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A message from the president

Mama’s Cooking – and Sacrifices

A school teacher asked a boy this question:

“Suppose your mother baked a pie and there were seven of you – your parents and five children. What part of the pie would you get?”

“A sixth,” replied the boy.

“I’m afraid you don’t know your fractions,” said the teacher. “Remember, there are seven of you.”

“Yes, Teacher,” said the boy, “but you don’t know my mother. Mother would say she didn’t want any pie.”

Most likely, you can relate to that story. I certainly can. While we were all home, my mother had to take care of cooking for four males – my father and three of us boys. She always prepared a pie or cake, often more than one, for supper. And if she ate any of those made-from-scratch treats, it was always after we had all the helpings we wanted.

Her Southern-fried chicken was incomparable, and her pot roast – which was a favorite at our table – was so tender it fell apart at the touch of a fork. Yet, the only meat she preferred was country ham. Despite her food preferences, Mama always saw to it that we had our favorite dishes.

One of the most amazing characteristics of a mother is her willingness to sacrifice her own desires for her family.

The word sacrifice means forfeiture of something highly valued for the sake of one considered to have a greater value or claim. Whether it’s a piece of pie or valuable time, all mothers give up what they want for the benefit of their children. But the giving of themselves is not done in vain; there are great rewards. Having a servant’s heart is a theme throughout the Bible.

There is no greater reward than reaping the benefits of sacrificing personal needs for the needs of others. The associates of Life Care and Century Park understand – and practice – this principle. It plays out in our centers every day.

Mother’s Day was Sunday, May 8. Although my mother passed away in 1999, it is always a day in which I thank God for the sacrifices of Rebecca Sullivan Hunter for me and my brothers. And you and I can demonstrate our gratitude by honoring the mothers we serve in our centers.

Sincerely,

Beecher Hunter

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The Highlands Named Life Care’s 2015 Top Team in Walk to End Alzheimer’s

From dress-down days to basket raffles, The Highlands in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, went all out in its efforts to end Alzheimer’s. Coming in at $5,168.45, this facility was named Life Care’s Top Team for the 2015 Walk to End Alzheimer’s fundraising efforts.

“Our families, residents and community benefit directly from our support of the walk through the services the association is then able to provide,” said Michael Brothers, interim executive director of The Highlands. “We all want a cure to Alzheimer’s disease, and this is one way we can make a difference.”

The Highlands’ 2015 theme was “Purple for a Cause.” They kicked off 2015 fundraising efforts with a purple snack team registration event.

Century Park Associates Names Dan Swiatkiewicz Director of Sales and Marketing

Swiatkiewicz most recently served as director of sales and marketing for Spectrum Retirement Communities in Denver, overseeing dining in 30 senior living communities. Prior to that appointment, he was regional director of sales and marketing for Life Care Centers of America’s Pikes Peak Region for five years. He is a licensed nursing home administrator and served as an interim executive director for several buildings in the Pikes Peak Region.

Starting his career in senior living as a social worker in Castle Rock, Colorado, Swiatkiewicz has more than 14 years of experience in the industry. “I have always enjoyed working with people and have a passion for serving others,” said Swiatkiewicz. “I love being in the buildings around the residents and associates, and I love training, supporting and encouraging our sales associates and building teams to be their best.”

Century Park Associates recently named Dan Swiatkiewicz as its national director of sales and marketing.

Originally from Enfield, Connecticut, Swiatkiewicz earned his bachelor’s degree in sociology from Grove City College in Grove City, Pennsylvania. Swiatkiewicz is currently working out of Denver and travels to the company’s communities across the country. “Dan has that positive energy that motivates others around him to do their best,” said Jenny Graham, Century Park’s director of operations. “He is skilled in sales and marketing efforts and enjoys sharing his passion with the community sales teams. Dan was a strong asset to the Mountain Region team, and we are lucky to have him throughout all of Century Park.”

