

# Connecting with the Heart of Home Care: *The BAYADA Way* Project, Ten Years Later



*By J. Mark Baiada  
and Albert Freedman, Ph.D.*

## Forward by Albert Freedman

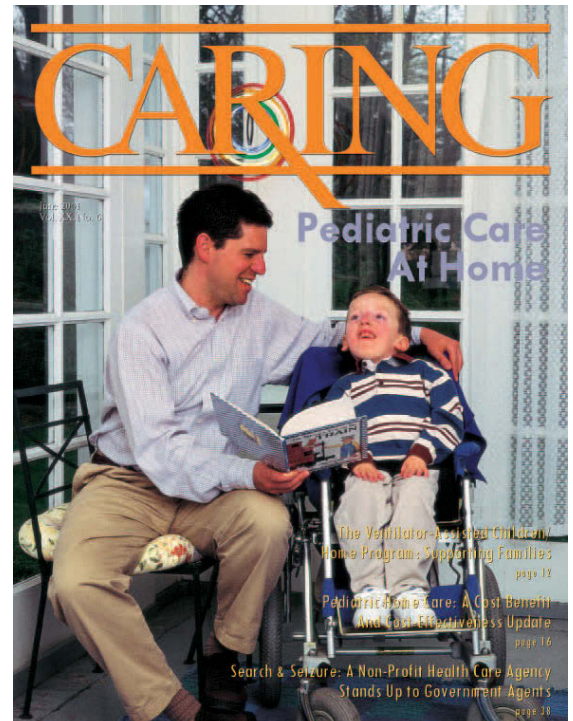
Eleven years ago, *CARING* magazine published a letter of thanks I wrote to honor the home health care nurses who cared for my medically fragile six-year-old son, Jack. In my letter, called “Welcome to Our Home,” I shared my wishes, challenges, and fears as the father of a child with an incurable neuromuscular disease called spinal muscular atrophy (SMA). I encouraged home health care professionals to take the time to get to know their patients as people, and to bring confidence, patience, skills, sensitivity—and most importantly, hope—when they enter the home of a child and family facing so many difficult challenges.<sup>1</sup>

Among the many people who read and responded to my letter was Mark Baiada, the founder and president of BAYADA Home Health Care, the organization providing home health care services for my son. I was surprised and honored when Mr. Baiada asked me to help him and his colleagues at BAYADA. In the decade since I wrote my letter to thank my son’s nurses, Mr. Baiada and I, together with hundreds of professionals at BAYADA, have embarked on an important journey to align day-to-day practices with clearly stated organizational values and beliefs. The ultimate goal of our collaboration is to provide the highest quality home health care services available to as many people as possible, who—like my son, Jack—need help.

*“I encouraged home health care professionals to take the time to get to know their patients as people, and to bring confidence, patience, skills, sensitivity – and most importantly, hope...”*



Mark Baiada and Al Freedman, 2003



Dr. Freedman published an open letter in the June 2001 issue of *CARING* Magazine asking for home health professionals to bring hope to families like his. Jack, his son, was diagnosed with spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) and his life expectancy has always been uncertain.



After *The BAYADA Way* was formalized into words, Mark Baiada drove a specially wrapped, 38-foot RV to personally share it with every BAYADA office. Pictured here with his wife Ann, director.

## Introduction by Mark Baiada

Ten years ago, I realized that BAYADA Home Health Care needed a clearer expression and shared understanding about the way we should work—both in spirit and action. For 37 years, we have helped people at home and succeeded by following important, but unwritten principles. I felt it was time to formalize these principles so we, as a group, could be clearer about what we stood for in our work, attract like-minded individuals to join us, and pass on our stated values to future generations of BAYADA professionals who will carry on our important mission.

