



Melbourne
Terrace
REHABILITATION CENTER

Maria Phelan
Administrator

Making home [Melbourne Terrace] where friends meet, family gathers, and relationships grow

Administrator, Maria Phelan is a woman of many dimensions. She's fluent in two languages, (Tagalog and English) has traveled and lived in areas in and out of the United States, and knows what it's like to feel out of sorts and away from home. That feeling is why she is an adept leader and change-maker in the skilled nursing industry.

At the tender age of seven, Maria left her beloved grandmother and her native home in the Philippines. Her American father was re-stationed to Hurlburt Air Force Base in Florida's Okaloosa County. Born in the Philippines, and raised in Florida as a US citizen, there were moments of trying to belong in an ever changing world.

"There was a bit of struggle trying to learn a whole new world...new language...new culture," says Maria. What helped her through the transition was a solid family. "My dad and his dad are military men and I grew up with order and discipline. But my mom was the "fun" one and I gratefully learned from all my family."

Being bicultural, Maria took part in the life of an American and a Filipino. Maria admits that blending in gave her the capacity and willingness to acknowledge competing perspectives. It also meant she is keen at forging links between generations and cultures. But dealing with different mindsets and knowing how to integrate them into a coherent whole came from a solid family base.

It was there she learned the meaning of respect for everyone and knowing how to reach out to anyone who did not feel at home. "I want everyone to know that they're important. So, I try to be present for everyone in my home [Melbourne Terrace]."

Maria knows that the ache for home lives in all of us and that everyone deserves a place where they can be safe and be who they are. She owes that mindset to her parents. "They are such giving people and their ability to reach out to anyone in need built the foundation of what I do today," she says.

She says she chose her profession because she wanted to make a difference for those who struggle. Earning her masters (Executive Health Service Administration) at the University of Central Florida, she would apply her studies to real world issues.

After college, Maria did work and experience the acute medical environment, the home health arena, and the skilled nursing industry. "My takeaway was the ability to see the breadth of the health care continuum as it relates to seniors."

"What I bring to my home at Melbourne Terrace, is a driving force to seek out those in need, and make a difference for those who are vulnerable," she says. For Maria, it's comes effortlessly. Her background, the solidity of family and her bicultural perspective, enriches all the lives she touches.