

“You have to listen really carefully, try to connect with them, and try to understand the total situation. If you make a promise, you keep that commitment. Sometimes we need to help each other to always listen closely, always let our smiles be seen and felt even on a bad day, because you have to do this reliably. It is easy to get a little snippy when you are under pressure. When you are working in home care, you have to realize that the situations your clients are facing are extremely difficult—something they never wanted for themselves or their family. You have to empathize and let that pressure motivate you to do a better job.”

Kindness toward clients and kindness toward employees were one and the same. Mark knew that committed employees were the foundation of the company's success. In fact, early on, he even supported an office manager who wanted to move south to open the Pinellas Park, Florida, office. That was the first of many offices opened by trustworthy employees with a hankering to relocate. Not all of these offices survived, but most did, and they created a pattern in which company growth sprang from real human relationships as well as research and data analysis.

As companies and families get bigger and start to disperse, past rituals can get lost. Mark took pains not to let that happen. To keep people connected, the company launched the *RN Home Health Care Newsletter*. It wasn't fancy, more like a letter from home. That was the idea—to keep employees in different offices informed of news, community service efforts, and billings, as well as engagements, marriages, births, and passings. Each issue ended with a heart-tugging thank-you note from a client or a client's



ABOVE: Tom Mylet was one of several early Philadelphia-area employees who remain with BAYADA at its fortieth anniversary. Tom went on to open and build the company's operations in North Carolina.

BELOW: His early name badge was made on a machine at Headquarters. Making those name badges was an occasional after-school task for young David Baiada.



family. The newsletter evolved into the more robust *BAYADA Bulletin*, which transitioned from print publication to e-distribution in 2000. To this day, the weekly *BAYADA Bulletin* remains jam-packed with employee submissions.

A new name and other turning points

With growth came the decision to change the company name. RN Home Health Care had been tweaked a few times, to RN Home Care and RN Health Services, during the early years. Mark now wanted to solidly differentiate the company in a rapidly growing market. He is a great believer in consensus, so he asked employees for ideas and opinions. Some of his own choices, he admits, were “really out there.”

If Mark had had his way, the company might have been renamed Hygieia, for the Greek goddess of health; or Little Nurses for Home Care, after the Little Sisters of the Poor; or Oak or Elm or Maple, for solidity. Fortunately, wisdom prevailed. As Mark explains, “Finally someone said, ‘Let's call it Baiada.’ And I thought, ‘That's a little prideful.’ Then I thought, well, people will know there's somebody behind this company who takes responsibility for it. But there's the spelling problem. I've lived with it. I grew up with it. I know how people can never get Baiada right. So someone suggested we just change the spelling.” The phonetic spelling of Baiada would make it easier to spell and pronounce. That solution had worked well for the Bloch family, who founded H&R Block, the Toyoda family, who founded Toyota Motor Company, and Marcel Bich, the Frenchman who invented Bic pens.