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Contact: [Kelsi.Gulig@lifeviewgroup.org](mailto:Kelsi.Gulig@lifeviewgroup.org)  
850-503-8164

## Lakeview Center selects 2023 Team Member of the Year

**Pensacola, Fla. (Feb. 15, 2024)** – Melissa Caraway has been named the Lakeview Center Team Member of the Year for 2023. Melissa serves as component director for Lakeview Center’s Special Populations Network.

Melissa has worked at Lakeview Center for 30 years, focused on serving intellectually disabled individuals in her community. She often encounters people who have no one to turn to. One young man had cancer with only a few weeks to live. She went out of her way to get his favorite Filipino food, which was his last meal. Another former client, who was homeless, reached out to Melissa. She had been off dialysis too long and went into a nursing home, knowing she was going to die soon. Melissa visited her weekly. The client requested Melissa bring her favorite food, chicken soft tacos from Taco Bell. This client passed away shortly before Melissa’s next visit.

People with disabilities may have a shorter lifespan than average. Melissa often visits the grave sites of her former clients to change out the flower vases. She sits and talks with them to let them know someone cares.

“This population has a special place in my heart,” said Melissa. “My dad taught me that if you see someone who needs help, you help them.”

Her official role of supervisor could easily be a hands-off position. However, she likes being in touch with the clients. She loves watching them achieve something they’ve never done before. “It’s all worth it when I see a smile on their faces saying, ‘I did it!’”

Working at Lakeview Center aligns with her upbringing. Melissa’s dad taught her to help people if they need help. “When your organization believes in helping people, you don’t have to look for it. I see opportunities every day.”

For more information about Lakeview Center team members like Melissa, visit [eLakeviewCenter.org](https://eLakeviewCenter.org).

### About Lakeview Center

*Lakeview Center provides comprehensive behavioral health care to adults and children with mental illnesses, drug and alcohol dependencies and intellectual disabilities. Across Northwest Florida, our services range from residential treatment to outpatient counseling, psychiatry, trauma care, treatments for substance misuse and 24/7 support for those with serious mental illnesses. Learn more at [eLakeviewCenter.org](https://eLakeviewCenter.org).*

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