Greg Yengo to Lead Century Park Associates’ Dining Services

Gengo earned a degree in business from Michigan State University with an emphasis in hotel, restaurant and institutional management and started his culinary career in restaurants, hotels and casinos. He also spent eight years as a culinary arts instructor at the Art Institute of Colorado.

“I’ve been in this business all my life, since I was about 12 helping out in my grandparents’ Italian restaurant in New York,” said Yengo. “Once this gets in your blood, it’s hard to get out.”

Yengo added that he has enjoyed serving seniors over the last few years. “I love hearing their stories and their life experiences,” he said.

Yengo is currently based in the Denver area and will travel to Century Park’s communities to provide support and training.

Greg Yengo was recently named national director of dining services for Century Park Associates. In this role, Yengo oversees dining services for the company’s more than 40 senior living communities in 20 states.

“Meals are the most important activity of the day for our residents, and we want to give them the most enjoyable experience, from the ambiance to the food quality,” said Jenny Graham, Century Park’s director of operations. “Greg can certainly help us do that. He is very hands-on and has great restaurant and culinary experience. He is a great mentor for new and experienced dining services directors.”

Most recently, Yengo served for five years as regional director of dining services for Spectrum Retirement Communities in Denver, overseeing dining in 30 senior living communities. Prior to that appointment, he was executive chef at Exempla Lutheran Medical Center in Wheat Ridge. He has also been the executive chef at Rose Medical Center in Denver.

Greg Yengo was recently named national director of dining services for Century Park Associates.
ONE GIANT LEAP FOR WELLNESS

By Xavier Jasso, Life Care Public Relations

What do we mean by “Healthy Lifestyle?”

It’s the day-to-day choices we each make that can improve our health and well-being – like healthy eating, being physically active, not smoking, managing stress, wearing seatbelts – just to name a few.

The Wellness Committee strives to equip associates with the tools they can use on their journey to healthier living. Every week, the committee provides a Tip of the Week, a one-page article focused on a range of different topics such as exercise, mental health or healthy eating habits. In addition, the committee also publishes “Spotsight: On Health,” a monthly e-blast which focuses on individual associates and their personal journeys and success to healthier lifestyles. To further engage corporate associates, the Wellness Committee also hosts a number of events to encourage healthier lifestyles, such as the Lunch & Learn, a short wellness seminar offered every few months, and the Wellness Fair, where many health-related vendors from the community present their products or services at various booths.

“Our associates are our No. 1 resource,” explained Tanya Mazzolini, vice president of accounting and member of the corporate Wellness Committee. “A wellness program is important because it allows us to encourage our associates to be healthy.”

In an effort to focus on associates as Life Care’s most valuable resource, a company-wide wellness program named Fit for Life was created in 2007. A group of 12 volunteers form the Wellness Committee, focused on designing and implementing wellness initiatives as well as supporting facilities on the journey to begin a facility-specific wellness program.

The goal of the Fit for Life program is to encourage associates and their families to adopt and practice healthier lifestyles to improve their physical and mental well-being. The goal is achieved by making the work environment a place where:

• Healthy behaviors are promoted, encouraged and supported.
• Associates have easy access to programs to help them make better lifestyle choices.
• Associates have the opportunity to practice healthy lifestyle behaviors.

The Wellness Fair also offers free health risk assessments and flu shots to corporate associates and spouses.

To engage the company as a whole, the Wellness Committee also oversees the Steps Program, available to Life Care associates nationwide in which associates can track their steps either through the use of a pedometer or through an electronic converting system located on Village Square. The Steps Program is also used in the Fit for Life Contest, a contest in which all Life Care and Century Park corporate and facility associates are eligible to participate. Associates track their steps throughout the year and can win awards monthly, quarterly and annually. Monthly awards are distributed to the top steppers, individuals who accumulated the most steps during the month. Quarterly awards are given to the top stepper in each of the divisions of Life Care, as well as a top stepper from Century Park. The annual awards, however, are given to winners of a random drawing of all those who participated in the program during the year. In 2015, two second runners-up received $500 and one vacation day, the first runner-up received $750 and two vacation days, and the grand-prize winner received $2,500 and three vacation days.

