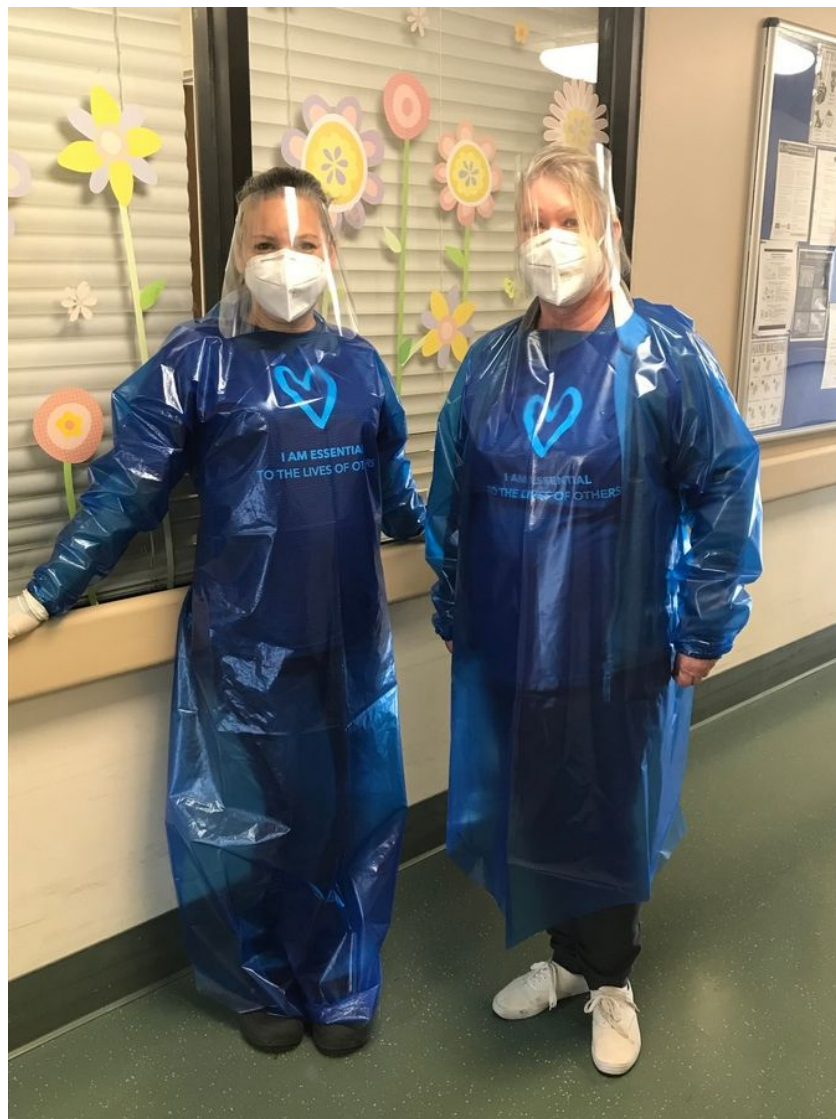


# Nurse at Arlington Heights-Based Nonprofit, Clearbrook, Reflects on the Past Year, Wins Award



Tiffany (Left) in full PPE with colleague, Laurie, Director of Nursing at the Lattof Commons. Clearbrook

**Juliann Carlson**

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Clearbrook serves over 8,000 children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The nonprofit based in Arlington Heights provides personalized children, community day, employment, home-based, residential, and clinical services, covering an array of unique needs across the lifespan.

For some, Clearbrook has been an integral part of their life for decades, walking alongside them for most of life's major milestones. When the pandemic hit in March 2020, Clearbrook faced major challenges and had no option other than to adapt.

Clearbrook President and CEO, Anthony Di Vittorio says, "We could not stop. We would not stop. We had families and hundreds of individuals depending on us to continue to provide the high level of services that we are known for. Our staff did a remarkable job and continues to do so."

This is especially true at Clearbrook's largest Intermediate Care Facility (ICF), the Lattof Commons. With space for over 85 residents with increased medical needs, the Commons was hit hard by COVID-19.

When the ICF had their first case in April 2020, Tiffany Carey, a nurse at the Commons, was ready to serve. She immediately called her family and moved into a Schaumburg hotel for six weeks. She did not want to bring this deadly virus home from work to her four children or vice versa. She made sure to stay close to work so she could be at the Commons when needed.

Every weekend, she would go home and do a driveway visit while her family sat in the garage.

All residents at Clearbrook's ICF were quarantined in their rooms. Staff made sure they had oxygen machines and other necessary equipment in

each hall.

For these individuals during quarantine, Clearbrook is all they had. They were isolated to their rooms.

"They gave up so much more than we actually had. We got to go home. We got to see or Facetime our families. They were stuck down their halls. In their rooms. They were isolated. We were literally all they had. We were just trying to do all we could for them because we are their family and were there for them when their families were not able to be."

Now, as things begin to reopen, the Commons activity managers always have something going on. From movies and crafts, to zoom classes and video chats with their loved ones. Tiffany says the individuals are happy. "They know that they are home. They know they are safe."

Tiffany has been with Clearbrook for eight years at the Lattof Commons. This was her first year as a nurse.

"This year showed you everything that was important. Everything is replaceable except for people. If my people are good, I'm good."

Tiffany was named the Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (IARF) 2020 Community Care Professional of the Year. She was selected among 19 total nominees from 13 intellectual/developmental disability or behavioral health services providers.

The award is given to a frontline staff member working in an IARF member agency. It recognizes the high level of care, compassion, person-centered focus, and commitment Tiffany provides to those in her care.

Clearbrook is so proud of Tiffany for her dedication over this past year. All of the nonprofit's staff at their 60+ locations have risen to the challenge COVID-19 presented.

Reflecting back on the past year, Tiffany says, "No matter what happens in this building, I'm happy to come to work every day. As long as I helped at least one person, I did my job for the day. The staff truly love and care for these individuals. COVID brought everyone closer together in a way. You knew you could count on anyone for anything. For those that were extremely sick, we sat with them. We held their hands. We made sure they were never alone. That's what we do here. We love them and they love us."

Learn more about Clearbrook at [www.clearbrook.org](http://www.clearbrook.org) (<http://www.clearbrook.org>).

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