



MOUNT OLIVE CHRONICLE — story by Liz Hamlin

Two Flanders women have set up an agency to provide home health care services for elderly and sick residents.

In doing so, the women have joined and continued the paths both started on long before they met. Both Janine Davis and Laurie Picillo donned the pink and white “candy-striped” smocks of hospital volunteers as young teenagers, Davis at Morristown Memorial Hospital and Picillo at Wayne General Hospital.

Both used the volunteer opportunity to affirm what they knew: They wanted to be nurses, and to use nursing skills to help people through the difficult times of their lives. To that end, both became registered nurses.

Davis, after growing up in New Jersey and graduating from Basking Ridge High School, moved to Columbus, Ohio, to attend Capital University, where she obtained a bachelor’s degree in nursing. She returned to New Jersey in 1996, and settled in Flanders with her husband, Rich. They have two children, ages 8 and 5.

Picillo grew up in Hawthorne, and attended nursing school at Mountainside Hospital in Montclair. She and her husband, Vinnie, moved to Flanders in 1989, and have three sons, ages 19, 16 and 13.

Both Davis and Picillo lost their mothers in 1997, with both women succumbing to cancer at early ages.

“Watching my mom’s long battle made me realize the importance of medicine and the positive effect good caregivers can have on the lives of people in need,” Davis said.

Two years ago, Davis and Picillo met when they were both working at an area private nursing home and private home care agency.

After working together for a year and a half, the women recognized how well they worked together, and that between them, they had all the skills and training necessary to establish a successful home health care agency of their own. In September 2003, Davis and Picillo opened Claddagh Home Care, working out of the Flanders Professional Building on Route 206. They chose Claddagh as the name of their agency to emphasize the “caring hands and kind hearts,” Picillo said is the essence of their work. The claddagh, a Celtic symbol, features a heart surrounded by hands.

Claddagh’s chief mission is to provide in-home health care, including state-certified home health care aides, to people who need assistance with medical care and daily living tasks.

The agency’s relationship with a client starts with an in-home assessment by Davis or Picillo, who develop a care plan. If warranted, the agency places a home health aide with the client for any-

where from two to 24 hours a day.

Davis and Picillo continue to monitor the client with weekly or semi-weekly visits.

“Having our own agency allows us to go out and see clients the way we should,” Davis said. “We develop a personal relationship with our clients, and we make sure everybody’s being taken care of properly.”

Both Davis and Picillo are certified Geriatric Care Managers, and can develop a complete care plan for their elderly clients.

As skilled nurses, they also provide in-home nursing services, including medication management, wound care, and responding to medical emergencies.

“A lot of today’s elderly want to stay in their own homes as long as possible, in preference to moving to a nursing home or assisted-living facility. Many are able to do that with the proper care,” said Davis.

“We provide an alternative option to moving away from familiar surroundings.”

The agency employs 25 to 30 certified home health care aides, who have completed more than 76 hours of training in home care skills, and passed physical, medical and criminal background tests.