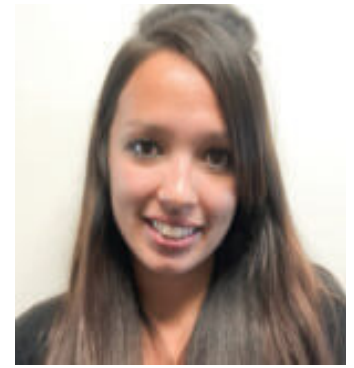


CHA Spotlight – Tina Nollner



The residents of Circle had no idea that the frightening illness of the recent newcomer would bring health to the entire community, but it did. Tina Nollner recalls, “I moved to Circle in March of 2018, and soon after got really, really sick. I felt like I was going to die and here I was in a remote village with no medical help available. I didn’t know what to do and I told myself if I got better, I would make sure no one else ever felt that frightened and hopeless.” She did recover and, true to her thoughts, within six months, Tina became the TCC Health Aide in her new hometown.

It was not her first exposure to caring for others or the medical field. She and her older sister had both been Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) in Fairbanks, so Tina knew she had a heart for helping people and could deal with some of the less pleasant aspects of illness. But she finds even more fulfillment as a health aide because “I come to really know my patients, every single one. I know their histories and what is going on in their lives, which helps me serve them better. Every person is different and I love being able to help them.”

The hardest part of her job has nothing to do with patient care or paperwork. It is the strain of being the only health aide and so on call 24 hours a day. Being a single parent to four children, ages three to nine, is tough all by itself, but being available all the time can make life pretty hectic. She deals with it by spending her free time doing healthy activities. “I love to bead and to cook and enjoy berry picking. I am learning the traditional subsistence tasks, like how to cut fish. I just love learning those skills! I am really excited that I will be going moose hunting for the first time this year. I was born in Kobuk but was raised in Fairbanks so this is the first time I have had the chance to do all these things.”

Tina is so enthusiastic about her job that she wants to encourage others to consider entering the field, although they should not make that decision lightly. Her advice to anyone interested is to spend time having in-depth conversations with a practicing health aide or, even better, try to shadow that person in order to experience how demanding yet fulfilling the career can be. As far as Tina is concerned, she has hit the sweet spot in her life, living and raising her children in a community she loves and doing a job that is vital to the health of her neighbors.

Jo Miller, Tina’s supervisor, has nothing but high praise for her. “Tina has been an amazing addition to CHAP! As a Community Health Aide in her village of Circle, she has repeatedly demonstrated her commitment and dependability in the delivery of the utmost quality health care. Her caring demeanor and compassionate approach to her patients has undoubtedly resulted in a reliable, trusting relationship with many throughout her community.”