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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Nursing Assistants graduate from Cortland Acres**

**Thomas, WV** – Cortland Acres is proud to announce the graduation of seven, highly qualified Nursing Assistant students from their in-house Certified Nursing Assistant training program. As with the previous four graduating classes, the six-week course culminated with an evening graduation and pinning ceremony held at Cortland Acres on Friday, April 5th and attended by family and friends. All seven graduates have accepted Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) positions with Cortland Acres and will take their West Virginia exam to become certified in the coming weeks.

The graduation ceremony and pinning of Florence Nightingale “Lady of the Lamp” pin has become a celebration of learning and a chance to welcome graduates to the Cortland family. Dan Bucher, Director of Development, delivered the welcome address to the crowd and included high praise to the students for their dedication and anecdotal words of wisdom.

Cortland’s CNA training program combines an initial three-week online educational component from Straightaway CNA Edge Training and hands-on practical training with the residents at Cortland Acres under the supervision of their instructor, Kathy Supak.

“Each time I instruct a class, I wait for “it”, explains training coordinator Kathy Supak. “It” is the moment of reckoning. The excitement a student feels from a residents’ smile or when they communicate their appreciation. To me, this is the most rewarding time of the program. I wish I could bottle it and hand it out to people that may have forgotten that feeling…that feeling of making a difference in a resident’s life.”

The pride is evident in the graduates – Ashleigh Forrester, Devon Lambruno, Carolyn Nicholas, Mary-Cathrine Pennington, Jonathan Rhodes, Nicole Swart and Catherine Weeks – as they begin this exciting chapter in their lives. Graduate Swart is “thankful to be able to continue in the healthcare profession is West Virginia…it’s what I love to do.” Lambruno offers, “I would highly recommend taking the CNA course through Cortland Acres.” Finally, Swart sums it up best when she explains, “I’m looking forward to making a difference in the lives of the residents here at Cortland Acres.”

The next CNA class is scheduled to start later this month. 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: Cortland’s most recent CNA graduating class. From left to right (front row): Catherine Weeks, Carolyn Nicholas, Ashleigh Forrester, Nicole Swart, Mary-Cathrine Pennington, and Devon Lambruno; (back row): instructor Kathy Supak and Jonathan Rhodes.

Photo 2: Ashleigh Forrester receives her Florence Nightingale “Lady of the Lamp” pin from her boyfriend Tom Wilson at Cortland’s CNA graduation last Friday evening.

Photo 3: Cortland’s Director of Development, Dan Bucher, welcomes graduates, family, friends and residents to the CNA graduation and pinning ceremony held at Cortland Acres last Friday.