



## **Meet our Heroes**

If you have been on The Campus for more than 15 minutes, you have met our Recreation Director, Jessica Finkenbinder. That is because that is her desire...to make sure that anyone that steps onto our Campus feels welcome, feels at home and knows how much she appreciates them being here. Of course, when you have a heart the size of Texas...that is your way.

Jess has been on staff for 18 years now, having started with us as an activity aide just out of College, where she graduated with a degree in Recreation and Leisure Administration. It was because of her boss at the time, who supported her and guided her; offering patience and knowledge that Jess was able to have the confidence to move first to the position of Assistant Recreation Director to her current position over the years.

"I was apprehensive in taking this new responsibility. But I gained the respect of all the recreation staff and they supported me and cheered me on. It was tough being the middle person between staff and supervisor. We try to build a sense of family in the Recreation Department and reach out to other staff to join in making it a big Jewish Home Family." A feeling and sentiment that is felt Campus wide thanks to Jess and Sarah's lead. True examples of what making a difference can feel like and be shared among others by leading the way.

"It's nice to have a good team to help you with decisions, ideas, and team building. We know when someone in our department needs a lift of encouragement. We are the encouragers of the facility because we are the fun group. Here to make the residents laugh, enjoy their days, and just be as happy as they can be. It is very hard right now since they have been using other ways such as video chats and window visits to see their families. We become that family."

Having started her first "real job" at such a young age and with really no life experiences, The Campus truly has become Jess's second family. Not just the staff but the residents as well. When you spend so much time with them, becoming part of their family is not by accident. And there is no one better than Jess at making sure they know they may be away from true family, but they are loved here as well. There is always someone here when they need it...no matter what they need.

One of her favorite aspects of what she does, is sharing those life experiences with her residents. From the wedding phase of life and the excitement that comes with it, to the birth of her children and how excited the residents would be. It all made for amazing memories and connections...ones Jess would not trade in for anything at all.

"All these milestones I have had in my own life I get to share with the residents. It brings us together as a family. Recently, one of my friends (a resident) passed away. She would always ask me how the 5 were and would say "you're the one with the 5". She couldn't remember my name, but she knew I was the one with the 5. It warms my heart that they remember something about me when its hard for them to remember day to day."

That is what happens when you make such a difference to so many people...they will never forget you. And we are forever grateful to have you, Jess!