When I read Dr. Freedman's letter in *CARING* magazine, I realized how deeply he understood the meaning and purpose of our work. We met, talked, shared, connected, and decided to work

together on a project we called "*The BAYADA Way*." Our goals were far-reaching and ambitious: to reconnect with the true purpose of our work as home health care professionals, to clarify and communicate our organization's core values, and to align our day-to-day practices with our values. Today, we are eager to share what we have learned over the past decade. We would like to articulate the emphasis we place on being a values-driven organization, and to illuminate our vision of the future, not only for BAYADA, but for the home health care industry as a whole. We want to take this opportunity to reiterate *The BAYADA Way*—our organization's statement of mission, vision, beliefs, and values.<sup>2</sup>



## Our Special Purpose as Home Health Care Professionals

*“BAYADA Home Health Care has a special purpose—to help people have a safe home life with comfort, independence, and dignity.”*

*– The BAYADA Way*

We feel our purpose as a home health care organization is to serve others and to help bring together care professionals and patients for the greater good. We have intentionally chosen our approach because as community members, it is our obligation to improve the lives of others. Families coping with significant illness or disability need help and support while caring for a family member. It is our responsibility to provide these families the support they need.

*At BAYADA, we are striving to fully align our day-to-day practices with our values and beliefs.*

We reject the common view that, in business, profits are primary. Many for-profit companies have neglected their obligation to society by putting profits first. At BAYADA, we view ourselves as social entrepreneurs leading a “for-benefit” professional services organization.<sup>3</sup> We maintain that profits earned from providing care to the elderly and those experiencing disability or illness should be used to serve more people who

need help. We actively search for individuals to join us who share our values and beliefs about the special purpose of our work.

At BAYADA, we are striving to fully align our day-to-day practices with our values and beliefs. Over the past decade, we have begun the process of alignment by clearly stating to our employees that our work is guided by our three core values—compassion, excellence, and reliability—and that the needs of our clients come first. Despite the many administrative, financial, and regulatory challenges inherent in our industry, we are passionate about our purpose and resolute in our beliefs.



Gabe D., who has cerebral palsy, receives expert home care from his nurse, John Bowen, RN

## Our History and Our Vision for the Future of Home Health Care

*“With a strong commitment from each of us, BAYADA Home Health Care will make it possible for millions of people worldwide to experience a better quality of life in the comfort of their own homes.”*

*– The BAYADA Way*

In 1975, BAYADA began its work in Philadelphia with three office employees, a handful of home health aides, and a modest number of clients. With hard work and a focus on providing the highest quality home health care services, we have grown steadily and consistently over the past 37 years. BAYADA is now one of the largest home health care organizations in the United States. Each week, more than 17,000 BAYADA professionals provide care to 22,000 clients in 25 states, supported by 2,500 office employees.

We believe the demand for home health care services will continue to grow. Health care services in the United States will continue to return to the home, where most care was delivered a century ago. Sophisticated, high quality health care can now be provided to many patients at home at a financial cost significantly less than the cost of services delivered in hospitals and facilities. Most importantly, people want to be able to stay in the comfort of their own homes whenever possible.

Of course, the need for home health care is not limited to the United States. Millions of people around the world lack access to needed health care services. We view home health care as a worldwide need and potentially a global movement. BAYADA is actively exploring opportunities to provide services to people outside of the U.S. In March 2010, we traveled to India to learn about their country’s health care delivery system. In September 2011,



Christopher S., who has Down syndrome, feels more self-confident and independent thanks to his BAYADA Nurse Marjorie Smith-Gale, RN

a delegation of fifteen distinguished physicians, nurses, and policy makers from Singapore traveled to our training center in Burlington, New Jersey to learn about home health care services in America. We were honored to serve as hosts and to describe the work we do in support of the expansion of home health care services in their country.

In the United States, we have significant resources that many other nations do not have. We believe it is our obligation to help as many people in their homes as possible, wherever the need exists. Our vision for the future at BAYADA is to serve millions of people worldwide and to foster collaborative relationships among health care providers in the United States and abroad who share our vision.

