always important to remember that the form does not usually take effect until you become unable to make a decision about your care. It is common in most states that you choose a health care surrogate or person who can act on your behalf. It is recommended that you have conversations with your healthcare surrogate to make sure they are aware that you are asking them to act on your behalf and to be sure they know what you want.

### 6) Where should I keep my advance directives?

The original advance directives should be kept in a safe place. Your surrogate or person you have specified to act for you should know where the document is, and how to retrieve it. The issue of making copies is your personal choice. You need to determine how comfortable you are with providing health facilities and doctor's copies of your documents. Remember, these forms permit another person to make life or death choices for you.

### 7) I travel frequently between two homes. If I prepare advance directives in one state, can they be used in another?

Many states honor the directives of another state, so long as the document does not contradict the current state law. If you divide your time between two or more states, it may be worth your while to execute the specific state forms, so that there is no confusion later on. Many state forms are available at [www.nhpco.org](http://www.nhpco.org).

### 8) Are Advance Directives honored in a medical emergency?

In the early stages of a medical emergency, there is usually no time and no physician present who can

read through Advance Directive documents. For the most part Emergency Medical Service personnel (**not doctors**) are the first to treat you during an emergency. However, once the emergency is resolved and a physician is assigned, the contents of the Advance Directive documents should be reviewed, and the health care surrogate should be consulted on the next steps to be taken.

One exception to this is a **Do Not Resuscitate Order (DNR)**. This is an additional, very specific form which says that you do not wish to be resuscitated if your heart and or lungs stop working. Each state has very specific rules for this form up to and including specifications for who must sign it, its color, and the circumstances under which a person can have a DNR. Please consult with your physician if you are interested in signing a DNR.

### 9) Where can I go for additional information?

Florida's Agency for Health Care Administration has brochures and copies of the Florida recommended Advance Directives forms. You can either call (888) 419-3456 or go to [www.floridahealthstat.com](http://www.floridahealthstat.com).

The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization also has a lot of information, and Advance Directive forms specific to most states. Their web site is [www.nhpco.org](http://www.nhpco.org).

There is also a document called the Five Wishes. While it may not in some cases suffice for forms required by your state, it is a wonderful tool for families to discuss and plan details, should a health care surrogate need to step in. There are many websites which sell the Five Wishes document. One website is [www.agingwithdignity.org](http://www.agingwithdignity.org).

Lastly, Advance Directives are legal documents. You should review/prepare your Advance Directives with your attorney. While the state recommended forms may work in many situations, a legal consultation is the only way to assure you that all of your documents are correct and in order. The time and money you spend with an attorney preparing these forms may be the most important investment you can make.

### 10) Why do I need to prepare?

Proper planning can spare your family the possibility of anguish or pain, and can assure you that your wishes will be observed.

*The foregoing article has been prepared on an informational basis only. It is recommended by the author that you consult your own personal attorney in preparing your Advance Directives and any other legal documents.*