The Steps Program has seen great strides (pun intended!) in participation: from 2014 to 2015 it saw an increase of 38 percent. With all the extra steps, Life Care associates in 2015 were able to log in a whopping 325,010,106 steps, equivalent to 162.5 million miles. That’s enough steps to circle the globe 6.5 times! But the Wellness Committee hopes to get even more people on board.

“This year we are planning to increase the collaboration between the facilities’ wellness committees and the corporate Wellness Committee,” said Kathi Christensen, executive secretary in the Human Resources department and member of the corporate Wellness Committee. “We want to find out what is most effective in their buildings so we can implement them here at the corporate offices, as well as share what resources we can to help them with their own programs. We want to pull it all together to create an even greater sense of teamwork toward healthier living.”

The Committee is continuously coming up with unique ways to encourage wellness in our associates’ lives, said Ron England, senior business analyst in IT and member of the corporate Wellness Committee. “We’ve seen that it works, and we will continue our efforts!”

The true purpose of Fit for Life does not lie in prizes, but the benefits of healthier lifestyles. The Wellness department site hosts resources and ideas to help start or enhance the wellness in your own life! Check it out by visiting Village Square and clicking the Fit for Life logo! 
A Little Training Goes a LONG WAY:
Life Care Facilities Help New CNAs Jumpstart Careers

Keyona Borth was looking for direction for her career. She had friends and family members working in health care, and she wanted to try that path for herself. Becoming a certified nursing assistant was the natural place to start. Unfortunately, the expense of the training stood in her way.

That is, until Life Care Center of Plymouth, Massachusetts, decided to offer CNA classes for free in December 2015. Borth and several other aspiring CNAs jumped at the opportunity.

“The program is being offered free of charge as a commitment on our part to make the program available to people who have a genuine desire to work with the elderly,” said John Bonfardeci, executive director.

Jennifer Shakeri, a registered nurse at the center, taught the pilot course, which included a combination of study/coursework and clinical time. The CNA classes are a win-win-win. Participants get to be mentored into a career. The facility gets to train its (hopefully) future associates in Life Care policies and procedures, and on its equipment, from the get-go. And residents get some extra attention while the students are training and have a rapport already in place if the graduates start work there.

The four pilot class students at Life Care Center of Plymouth graduated on Jan. 7, 2016, and went on to take their certification exam. Shakeri went with them to the site to encourage them before they took the test.

“The students did a class evaluation, and we got really good reviews,” said Bonfardeci.

“My favorite part is getting to bond with the residents,” Borth said. “The things that they can’t do themselves I can help them with, and that is rewarding.”

Life Care Center of Plymouth is not the only Life Care center offering such training. Dozens of other buildings around the country host CNA classes, often for free or at a reduced cost, while still others serve as sites for local nursing students to do their clinicals.

Life Care Center of Seneca, Kansas, is one of the latter types. Laura Noland, director of nursing at Life Care Center of Seneca, has been teaching the clinicals on site since the ‘90s, and Ashley Harbolt, MDS coordinator, assists her.

“I think they all feel like they’ve gained a lot of knowledge,” Harbolt said. “We’ve had several individuals come through the clinicals and decide they want to work here.”

The state of Kansas makes it even easier for people to become CNAs – when students pass their certification exam, the state reimburses them for the training.

Several centers in East Tennessee were also feeling the need for a bigger pool of nursing assistants and started CNA classes on site within the last few years.