## Our Work is Guided by Our Core Values

*“We believe our clients and their families deserve home health care delivered with compassion, excellence, and reliability, our BAYADA core values.”*

*—The BAYADA Way*

### **Compassion**

*“Work with a spirit of universal faith, hope, and love.”*

*—The BAYADA Way*

Our first core value at BAYADA is compassion. We define compassion as the ability and willingness to relieve the suffering of others. To be truly compassionate, we feel a person must listen closely, show empathy, and respond to the needs of others. We believe that the contemporary emphasis on clinical detachment and objectivity within our health care system often neglects the human needs and experiences of the patient and family. Providing health care services for people in their own homes, however, offers us a unique opportunity to focus on the social and emotional well-being of those we serve. It is our responsibility to demonstrate exceptional care and kindness to our clients and their families because when we enter their homes, we enter their lives.

We aspire to follow the rich humanitarian tradition of generosity of spirit to guide our work. Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Florence Nightingale provide compelling historic examples of compassion and leadership in action. We believe that nurses, home health aides, therapists, and other clinicians choose to enter their professions because it is in their hearts to help other people. Our goal as an organization is to support and honor our health care professionals and, with *The BAYADA Way* as our guide, to create conditions under which our clinicians can provide our clients and their families the compassionate care they need and deserve.

### **Excellence**

*“Continuously improve our work through evaluation, education, and training.”*

*—The BAYADA Way*

BAYADA Home Health Care provides nursing, rehabilitative, therapeutic, habilitation, hospice, and assistive care services to children, adults, and seniors from more than 240 offices in the United States. Together, we share the goal of providing home health care services with the highest professional, ethical, and safety standards. We view the delivery of health care at home within the context of a developmental continuum across the lifespan. We have recently undertaken an organizational design process with the goal of building multi-disciplinary, specialized professional practices to meet the unique needs of our clients, utilizing treatment outcome and client satisfaction data to improve the quality of care provided.

Our patients and their families deserve the same—or better—quality health care services offered by specialized hospitals and medical practices. It is our goal to elevate the profession of caring for people at home within the health care system. We would like home health care to be viewed and experienced as a viable career option for skilled health care professionals. Accordingly, BAYADA has committed significant resources towards ongoing training and education, employee recognition and rewards programs, and a companywide leadership development initiative. We believe our employees are our greatest asset.



The BAYADA Way wallet card allows us to easily carry and share our mission, values, and beliefs everyday.



The **BAYADA** Way®

*Compassion. Excellence. Reliability.*

## **Reliability**

*“Be creative, flexible, and determined – get the job done for our clients.”*

*-The BAYADA Way*

Demonstrating our organization’s first two core values, compassion and excellence, is only possible if we consistently deliver expected services. In home health care, there is one absolute: we must show up. Our clients and their families are counting on us to keep our commitments as promised. The current national nursing shortage has created challenging conditions for home health care providers, but with creativity, flexibility, and determination, we strive to fulfill our clients’ needs promptly and thoroughly.

At BAYADA, we are laying the foundation to serve our communities far into the future. We provide a wide range of specialized services, which best positions us to sustain our efforts through changing economic, societal, and demographic conditions. We are planning for the long-term and we have purposely chosen to be mission-driven home health care providers, available to our clients and their families for generations to come. We are developing an ownership plan that utilizes profits to provide care to more people in more places, a governance structure that employs our country’s principles of checks and balances in decision-making, and a succession-planning process for employees at all levels of our organization. Our clients and their families can rely on us to be here now and in the future.

To clearly communicate the range and breadth of the services we provide, we recently changed the name of our company from Bayada Nurses to BAYADA Home Health Care. While approximately half of our employees are nurses, our organization also includes home health aides, physical therapists, social workers, occupational therapists, speech pathologists, and administrative and managerial staff. We want to be clear that we are a unified, multi-disciplinary team of BAYADA professionals working together for a common purpose.

