

The District III Nurse Aide of the Year is Maria Canuto-Sosa. Maria was born in Mexico in a small town that was stricken with poverty and little work opportunities. Her parents wanted their children to have a better future, so at the age of 2 years old, she and her family moved to the United States. Growing up, Maria's mother always instilled in her that life is about serving others. She watched her mom take care of her siblings and other adults selflessly and it inspired Maria to do the same thing.

Maria is a Certified Nursing Assistant at Alpine Health and Rehabilitation of Asheboro. Maria has been a CNA for seven years and was nominated by a very special group, the Resident Council. When Administrator Chip Lacy-Sellers brought up the 2020 awards ceremony and asked for nominees, everyone in the room shouted Maria's name. In 20 years, I have never seen the Resident Council agree on something so quickly and so easily!

The residents then begin to share their own stories of how Maria serves them on a daily basis. The experience she provides is outstanding. Maria knows their routine and has things ready for them before they even mention it. One resident stated, "There are days that if I didn't have Maria caring for me, I would not be here today." As you watch Maria going down the hall you can see the love that she gives and receives from our residents. You can tell that it is genuine with how delicately she speaks to each and every person she passes, and how gently she places her hands around theirs. She realizes the importance of just listening. All of our residents look forward to special visits from Maria and her kids on her days off just so she can engage in longer conversations!

Due to her childhood and upbringing, she lives everyday with optimism, hope, and a passion to serve others. Maria is very proud to be the first in her family to graduate high school and is touched to be able to make her mother proud of the CNA she is today! Maria says, "I am so blessed to be able to serve our residents and actually get paid to do so. The work I do is not done for a paycheck. I truly serve these residents with all the love in my heart. I treat them like I would treat my own grandparents had I had the chance to ever meet them. I consider myself very blessed to be in the position to be able to care for those that need me."