

Stephanie Wielgosz

I've lived in the Jackson area most of my life. I stayed in the area and went to Mississippi College for a degree in Psychology. Afterwards, I went straight into graduate school at Reformed Theological Seminary for a Master of Arts in Counseling. I became friends with Lauren at Mississippi College. Before I knew of a need for more team members, I would occasionally stay the night with Lauren in her dorm room.

It was my first year in graduate school that I heard about Lauren's need for more team members. I was looking for another job to help pay for school, and Lauren gladly took me into her team. I had no prior experience as a personal care assistant. I was not (and am not) in the medical field, so I was thankful that Lauren took a chance on me! Since I knew Lauren from college, I was not very nervous about working with her. When I started working, I realized that there were some things I was nervous about doing for fear of hurting her. It didn't take me long to learn how tough Lauren is, and I was able to feel more confident in how I lifted her or adjusted her. Lauren is very vocal about her needs, so I became confident that if there was something I could do better, she would tell me.

Even though working as a personal care assistant is not what I'm continuing to do now, I gained experience developing a close connection to Lauren. Working so closely with her meant we often had meaningful conversations that helped me learn how to care for more than Lauren's physical needs. I could see when she was having a good day or a bad day and we could often talk about that while I was helping her get ready or driving her to an appointment. I gained more from working with Lauren than just a job. I developed a friendship with someone who is deeply passionate, hard-working, and committed to everything she does.