

Putting a stake in the ground

The business grew fast, but not too fast. As with building the sea wall, Mark recognized that certain essentials cannot and should not be rushed. One of them, he believes, is interviewing. There was (and still is) thoughtful consideration of every job candidate. With a goal of fostering a warm, family-like environment for the company and for clients, Mark knew employees need to be extremely reliable and have a certain personality—a caring one. It's fairly easy to evaluate a person's skills and teach what needs to be learned; it's harder to evaluate and instill values like compassion and reliability. Although *The BAYADA Way* was still years away from being put into words, those core values were the qualities Mark prioritized.

A family friend once said to Mark, "If you stand for something, you'll attract people who feel the same way. You have to put a stake in the ground." This made innate sense. It was true of the U.S. Marines and the Jesuits, two entities that Mark admires. So he refined his process of finding like-minded professionals. Hiring the right people meant that those individuals became like family, because they shared RN Home Health Care's values. They bonded as they worked long hours together to answer calls and get shifts covered. They modeled the "community of compassionate caregivers" decades before that concept appeared in *The BAYADA Way*. Eventually, they became mentors to a new generation of employees, a vital role as the company grew. Mark knew hiring like-minded employees would make connections to last a lifetime, produce long-term careers at

BAYADA, and help him fulfill his vision of building a successful company while caring for others.

Bringing employees together for smiles, laughs, and stress reduction was a top priority. Just as the extended Baiada family regularly gathered for celebrations, the family of BAYADA employees loved to party, too. Any occasion will do: parties for recognizing employees, quarterly parties, holiday parties, billing records parties, summer parties, parties to celebrate marriages and births, and sometimes parties for no reason at all. "Work hard, play hard" was the rallying cry. In time, even the early training retreats would morph into today's weekend-long, party and recognition-rich Awards Weekend celebrations.



"Mark always had, and still has, a great sense of humor and a great way of making you feel like you're part of the family. You were part of what he wanted the company to become."

JOANNE WILSON, who started in 1982 as an Accounting Supervisor and is currently a Director working in the Home Care Technology office

LEFT: Linda Siessel, Kathy Moran Dempsey, Carole McMahon, Vicki Bolcar, and Marion Fiero getting into the swing of "work hard, play hard" in the 1980s.