“We were seeing a large number of open positions,” said Jennifer Solomon, vice president of Life Care’s Appalachian Region. “It was clear that CNAs from other organizations were not trained specifically on giving care to a primarily senior population. It made sense that if we started our own classes, we could train them correctly from the start. Training students about post-acute and long-term care has been more successful in keeping those students long-term.”

“We have trained and educated several highly qualified individuals who have enhanced our already qualified staff,” said Hope Broyles, director of business development at Life Care Center of Greeneville, Tennessee. “The community has benefited by knowing that quality individuals are available to care for their loved ones.”

Yvonne Waddell, staff development coordinator at the building, teaches the classes and considers them one of her favorite aspects of her job.

“The students are excited about the class and enjoy learning,” Waddell shared. “They work as a team and help each other, and they want to work here after graduation as they learn about Life Care.”

Classes are almost always full, as they are at the other Appalachian Region buildings.

The same is true about CNA classes on the West Coast.

In Washington, several facilities have banded together to offer these classes. Tina Barrett instructs CNA classes serving two communities: Life Care Center of South Hill/Life Care Center of Puyallup, and the three centers in Federal Way: Life Care Center of Federal Way, Hallmark Manor and Garden Terrace Healthcare Center of Federal Way.

Every seven weeks, Barrett teaches a class, alternating between the two areas. Her 10-student class size is usually packed, and it’s a good deal for students with the instruction being free. Students hired at a Life Care center after graduating can even have their certification exam fee reimbursed over the first year of employment.

“It’s a wonderful chance to train the students for the facilities,” said Barrett. “There’s always a need for CNAs, and the staff in the facilities have embraced the students.”

Not far away, Life Care Center of Coos Bay, Oregon, is helping rebuild the CNA pool for its small community.

“The community college stopped doing classes, the high school stopped doing classes, and we were left with another local skilled nursing facility running a class maybe two times a year and only putting out enough CNAs to marginally fill their own needs,” said Jesse Winkler, executive director. “We started a class because there was a need.”

Four classes later, 33 new CNAs are working in the community, many at Life Care.

Life Care is putting a lot of effort into training CNAs around the country, and it’s effort that pays off.

“CNAs spend more time with our residents and patients than any other discipline in our facilities,” said Solomon. “Although it takes all departments in our facilities to make the ‘well-oiled machine’ run, the CNAs are the heartbeat of our facilities. Their kind faces and caring hearts are often remembered by our patients for years after they return home.”
Every individual has a story to tell. For those who have lived to see more than 100 years of life, those stories are especially abundant. I had the privilege of interviewing one centenarian resident from each of Life Care’s geographical divisions to learn more about their amazing life journeys. I am honored to share in the heritage of some of our resident centenarians, and catch a glimpse into their lives.

**Winner “Peg” Stearns**

**From Life Care Center of Wilbraham, Massachusetts • Age: 105**

Q: What should we know about you?  
A: I’m a character. I like to talk. I make friends easily, and I like to dress up for parties. I’m not a TV watcher. I don’t have to be entertained all the time, and I love Maine.

Q: What do you do now that you wish you’d known at the age of 25?  
A: I should have changed my ways and saved a few more pennies.

Q: Who is your favorite U.S. President? Why?  
A: Abraham Lincoln because he came from having nothing to being the leader of the U.S. I need to study a little more about President Lincoln!

Q: Where are some of the interesting places you’ve traveled?  
A: I’ve been to California, Washington, Arkansas, New Jersey, New York. I took a train across the northern U.S. and picked up many WAVEs. I left from Seattle and traveled to New York – it took a week to get there.

Q: What’s the secret to living to your age?  
A: I live moderately.

Q: Any favorite memories of a holiday or historical event?  
A: I always loved Christmas because of the togetherness.

Q: What’s the greatest thing about being your age?  
A: I’ve always loved Christmas because of the togetherness.

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Parkview Opens Its Doors to the Community for
PUBLIC FORUM

By Benjamin Scott, Life Care Public Relations

Parkview Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Paducah, Kentucky, recently hosted an open forum in which members of the community could ask the facility’s on-site physician health-related questions.