*By focusing on the needs of our clients over the past 37 years, our company has been successful and has continued to grow.*

## **Doing the Right Thing**

*“We believe we must demonstrate honesty and integrity at all times.”*

*-The BAYADA Way*

Recent attention has been paid to the home health care industry because some companies have focused primarily on maximizing profits. It was recently discovered that a small number of home health care companies received payments for services that were not provided, and others may have provided medically unnecessary care in order to maximize payments from the Medicare reimbursement system. As a result, there is now an understandable focus on compliance by the government.

As home health care providers, we must comply with many regulatory, legal, and ethical standards. By focusing on the needs of our clients over the past 37 years, our company has been successful and has continued to grow. At BAYADA, we view compliance as a moral issue. As providers of home health care services to the elderly and those experiencing disability or illness, we will not compromise our moral, ethical, or legal obligations.



## Giving Back

*"We believe in providing community service where we live and work."*

*-The BAYADA Way*

As members of our local communities, we feel it is our obligation to contribute our time and resources to improve the lives of others. Many of our clients participate in and are supported by local community organizations, disease-specific support



*"I can't get the Haitian people out of my mind...and I can't wait to return," claims Kristine Heppner, a BAYADA LPN who volunteered in Haiti in 2011.*

groups, adaptive athletic activities, and other not-for-profit charitable causes. At BAYADA, we encourage and celebrate active participation in community service efforts outside of our professional roles. Our clients and their families appreciate and benefit from our efforts to support the organizations that support their unique needs.

As members of the world beyond our local communities, we feel just as strongly about contributing our time and resources to help others. In response to the recent, devastating earthquake in Haiti, BAYADA recruited more than 25 nurses to volunteer their services as part of the rescue and recovery effort. With the support of our

organization to provide air travel, expenses, and supplies, nurses from BAYADA and other agencies have travelled to Haiti for four to six weeks at a time, providing more than 800 shifts of nursing services to children and adults in need. We are proud of our team of professionals who have made a commitment to help the people of Haiti.

## Responsible Stewardship

*"We believe it is our responsibility to strengthen the organization's financial foundation and to support its growth."*

*-The BAYADA Way*

To actualize our vision to serve millions of people worldwide and build a lasting legacy, we must work hard, work efficiently, and allocate our resources wisely. In short, if we spend more money than we earn, we cannot continue to serve our clients. At BAYADA, we view ourselves as stewards of our organization, charged with the responsibility to utilize our resources prudently without compromising our values. Our relatively weak national economy has created particularly



More than 160 BAYADA employees unite at the state capitol building in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania as part of the fifth annual legislative BAYADA Day.



## We Are All in This Together

challenging conditions for home health care providers, which has led BAYADA to step up efforts to advocate for the profession of home health care. As stewards of our organization, we must demonstrate the value of home health care services to government officials, health insurance carriers, and policy makers. Without adequate funding for our services, we will not be able to recruit and retain skilled nurses, aides, and clinicians, and we will not be able to provide needed care to our clients.

Many of our recent advocacy initiatives have proven to be effective. In New Jersey, our advocacy efforts contributed to a reversal of the largest proposed rate cut in the history of the state's personal care program. In addition, a new law was unanimously passed raising clinical standards for nurses and home health care agencies providing services in schools to children who are ventilator-dependent. In Pennsylvania, our annual legislative day has heightened awareness; while across-the-board budget cuts have been made over the past two years, the home health care budget has been spared. In South Carolina, in response to a focused legislative campaign, a proviso was added back into the state's significantly reduced budget protecting home care services for medically fragile children.

*"We believe that building relationships and working together are critical to our success as a community of compassionate caregivers."*

*-The BAYADA Way*

Building, maintaining, and strengthening relationships—between and among our clients, caregivers, support staff, and our communities—is at the heart of the work we do. At BAYADA, we place a high value on relationships and feel that the quality of the home health care services we provide can only be strengthened by our unified spirit and efforts. As members of a team, we count on each other to demonstrate honesty, commitment, loyalty, and respect—to our clients, our fellow employees, and our organization.

