



MANN-U-SCRIPT



Luanne Sherman



Sue DeBlois

The Faces of HMEA

Luanne Sherman, who is the Manager at Holliston St., and **Sue DeBlois**, Manager at Stoney Brook Lane, have the distinction of being the longest-term employees at HMEA. They were both hired in July 1984.

Luanne had just come back from a six-month stay in Colorado Springs; Sue had come from college education and was looking to enter "the real world". When they were hired, they took the first step in a career that would become part of their lives, just as they have become part of the lives of the people they support. They are special employees, and through their stories, we can see a life of commitment and dedication beyond the boundaries of a job.

Prior to employment at HMEA, **Luanne** had worked in a group home and loved the family-type atmosphere. Her involvement in all aspects of the individuals' lives made it very rewarding and special. It was a job well suited to her dedicated, committed and caring professional goals. She found herself needing a change in schedule and found a job at HMEA in a classroom setting; the hours were Monday-Friday from 8-4. The schedule was perfect, but Luanne soon felt the need to become more involved in all aspects of people's lives, and began to work in one of the residences at Westboro Rd. Several years ago, the 8 individuals there moved into two smaller homes, and Luanne became the Manager at Holliston St. She recalls the time the

Medway High football team went to visit one person at the home; "it was the happiest day of his life". She remembers another time just before Thanksgiving, when turkeys donated by UPS were delivered, and each person received his own turkey. Luanne has developed such a strong bond with these people that she considers each and every one "family".

When **Sue** graduated from high school, she spent the summer working in a special education class, and loved it. When she entered college, she took classes in Special Education. She believes that "I was born to do this as part of my life and not just as a job". Upon college graduation, she made a choice to work in a smaller setting, rather than work in an institution. She felt that she could have more of an impact on the lives of the people she would be supporting. What she realizes now is that it wasn't so much her impact on others, as it was about developing relationships. She began working at Peck St. in Attleboro with 8 people, who eventually moved to smaller homes. When Stoney Brook Lane opened, Sue became the Manager there.

"Mary, Ruth and I have been together a long time. In fact, I've known them my entire adult life and longer than I've known my own kids. Mary can still get away with scolding my 6'2" son where I can't!

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I love what I do even though I often ask myself 'what am I doing? I have a plunger in one hand, a screwdriver in my pocket, a pen in my hair and a phone in the other hand'. You just do what you have to do because, in the end, we truly are all one family here."

It is clear that these two women are not only committed to their jobs and the people they support, and love their work, but that they do, indeed, feel that they are part of a family. ◀

Thanks to **Doug MacPherson**, Diversity Committee member, who interviewed Sue and Luanne

Note: In a footnote conversation with Sue when asked who she thought was the next longest-term employee, she answered "oh, that's easy - it's Karen Slowick. They hired her to keep an eye on us." However, the disclaimer is that this editor was hired as an Administrative Assistant in 1984 and later processed payroll. No oversight of employees was included in the job at that time!