“An Apple a Day Keeps the Doctor Away,” was the title of the forum that gave locals the opportunity to listen to and meet the facility’s on-site physician, Dr. Patrick Finney. Parkview is the first and only skilled nursing facility in the area to have an on-site physician, and they wanted to showcase this, along with other positive features of their facility, during the forum.

“We always want visitors to see our friendly staff, happy residents and how nice and clean our facility is,” said Melanie Henson, the facility’s director. “To showcase some of our unique selling points.

Guests began arriving 45 minutes before the forum began. By the time the questions started, more than 70 guests were present, age 60 and up, all eager to hear Finney.

“In a doctor’s visit, as a doctor, you have very limited time to interact with the patient, check the boxes and address the problem,” said Finney. “This forum allowed the people in the community to get their questions answered that they may have been afraid to ask their doctor, or questions that the doctor didn’t have time to answer.”

Parkview’s dietary manager, Jenny Leslie, designed a complimentary lunch for guests and personally served the attendees. The lunch gave the opportunity for those in attendance to meet Finney and ask him any remaining questions they had. The associates at Parkview also planned super bingo and multiple door prizes. Each guest received a tote bag, notebook, pen set, a Leader magazine and facility brochures.

“It was really nice to be able to have no pressure as far as explaining something to them in a relatively simple way and relay knowledge that they would normally not get from their doctor because he or she is in such a hurry,” said Finney.

After the forum concluded, all guests were asked to fill out a questionnaire about the event. Of those who filled out the survey, more than 30 percent said they did not realize Parkview was the only facility with an on-site physician before this event. More than 95 percent said they enjoyed the forum. More than 70 percent said it was important to choose a facility with an on-site physician.

“Our goal was to try to get as many people as possible from the community to gather inside our building,” said Henson. “I was so pleased with the results because we were able to educate our exact target audience on the importance of having an on-site physician. We had so much fun that day!”

NEW HOBBY FOR GREAT CAUSE

By Heidi Tompkins, Life Care Public Relations

The sounds of the scroll saw have become a common occurrence at Garden Plaza of Greenbriar Cove in Ooltewah, Tennessee.

Residents have taken up the hobby of wood crafting. Classes of six to eight participants meet each week in the scroll saw room, gathered around the table to work on their projects.

Recently, some of these creations had been on several mission trips to third world countries, said resident Tenia Backm, “and there we gave children toys, clothing, etc., that we bought. Now we are making them with our own hands. Both of us were born with dwarfism, so our hands are smaller than the average; however, that has not stopped us from using them. And they are kept busy. It just brings us great joy when we can give to those less fortunate.”

The class began with just a few residents more than a year ago, but word spread quickly.

“It didn’t take very long at all, and the [list of participants] was long,” said Pam Lewis, instructor of the class and daughter of one of the residents.

Lewis now teaches two scroll saw classes a day for residents on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. She also teaches a class for associates and another for the community at large.

“People need this hobby and it’s a great therapy,” said Lewis. “They love to visit with each other, and they have their own groups. It’s actually more of a therapy. Lewis shared about several residents with Parkinson’s and how she’s amazed at how well they can cut their designs, even with tremors.

Residents all tend to have their favorite role in the process. Some like the pattern laying the best, while others prefer to cut the wood and others like to sand or paint. That teamwork came in handy with the toy car project – residents could do what they’re best at and work as a team to complete the toys.

From sharing with the community, building relationships among residents, providing a therapy outlet and offering a new hobby to Garden Plaza, the class has been a success.
Peggy Keller, occupational therapist, Life Care Center of Burlington, Kansas
Keller went out of her way to help a short-term resident with her dog, picking the dog up, taking it to the vet, paying for its shots and taking care of it while the resident completed rehabilitation. She even brought the dog in to the facility to visit its owner once or twice a week.

