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### **Inez Platt Honored as Caregiver of the Year for Work at Neilson Place**

Inez Platt, who works At Neilson Place in Bemidji, has been honored as the District A Caregiver of the Year among members of Minnesota Health and Housing Alliance. The award was announced Feb. 6 in Minneapolis during the Minnesota Health and Housing Alliance Institute for Older Adult Services. District A is composed of 11 counties in northwestern Minnesota.

Neilson Place is a leader in Minnesota among long-term care centers that have adopted a new model of care called “person-directed” or “culture change.” At Neilson Place, smaller groups of residents comprise “neighborhoods” where caregivers take an expanded role from that in traditional care centers. Platt is one of those staff members whose role changes from cooking to helping residents with daily needs such as getting dressed to conducting activities that keep residents engaged.

Inez, known as “Inie” to some coworkers, was skeptical at first about the system that took care specialists and put them in the new “blended worker” role. But as the model caught on, she embraced it. “Inie visited a facility that was well into their culture change journey and came back with new-found purpose, excited to create home for the people she served,” observed Lynn Fisher, Neilson Place Associate Director. “Now, she promotes resident choice to its fullest.”

Another coworker, Penny Bohlman, agreed with the nomination of Platt for the award saying, “Inez goes above and beyond in her every day duties to enhance the quality of life for seniors and their communities on a daily basis.” Bohlman pointed to Platt’s special touch when a resident is near the end of life, seeking advice from the family on providing a special quilt, favored music or preferred food to make a resident as comfortable as possible.

Platt was termed a role model and mentor for new employees whose 20 years of experience in long-term care, and her approach to culture change, is appreciated by her employer and coworkers alike.

Caregiver of the Year is a top award from MHHA. The association also honors volunteers, organizational trustees, professional leaders, innovative practices, community service and mission-driven work at its annual Institute. To learn more about MHHA and to obtain consumer information about older adult services, go to [www.mhha.com](http://www.mhha.com).

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