

you.’” Although she was embarrassed and tried to talk him out of it, Marty’s dad prevailed. On a cold December day in 1974, they met Mark, who was clean-cut, dressed professionally in a suit, and was completely disarming. “Mark introduced himself. He’s a friendly, nice guy, and my dad said, ‘cool’ and he turned around and walked out. For the rest of my dad’s life, they were friends, and the three of us often had lunch together,” says Marty.

Marty started in January as the company’s first Client Services Manager (or Staff Supervisor at the time). Next, Mark hired Bev Altman, RN, a part-time employee who helped with marketing. While Mark devoted himself to the fledgling business, Peggy worked full-time at Jefferson Hospital as a social worker. “We started on a bare-bones budget,” says Mark, adding he did everything himself, from incorporating the company to designing the first logo and the business forms to performing the payroll and accounting services.

Opening the doors

In January 1975, the newly incorporated RN Home Health Care opened for business in sublet space on the second floor of 1426 Walnut Street in Philadelphia. Mark, Marty, and Bev began to admit a handful of clients, mostly seniors needing home health aide services. The aides were hired based on experience, their interview, and references; they were also tested on their knowledge of the sprawling network of buses, streetcars, and trains run by the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority, better known as SEPTA.



As the managers quickly learned, employees “called out” far more often than expected. In home health care parlance, a callout means that the field employee calls in sick or has another reason for not being able to go to a scheduled shift. Then as now, if there’s a callout from a field employee, the manager in charge has to quickly figure out how to cover the shift.

“If there was a callout, you had to find the right person in a narrow window of time. We worked hard together, and felt fully accountable that we needed to figure it out. We

ABOVE: The enthusiastic founder at the door of the first office, located at 1426 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.