



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Abilene State Supported Living Center

OUR MISSION:

*To empower people to make choices
that result in a life of dignity and
increased independence.*

AbSSLC News

Abilene SSLC

Week of January 5th, 2026

January 2026 Employee of the Month!

Carissa Mason – Campus Nursing



Tell us about your time with AbSSLC. When did you start? What positions have you held since being here?

In January, I will have been here 14 years. I began as a DSP and then did the Stipend program to be an LVN. I've been nursing here for about 9 yrs now.

What makes you do what you do?

The people. I began as an 18 year-old single mom just looking for a stable income ... but what I found was a calling bigger than I ever imagined it would be.

Tell us about your favorite memory in your time at AbSSLC?

Anytime I get to make a positive difference in the lives of those I serve it is treasured as a memory. One year I helped walk two sweet ladies through Christmas Lane and their smiles were the BEST! Just seeing their pure Joy makes my heart overflow! Anytime a resident tells me "Thank you" or even those who can't speak ... if you look in their eyes, you can see the gratitude they feel!

What recommendations do you have for other staff?

Treat/care for others how you would want to be treated/cared for. Do the extra "little things" to make somebody feel seen/heard each day. It doesn't have to be a big task. Something as simple as finding the favorite song and playing it during an ADL, let them have choices in what they can, acknowledge them as a person and not a job, lend a hand where you can, do what you can to make their day brighter. Same goes for co-workers too. A small act of kindness really does go a long way!

If you have a magic wand, what is something you would change about AbSSLC to make it better for those we serve?

I have to say staffing. Staffing is such a strain on so many different jobs here. If we could get (and keep) positive, good, caring staff what a difference it would make. This job isn't for everyone, and we all know it is challenging but PLEASE friends, never lose sight of the impact you make doing what you do. YOU matter. Your smile and love for those we serve makes a difference!

If you have had a mentor at AbSSLC, can you name that person and something they instilled in you?

Alleen Prince LVN. She took me under her wing as a new "baby nurse" and showed me how to love and advocate for those we serve. Sometimes, speaking up/out feels scary and you aren't always heard but I saw her advocate time and time again for the people she cared for and it inspired me to do the same. As a young DSP I worked with amazing ladies at 6390/5962 and they all showed me great traits to become hard working while also loving the ladies. We had an awesome team back then!

Any other comments to include your story?

Although it can be hard, come to work each day and do your best to be a light. Remember, those we serve would love to serve themselves if they could ... but they can't and that is why we are here. We serve a population who is overlooked and misunderstood by most of the world. But we get the chance to SEE them for who they are beyond their diagnosis. They are people like me and you. Take pride in what you do and find a way each day to share LOVE and LIGHT with everyone you encounter. I truly believe we are the hands and feet of Jesus for those we serve.

"Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me - Matthew 25:40

SRT Visit 2026!

Our State Review Team Visit is occurring next week! During this time, we will have a large number of staff from State Office reviewing many areas across the homes & program areas. Here are few reminders for things they will be looking to see ...

- Is Independence being promoted during mealtime?
- Is organized Active Treatment occurring in the Homes & Program areas?
- Is LOS documentation up to date?
- Are the formula feeding bags clean, properly labeled i.e. date, time, initials, and individual's name?
- Are Privacy Screens/Curtains being used during Med Pass?
- Are staff prompting individuals to leave the immediate med pass area when not receiving medications?
- Are there molding strips missing along any of the walls? If yes, is there a work order?
- Are the walls in good repair (painted)? If no, is there a work order?
- Are there any missing or non-working light bulbs? If yes, is there a work order?
- Do all stalls have working toilet paper holders? If no, is there a work order?
- Are all the appliances clean?
- Are all appliances in good working condition? If no, is there a work order?
- Are bedrooms and living areas clean, organized and sanitary & odor free?
- Is Housekeeping being contacted immediately whenever a home needs a clean up that cannot be immediately taken care of by home staff?
- Are Water Temperature Checks being completed and documented as scheduled?
- Do all the daily schedules match the current activities for the individuals on the home?
- Are the communication devices for those who need them available?
- Are the communication devices for those who need them in good repair? If no, was Habilitation Therapy notified of the problem?
- Are staff checking for correct food texture during mealtime?
- Are staff offering regular water to individuals during mealtime.
- Do individual's and staff know how to report witnessed or suspected ANE?

Important Gate & Vehicle Reminders

Before getting in your car to drive away, you should do a walkaround to ensure no one is behind or under it.



Always ensure your vehicle is locked with the windows rolled-up. You can leave them open 1" for ventilation if needed.

Driving a pickup? Always double-check the bed of your truck to ensure you haven't gained an extra passenger. Staff at the gate will also be performing random checks for vehicles exiting.

Please **dim your lights** when approaching the gate (coming in or leaving). This makes a huge difference for Gate Staff!

Holiday Contest Winners!

Home Winners

1st – 6760 Circle Drive

2nd – 6690 Circle Drive

3rd – 6710 Circle Drive

Activity Center Winners

1st – 6340 3rd Street

2nd – 5923 2nd Street

3rd – 5922 2nd Street

Wash your hands!



Shout Outs!

I would like to give a shout out to **Carmelita Ballesteros** from 6521 Peach, 2-10 - she will come-in early so the 10-6 don't have to holdover. She will holdover 10 to 6 to help out she goes above and beyond she is kind & hardworking. She deserves people to know how great she is.

Would like to Shout Out to **Katie, RN** at **5971 Service Avenue**. She is one of the smartest people I know. She is truly amazing. Thank you Katie for all you do daily and for caring so much for our individuals, LVN's and DSP's! We all appreciate you so much!

Shout Out to the **10-6 staff** at **6350 1st Street** for ALWAYS coming to work and always being on time! They go above and beyond their job duties and accept the holdovers as they come because they are TEAM players. They love the ladies they serve and treat them with love, kindness and respect. They are also thankful for all the hard work and teamwork from the 6-2 staff, 2-10 staff and their supervisor as well as other employees who come to thome and work hard with them to it a great place to work. WAY TO GO EVERYONE. Keep up the great work. HAPPY NEW YEAR! God bless to all!

Shout Out to **Jessica DelaCruz** – 6690 Circle Drive. She will go far and beyond the call of duty for anyone when asked to help. She is right on top of it at any point!

A Shout Out to **Cynthia Cross**, Food Service at 6710 Circle Drive. She goes way beyond her job description by making each plate for each meal look so inviting. She loves the home and the people she serves.

Shout Out to the **Vocational Department** for all that they do for our Individuals! They have forged amazing bonds with the individuals and continue to show up and work hard for them.

Click the link to nominate a deserving staff member for the **February 2026 Employee of the Month!**

[AbSSLC Employee of the Month Nominations \(February 2026\) – Fill out form](#)



Shout Out Abilene!

We want to hear from you! Have a suggestion on how to make Abilene SSLC the best place ever to live & work? Have a concern to express? Want to recognize someone for their amazing work?

- Email Jeff Goza with their name and your comments
- Text their name and your comments to 325.370.4525
- "Click the Link" or Scan the QR Code to use the **100% anonymous** feedback link

Shout Out and let us know!



SCAN ME