Jasmine Marion, activities assistant, Life Care Center of Columbia, South Carolina
About once a month, Marion cooks Sunday dinner and brings it in to share with any resident who wants to partake. “She loves to cook,” said Tacora Myers, activity director, “and they love to eat her food.”

Coral Wilson, certified nursing assistant, Life Care Center of the San Juan Islands in Friday Harbor, Washington
This past December, Wilson took the time to create a handmade Christmas stocking for every resident. She also is known for her towel animals, which she often places on the residents’ beds for their enjoyment.

Melissa Sanford, occupational therapist, Wooldridge Place Nursing Center in Corpus Christi, Texas
Sanford was on her way out for the evening when she noticed several nurses working late to prepare for several new admissions. Instead of just going home, she brought them dinner so they could focus on their work without being hungry.

Angie Baldenegro, environmental services, Desert Cove Nursing Center in Chandler, Arizona
When a resident needed someone to sit with her overnight, and no CNAs were available, Baldenegro volunteered even though she had worked all day in housekeeping. She also volunteers her own time and materials to do cookie decorating with residents.

Sarah Sowards, certified nursing assistant, Evergreen Nursing Home in Alamosa, Colorado
When one of two brothers living at the facility passed away, Sowards sat and comforted the remaining brother while he grieved. The next day, she came in on her day off to bring the resident a sympathy card and a teddy bear. She also volunteered to attend the funeral with the resident and help comfort him throughout the service and family gathering.

Tamara Crooke, licensed practical nurse, Life Care Center of Hilliard, Florida
Crooke brought in a birthday cake for a resident who had no family to visit him on his special day. She gathered the staff together to celebrate the occasion and sing “Happy Birthday.”

Jeffrey Slifka, dietary aide, Rivergate Health Care Center in Riverview, Michigan
Slifka hand wrote Christmas cards and distributed them to any resident who didn’t have a visitor for the holidays and to all the associates who were working. He even included a candy cane with each card.

Sarah Lewis, Life Care Center of Collegedale, Tennessee
Keep your mouth shut.

Duncan Ross, Life Care Center of Crossville, Tennessee
Always be honest to everyone and yourself.

Donald Kehn, The Vosswood Nursing Center in Houston, Texas
Be satisfied with what you can afford.

Don’t try to live above your means.

Sarah Lewis, Life Care Center of Collegedale, Tennessee
Be true to your raising.

Phyllis Mason, Life Care Center of Leominster, Massachusetts
What is the best piece of advice you’ve ever received?

People must be forgiven, animals must be gently loved and all of nature must be humbly nurtured.

Ann Kiraly, Hammond-Whiting Care Center in Whiting, Indiana
Practice the discipline of gratitude.

Deborah Newman, Garden Plaza at Inverrary in Lauderdale, Florida
Be true to your raising.

Lois Long, The Lane House in Crawfordsville, Indiana
When you work hard for something, you get more satisfaction out of it when you receive it.

Terry Cheek, Rimrock Villa Convalescent Hospital in Barstow, California
Look inside the person, not the outward appearance. Do not judge color, race or religion.

Samuel Rabinowitz, Life Care Center of Altamonte Springs, Florida
Think twice, and speak only once.

Leon Cookman, Life Care Center of Hendersonville, North Carolina
Be sure to do the right thing.

Phyllis Mason, Life Care Center of Leominster, Massachusetts
What is the best piece of advice you’ve ever received?
Congratulations to Life Care’s Company-wide Physician of the Year and Heritage Award winners.

Company-wide Physician of the Year

Dr. Scott Burgstahler
On-site physician at Life Care Center of Sandpoint, Idaho

Heritage Award

Dr. William Sheldon
Medical director at Life Care Center of Charleston, South Carolina

Presented during the American Medical Directors Association Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida, on March 17, these awards acknowledge physicians committed to excellence in patient care.