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As home health care professionals, it is important to us that our clients and their families live their lives to the fullest, with a sense of well-being, dignity, and trust. Many of our clients are faced with complex medical and psycho-social challenges, and they cannot experience a better quality of life without a strong, collective commitment from us to work together as a team. We feel we can accomplish significantly more on behalf of our clients as a unified group than we can as individuals, and we believe it is our responsibility to do so. At BAYADA, we are all—home health care clients and families, caregivers, support and administrative staff, and the communities we serve—in this together.

## How Home Health Care Helps Me

By Jack Freedman

Hi, my name is Jack Freedman. I am 17 years old and I live in West Chester, Pennsylvania. I am in 9th grade at Unionville High School. My classes are Algebra 1, Essential Computer Applications, English, and Western Civilization. My BAYADA Nurses come to school on the bus with me every day.

BAYADA Nurses have been taking care of me since I was two or three years old. I need nurses to take care of me because I can't move myself. I have weak muscles because of spinal muscular atrophy. I have a power wheelchair; a feeding tube for formula, water, and other medicines; a BiPAP machine to help me breathe better; a cough-a-lator to help me cough; and a suction machine to get secretions out. My mom and dad drive me places in a big van with a wheelchair lift.

*“My nurses always come to my house when they are supposed to. I like that.”*

My very first BAYADA Nurse when I was little was a nurse named Wendy. I have had many great nurses take care of me for a lot of years. My BAYADA Nurses are very good to me. My nurses are friendly and happy and they always smile. My nurses know what I need. They know how to position me in my wheelchair and know how to adjust my driving switches. Whenever I am sick, my nurses know how to help with my cough-a-lator and BiPAP machine so I can breathe better. My overnight nurses turn me because I get uncomfortable and can't turn myself.

Every month, I like to get my schedule from Crystal at the BAYADA office. I like to keep track of when everyone is coming to take care of me. My nurses always come to my house when they are supposed to. I like that.

The names of my BAYADA Nurses who take care of me are Katie, Laura, Sheri, Stacy, Maureen, Brian, and Ellen. They are all very friendly, awesome, and they work really hard. I am lucky to have so many nurses who care about me.



Jack Freedman, now 17 years old, with his BAYADA Nurse Katie Mitros. In the some 6,000 days of his life, more than 4,000 have been spent with a BAYADA Nurse at home and school.



Jack Freedman and his dad Al (left), and Mark Baiada support the walk to find a cure for spinal muscular atrophy (SMA). BAYADA celebrates active participation in community service.

## About the Authors

**J. Mark Baiada** founded BAYADA Home Health Care in 1975 with the mission to help people have a safe home life with comfort, independence, and dignity. More than three decades later, BAYADA has grown from its humble beginnings to become a national leader in health care at home. Residents of Moorestown, NJ, Mr. Baiada and his wife, Ann, RN, CRRN, have five children and seven grandchildren.

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**Albert Freedman, Ph.D.** is a child and family psychologist in independent practice, a frequent speaker on the topic of caring for children with special needs, and a consultant to BAYADA Home Health Care. Dr. Freedman has two children, Jack (1995), a BAYADA pediatric client, and Cara (2000). Dr. Freedman lives in Chester County, Pennsylvania.

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**Jack Freedman** is 17 years old and a 9th grader at Unionville High School in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. He has been a presenter at health care conferences, helping professionals understand what it is like to be a patient. He enjoys seeing his friends at school, watching movies, swimming, driving his power wheelchair at the mall, and using EyeGaze technology with his computer. During the summer, Jack loves his time at the Pennsylvania Vent Camp where he will be a camper for his 6th season.

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*Compassion. Excellence. Reliability.*

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To learn more about *The BAYADA Way*  
go to [www.bayada.com](http://www.bayada.com).