

Homemaker of the Year

Ida Espinoza

When you think of giving care at home, homemakers are the unsung heroes. Their work isn't glamorous; they change diapers, give baths, mop floors, do the dishes, help clients in and out of chairs, read stories, cheer them up, and listen to their clients' tales of pain. They are at the scene with their client when no one else is, or can be, to prevent a fall, remind their client it is time to take their medications, see their client doesn't put themselves in danger by wandering off, and protect their client from unwanted intruders. If there is an emergency, more often than not, it is the homemaker who makes the call.

Theirs is a labor of love, or necessity. To honor these soldiers delivering comfort, the New Mexico Association for Home & Hospice Care annually selects a nominee who best exemplifies the qualities of dedication, providing service above and beyond the work plan, and the spirit of compassion so needed in their difficult role.

In 2010, the winner was Ida Espinoza, an employee of Addus Healthcare in Española, NM, who has worked at her agency since the year 2000. Below is the testimony that earned Ida the award.

"Ida has been employed with Addus Healthcare for 10 years. In those 10 years she has shown her loyalty and commitment to her clients. She tends towards caring for clients who have little to no family support. She offers her support to them above and beyond what she gets paid for.

"Recently she had to take some time off for cataract surgery. Before her surgery and on her own time, she spent seven hours cooking individual meals for both of her clients. She prepared them, froze them, and delivered them to her clients' freezers so that they could warm them up in the microwave and have a hot meal while she was gone.

"One of the clients she currently works for could not afford a Christmas tree. Ida took it upon herself to purchase a tree and decorations for her. The client could not have been happier.

"The second client she works with suffers from schizophrenia. When she first started working with her the only piece of furniture she had was a mattress on the floor. Again, on her own time, Ida purchased used furniture and household items for her. Today, the client's home is



beautifully decorated, functional and comfortable.

"Ida had a neighbor that was injured and left disabled after he was thrown from a horse. He had no family support, so Ida started preparing meals for him and doing household chores. She had two full-time jobs at the time and was finding it difficult to care for his needs. She assisted him with get-

ting onto the Medicaid Personal Care Option program and he is now receiving the assistance he needs and Ida continues to visit him when her time allows.

"These are just a few examples of the wonderful and generous person that Ida is. Addus and her community are blessed to have her."