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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Nursing Assistants graduate from Cortland Acres**

**Thomas, WV** – This is the fourth group of Nursing Assistants to graduate from Cortland’s CNA training program since its inception in April, 2018. While it’s the fourth class to complete the necessary training to earn a CNA certification, Cynthia Jeffers and Jennifer Lugo were the first to take advantage of the new online training component, a partnership with Straightaway CNA Edge Training. They will each take the West Virginia State Certification Exam in a few weeks to become Certified Nursing Assistants.

“Every group is different”, explains training coordinator Kathy Supak. “We had a small, but very dedicated group of students take the course this go-around. They took advantage of the flexible, online training modules and were well prepared to participate in hands-on training with Cortland residents”.

Having established the tradition of a formal graduation ceremony in 2018 - family members or close friends participate in the ceremony by applying the coveted Florence Nightingale “Lady of the Lamp” pin to individual graduates - the event has become a fitting celebration of learning while also welcoming graduates to the Cortland family. This graduation ceremony was made even more special as opening remarks were made by Cortland resident and President of Resident Council, Stanley “Champ” Sedmock, Jr. who congratulated each graduate on their accomplishments and welcomed them to his home, Cortland Acres.

The guiding principles of resident-centered care continue to remain core to daily life for residents at Cortland Acres. The entire staff operates as a support team for residents – each member responsible for different skills and level of care and CNAs play a pivotal role in that care.

“I feel like I finally belong somewhere,” explains Lugo. “I’ve been working all my life, but I can honestly say that becoming a CNA is my new career and it gives me purpose.” New nursing assistant Jeffers states that Cortland’s CNA training “is a way of taking command of my life. Following in my late mother’s footsteps and providing compassionate, helpful care is important to me. Having recently moved here from Kentucky, taking this training has empowered me. I’m proud of how far I’ve come and feel I can accomplish anything.”

The next CNA class is scheduled to start in February. Space is limited so anyone interested in enrolling, please contact Lois Nelson or Kathy Supak at Cortland Acres at (304) 463-4181.

Cortland Acres is a non-profit corporation offering state-of-the-art nursing care and skilled rehabilitation on a spacious 35-acre campus in the heart of scenic Tucker County, West Virginia. The Cortland campus includes a 94-bed long-term care facility, inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation and therapy options, as well as a variety of independent living opportunities. For more information call 304-463-4181 or visit [www.cortlandacres.org](http://www.cortlandacres.org).

**Helping people age in healthy, affordable, and meaningful ways.**

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Photo 1: (left to right) Nursing Assistant graduates, Jennifer Lugo and Cynthia Jeffers pose with their Cortland Acre certificates after the official pinning ceremony on Friday, January 4, 2019.

Optional Photo 2: (left to right) Director of Staff Development and In-Service Coordinator, Kathy Supak and Stanley “Champ” Sedmock, Cortland Acres resident and President of Resident Councel offer congratulations and words of encouragement for the graduates and audience members during the Nursing Assistant pinning ceremony on Friday, January 4, 2019.

Optional Photo 3: (left to right) Jennifer Lugo, Director of Staff Development and In-Service Coordinator, Kathy Supak, and Jennifer Lugo celebrate graduation at Cortland Acres on Friday, January 4, 2019.