



(L-R) Melissa Quinn, director of Angel Corps Bluffton office; Ruth Force, director of Angel Corps Auburn office and Robin Norman, director of Angel Corps Fort Wayne office

Angel Corps Adopts Eden Philosophy

article by Jennifer Blomquist • photo by David Kirk

It's spring and everywhere we look, we're reminded of a fresh start with fresh air and new life. It's the perfect time for Angel Corps to launch a fresh initiative designed to better cherish and nurture life around us.

The Fort Wayne-based in-home care company is currently taking steps to re-think the way it helps its elderly clients.

"It's called Eden at Home," explains Angel Corps founder Dorian Maples. "It's about changing the language from 'caregiver' to 'care partner.' We're partnering with them [our clients] in

this journey and walking beside them. But we're not going to make decisions for them. We're allowing them to stay in charge of their own lives."

The Eden philosophy stems from a book written by Dr. William H. Thomas titled, "In the Arms of Elders, A Parable of Wise Leadership and Community Building." A Harvard Medical School graduate specializing in geriatrics, Dr. Thomas writes about his struggle, in a fictional society, to appreciate the fact that medicine doesn't have all the answers when it comes to caring for

our elders.

"To love and to feel loved can heal many ills," explains the main character in his book, an elder named Hannah. "You must promise me that you will do your best to see that the elders are given all of the love they need."

A registered nurse, Maples understands the conflict that the Eden philosophy presents to anyone with a background in patient care, particularly those who have worked for facilities like a hospital where the medical personnel are viewed as the authority figures and make all the rules.



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From the book “In the Arms of Elders, A Parable of Wise Leadership and Community Building”
by Dr. William H. Thomas which inspired The Eden philosophy

The patients are expected to comply and trust that the ones in charge know what is best for them.

“It’s a difficult transition for professionals because this is different,” explains Maples. “This is allowing our clients to be in charge of their own lives and it reinforces the idea that we’re guests in their homes.”

Angel Corps is making the transition not because it’s required by any overseeing agency, but because Maples and her staff believe it’s the right thing to do, as well. It’s a better way to provide the best care possible for their clients.

“Instead of us walking into the client’s home and saying, ‘I’m giving all of the care,’ they’re giving back and forth,” says Angel Corps Marketing Director Katie Eber. “It’s a relationship. It’s not just taking care of the client.”

Angel Corps is one of four local healthcare businesses owned by Maples and her husband. The company specializes in the care of older adults and individuals with disabilities.

Besides assisting clients with personal care, such as bathing and dressing, Angel Corps attendants will provide services like light housekeeping and meal preparation. Maples has even turned the conference room in their Fort Wayne office into a fully functional kitchen where employees take the “Culinary Creations” course so they’re well-equipped to take on any cooking assignment.

“We take client satisfaction seriously,” says Maples. “The culinary arts class is now a requirement for our employees after we received a suggestion in one of our client surveys to teach our employees better cooking skills.”

For Angel Corps employees, caring for those who cannot care for themselves has become a passion. Incorporating the Eden philosophy in

their jobs will require some extra work, but they agree it’s worth it when they look at the big picture and purpose of the care they provide.

“It’s hard to think outside of the box when you work in home care,” explains Robin Norman, who is one of three Angel Corps directors and has worked in the home care field for more than 20 years.

“I admit I was reluctant to learn about the Eden philosophy at first because it’s so different from the structure we’re used to having in our jobs,” Norman explains. “But it has taught me that if an elder has to rely on other people, they end up feeling like they’re a burden or a concern. Whereas, if the elder is in charge and giving us some direction as to the kind of care they want, it tends to give them a sense of purpose.”

“The medical society tends to forget about the nurturing aspect,” says Angel Corps director Ruth Force, who works at the company’s Auburn office. “Even with hospice patients, their homes become institutionalized with the hospital bed and all of the medical equipment. It takes away from the reasons why we like to be in our homes - for the comfort of it, the love and the family feeling. The Eden Alternative brings it back.”

Angel Corps’ three directors spent several days last summer undergoing training on the Eden Alternative. This spring, Norman, Force and Melissa Quinn, director of the Angel Corps Bluffton office, are in the process of educating their co-workers on how to implement this new philosophy.

“It’s more than just medicine,” Norman explains, with a sense of warmth in her voice. “It’s holding their hand or soothing them. It’s letting them know we want to be their friend - a part of their family and their life.” •

Owners: Rick and Dorian Maples

Angel Corps

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704 West 7th Street
Auburn, Indiana 46706

201 East Market Street
Bluffton, Indiana 46714

Telephone: (260) 426-4357

Website: www.CorpsOfAngels.com

Years in Business: 8

No. of Employees: 140

Services: Non-medical home care

Home Nursing Services

Telephone: (260) 424-1237

Website: www.InHomeNursingServices.com

Years in Business: 14

No. of Employees: 180

Services: Medical home healthcare

First Call Medical Staffing

Telephone: (260) 424-1329

Website: www.FirstCallMedStaff.com

Years in Business: 13

No. of Employees: 40

Services: Temporary staffing of health care facilities

Dorian Maples & Associates

Telephone: (260) 918-1141

Website: www.IndianaGeriatrics.com

Years in Business: 7

No. of Employees: 3

Services: Geriatric care management