

knew what was expected and that we had to come through for the clients,” says Linda Siessel, who joined the company in 1980 and is now Chief Operating Officer, Home Care Services, based in Morristown, New Jersey. “At the end of the day, it felt good to see the results and to hear the appreciation from clients.”

Camaraderie developed fast in those years. There’s something about the start-up phase of a business that turns colleagues into lifelong friends who become as close as family. Maybe it’s the team-like environment, the shared challenge of operating on a shoestring budget, or the collective long hours. For these reasons and more, unshakable bonds are forged—as they certainly were during the early years of RN Home Health Care.

When another Marty came aboard—Marty (Martha) Soroka, who started in 1977—she was amazed that the founder and president’s office consisted of a card table and a stool inside the utility closet. Mark had moved there temporarily to accommodate the growing staff.

The close-knit bunch worked long hours together, and Mark appreciated them. As a perk on hot summer days, he rented a room at the Holiday Inn next door so staff could go for swims. “During the day, we took turns going to the hotel pool and at the end of the day, we all went and had a little party,” says Marty Soroka, Division Director of the Personal Care Assistant office in Philadelphia.

Laughs abounded, often to relieve stress but sometimes at Mark’s expense. One day, he entered the office excited about his new “negative ion generator.” He explained that



ABOVE: Marty Soroka in 1981. As a Service Coordinator (now Client Services Manager), Marty arranged homemaker service for elderly clients in north central Philadelphia.

it would eliminate negativity and make everyone happier. “Most of us were afraid of going near it because we thought we could get cancer from it,” says Marty (Bodor) Boughey. “But Marty Soroka volunteered to put it on her desk. When we went to talk to her, we all would walk a big circle around her.”

Landing the first major contract

The start-up phase involved a lot of prospecting. Mark tried to drum up referrals by calling local hospitals to let them know about his new agency. He continued placing ads in newspapers. “I was very research-oriented and would keep track of how many calls we received and how many turned to cases. I remember I wanted to get a new case a day,” he says, adding that it took less than six months to meet his goal.

As the company started growing, so did the Baiada family. In 1976, Peggy was pregnant. While Mark and Peggy were busy preparing for their exciting new addition at home, Mark was also very busy at work. Mark and Marty (Bodor) Boughey were collaborating on an important proposal that could secure a contract with the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging™, which provided thousands of low-income senior citizens with home care services. Itself a nonprofit, at first PCA had hired only nonprofit agencies as providers. Some people in the industry exhibited a subtle bias against privately owned proprietary agencies like RN Home Health Care, despite the fact that profit margins were typically low. RN Home Health Care passed the first