

## TLC Aged Care Years of Service Article February 2010

*Celebrating a milestone of years of service at a job is a sweet celebration, particularly in these days of claims that you'll be having a dozen or more employers in your working lifetime. So it's even sweeter when the employer is sharing in the celebration with you and is pleased with your contributions!*



*Such is the case with TLC Aged Care – a private, family owned company operating nine quality residential aged care homes across Victoria.*

*At the February 2010 years of service celebration event, Maree McCabe and Ingrid Williams were both acknowledged for their five-plus years service. Here's what they had to say about their roles and their experience with TLC Aged Care. And as a special surprise Dr John and Mrs Jenny Leaper, owners of TLC were presented with certificates acknowledging their respective 19 years of service. (Pictured above)*

### **Maree McCabe** Executive Operations

Maree McCabe is celebrating her five years service with TLC Aged Care by taking on some more responsibility! It's an example of how her career has developed and changed in such a short time at such a progressive organisation.



"My role is Executive Operations, and I've just taken on the responsibility of maintenance across our properties too," she said with a beaming smile.

"I originally started as Assistant to the Director of Care, then moved to a regional management role for the south east region and then progressed to managing operations for all of the homes. That was two years ago," she explains.

For Maree, many of the highlights of her time at TLC Aged Care come from the business' progress and the opening of new homes. "We're creating a better life for residents and caring for residents every day and that in itself is just a wonderful thing."

She also says participating in research projects is rewarding too, but she's quick to return to the topic of resident care as the feature and highlight. She's clearly passionate, enthused and committed to the business and to aged care.

"People don't know what they're missing," she says of working in aged care. "It's amazing. The relationships with families and residents, the opportunity to make a difference at a critical point and critical time of life is so rewarding. There is great joy in contributing to a team that is nurtured, and that nurtures others."

"TLC Aged Care owners John and Jenny Leaper have a dream and to be a part of that dream is inspiring."

While some family owned business can get a bit of a rap regarding culture, succession planning or career path and progression, not so TLC Aged Care, at all!

"They're a great employer," says Maree. "It's the culture. They really do care. They care what happens to residents. They care what happens to staff. They care what happens in and to the industry. It's right throughout and at all levels, they care... and so we all do too."

And in spreading the word to others about working in aged care, and particularly TLC Aged Care, "it's the culture of the organization," she says. "The staff are amazing. It is such a great team. They're all here to make residents lives better. I've loved it working here, it's been an amazing five years and we've accomplished a lot as a team."

Each day brings some new wonders to her. "I'm often wondering, thinking of the day ahead, about how the managers are going, what's been happening across our homes with our lovely residents and families and I'm excited about the day ahead. I'm thinking and planning for what's coming up and how we can make a difference today. It's a nice contrast to some roles and jobs where you might be thinking dull thoughts or dread. Not here; it's a joy," she said. ■

## **Ingrid Williams**

### **Chief Executive Officer**

Ingrid Williams celebrates six years service with TLC Aged Care in May 2010, and three of them as CEO.

Ingrid initially joined the business in 2004 as the Manager of TLC Aged Care, Marina, the aged care home in bayside Altona. After a short year she was promoted to the role of Group Manager for the Western Region and then 18 months later to the role of CEO.



It's been a swift and rewarding rise and full of changes. "I think the main change is in being responsible for a larger part of the organisation. I demonstrated my abilities with one of the homes and then was able to show my commitment, enthusiasm and drive to progress my career and take on more responsibility," says Ingrid.

"Then I embraced those responsibilities to further demonstrate my abilities and to put back into the organisation."

At the point when the CEO role became available, Ingrid felt it was important to express her intention to further progress her career and commitment to TLC Aged Care as a company and a great place to work.

"I was committed to the continuing, ongoing success and growth of the business and the services provided," she said.

Moving to aged care from the acute sector was achieved by actually making the commitment to move. "I saw there were fewer nurses in aged care administration and management but there were clearly more opportunities. The aged care industry is in growth and it's an industry of the future. There are some wonderful opportunities for nurses to progress their career particularly in the management stream," she said.

Most people can identify a highlight in their career; but does it involve jumping into a swimming pool fully clothed? For Ingrid a highlight was a leap into a pool – the opening of a pool at TLC Aged Care, Marina. "It was the fun and enjoyment of it," she explains. "The company demonstrated there were no limitations in contributing to the organisation so jumping into the pool at the opening for a newspaper

photo, or directly assisting a resident, or doing daily what your role is, that's all part of it.

"On that swimming pool day, the owner's daughter and I jumped in as well so it shows that no matter your role or position, there are no boundaries, it's a team effort. It was a fun day of celebrations and milestones."

On a more serious note, being part of a fast growing organisation that's successfully opened so many homes over recent years is hugely rewarding for Ingrid. "We're providing aged care to people in the community that need that care. The success is right there in front of you. That's a great feeling."

TLC Aged Care is a family owned business and "it still has the family business feeling," explains Ingrid. "It has the intimacy yet it also has the infrastructure to support people and it has a progressive corporate feel. We don't lose the family values of caring for residents and staff, yet acknowledging it is a business that needs to be managed effectively.

"We like to think we nurture and support staff like a small business would, but with over 1000 employees," she explained.

TLC Aged Care demonstrate this in many ways, one of which is through acknowledging years of service by formally thanking staff for their loyalty and commitment.

So how does she feel each day heading in to work, thinking of the workday ahead?

"I'm always excited by the good challenges that work brings," she said. "It's a changing industry and there are always opportunities to provide great care to our residents and great opportunities for staff. Our tagline 'great care and great careers™' is a serious mission for us. I hope each day that I contribute to making a difference to the lives of residents and staff.

"Owners John and Jenny Leaper are always striving for improvements, very much a 'continuous improvement' philosophy so they embrace change and innovation. I like how the company is always aiming to be a step ahead of the rest. We embrace the contribution of everybody and what other people have brought to the organisation so that creates a brilliant atmosphere and environment.

"I love working for TLC Aged Care. As much as they've provided opportunities for me, it ensures my ongoing commitment to the organisation too. I get a huge sense of satisfaction in the job I do.

"All in all, I hope that I've provided strong leadership and a professional and calm approach that engenders confidence in the staff in the organisation and that directly reaches residents, families and our local communities, that yes, we know what we're doing," said Ingrid. ■

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