

# Mother-daughter duo put close relationship to work at ALC Mondovi

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Mondovi Herald-News

In July of 1978, Carol Christopherson was a first-time mom of a four-month-old and pregnant with her second child when she went looking for a part-time job. Little did she know, 39 years later, she would still be at American Lutheran Communities in Mondovi and sharing her workload with the child that was still growing in her belly at the time of her hire.

"I started as a part-time night cook and then began filling in for the dishwasher in the morning," says Carol.

It wouldn't be long before her kids would be making their rounds in the facility, visiting mom and enjoying a treat each visit.

"I don't remember those days but I do remember the cookies and juice," says Carol's daughter, Sheila Neil, as she begins to laugh.

"I think we even asked Dad to take us up there," she recalls.

The visits became more frequent, especially on mother-daughter days.

"She wasn't too interested in doing the dishes at that time but she really took an interest in being a CNA," says Carol.

As a junior in high school, Sheila took courses to become a CNA and started her career in the same location as her mother. They initially worked in different departments and on different shifts—Carol during the day and Sheila at night—but in the same facility. Due to insurance issues, Sheila switched locations when pregnant with her son.

About four years ago Sheila returned to where it



Mother and daughter Carol Christopherson (right) and Sheila Neil have worked together on the dietary staff at Mondovi's American Lutheran Communities for about eight years altogether. The duo have a special relationship that makes working in the same department both fun and productive—a feat the average mother-daughter pair might find impossible.

all began, joining the ALC Mondovi dietary staff alongside her mom. The two have now worked alongside each other in that capacity for approximately eight years altogether.

"It's been pretty good. There's some days where it's like, 'Oh my god,'" Carol says with a laugh, "but she's there and I know I can depend on her."

And that's exactly how Sheila feels about her mom, a reason she attributes to the longevity of Carol's career in Mondovi.

"Everybody depends on her," Sheila explains. "She's reliable so everyone goes to her. From her, I've learned to be dependable and honest. I think I've always said I want to be like my mom. I've watched her my whole life help others. She's helped everyone, especially me."

"I like to pick on her,"

says Carol with a smile. "And we get the job done without getting into trouble."

Neither expects any special favors from the other while on the job, but their bond is so close Sheila says it can be tough to remember to use her mother's first name at work.

"I do forget...I'm like, 'Mom—I mean—Carol,'" Sheila chuckled.

Working together also brings out a common interest—their love for the residents.

"The residents really love having us," says Carol.

Carol shared. "We learn a lot from them, especially a lot of history. They tell us stories. It's very interesting."

"They have so many stories," adds Sheila. "I love history so I love what they have to say about the past. That's my favorite."

Not everyone at ALC knows that the pair are a mother-daughter duo, but Sheila loves to tell the residents.

"I'll be the one that says it to the residents, 'Did you know that's my mom?' I love the reactions they give. She's my best friend," says Sheila.