A message from the president

February of this year marked the end-of-life journey for two men who brought sunshine and happiness to thousands of associates in Life Care and Century Park, as well as countless others across our country:

- Jimmy Rhodes, 83, director of music services for Life Care, beginning in 1994, prepared music therapy materials to inspire and entertain our residents and patients. He died on Tuesday, Feb. 5.
- Claude Ogle Sr., better known to our associates as Mr. Life Care, passed away on Sunday, Feb. 24, two days past his 104th birthday.

Traveling with Jimmy was always delightful – soaking in his music, watching the response of his audiences, and laughing at his jokes. He always had many.

Since both of us were coffee lovers, we particularly relished driving in the State of Washington, where Starbucks is headquartered. It seems there is a coffee shop on every corner.

One day, as we stopped at one of them, he turned to me and quipped, “You know, Beecher, I figure we get five miles to the latte!”

Ogle, too, was a gifted musician on several instruments, but his favorite was the piano. For a number of years, he volunteered to sing and play for the residents and patients of Life Care Center of Cleveland, Tennessee, and he came to live there in 2015. That same year, the center decided to select its first Mr. Life Care, as it had routinely picked a Ms. Life Care. Ogle won, and he embraced the title and proudly proclaimed it on any occasion.

His videos of wit and wisdom, dubbed a Daily Dose with Mr. Life Care, became instantly popular. He had an incredible memory, reciting the alphabet backward, and he was a master storyteller, most of them humorous, some reflective.

Sincerely,
Beecher Hunter

ON THE FRONT COVER: Jimmy Rhodes, 1935 – 2019

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25 Parkview Associates Celebrate 20+ Years with Life Care
On Feb. 26, 2019, associates from Parkview Nursing and Rehabilitation Center celebrated an important milestone: more than 25 associates from the facility in Paducah, Kentucky, have been with the company for at least 20 years. Executive Director Lori Moberly attended the event and congratulated associates who have been with the company for more than 30 years, loved the event. It was nice to see everyone, Barker said. I didn’t realize there were so many associates who had been here for over 20 years. It was great to reminisce with each other.

Travis Hills, regional vice president, attended the event and congratulated associates on their achievement. Each associate had a chance to stand and share about their years of service and memories from over the years. Another happy attendee was Kay Carson, a certified nursing assistant who is celebrating her 30-year anniversary with Parkview this year. “It made me feel like I was appreciated and special,” Carson said.

Remembering Mr. Life Care
Claude Ogle Sr., a resident at Life Care Center of Cleveland, Tennessee, who claimed the title of Mr. Life Care in 2015, passed away on Sunday, Feb. 24, two days after his 104th birthday. As Mr. Life Care, Ogle charmed thousands of associates, families and guests with his wit and wisdom. He was a featured resident in the 2016 edition of LEADER magazine, and many associates around the country knew him from his humorous Daily Dose of Life Care videos.

Raised in a musical family, Ogle could play every stringed instrument, as well as the piano. For years, he volunteered his talents at the facility in Cleveland, and he continued to entertain residents and associates after becoming a resident himself in 2015.

In a conversation with Life Care President Beecher Hunter several years ago, Ogle laughed, “There’s just one of me. Just one.” Yet true: there was only one Claude Ogle. And his contagious laugh and the gleam in his eye as he sang a treasured song or told a favorite memory will be long remembered by the Life Care family and the Cleveland community he gracied for 104 years.

Life Care Names Physician of the Year
On March 7, Dr. Nancy Witherspoon, medical director at Life Care Center of Jefferson City, Tennessee, was named Physician of the Year for Life Care Centers of America. The honor was given during a Life Care ceremony held at the American Medical Directors Association Annual Conference in Atlanta.

Witherspoon has served patients at Life Care Center of Jefferson City since 2016, first as an attending physician, and then in her role as medical director, which she was named in July 2018. During the ceremony, Witherspoon was praised for being approachable, as well as anticipating issues and communicating clearly with residents as well as the entire care team. She is an active member of the facility’s Performance Improvement Committee and has taken on the challenge of reducing the facility’s medication load.

“Nancy is deeply committed to providing excellent patient care,” said Juan Miranda, executive director at Life Care Center of Jefferson City. “Her professionalism and compassion are an example to follow.”

Beecher Hunter, Life Care president, added, “Physicians play a pivotal role in the care of our residents, and we are proud to honor those who stand out in their commitment and their compassion to ensure the health and well-being of those entrusted to them.”

On March 12, 2019, Green Valley Care Center in New Albany, Indiana, honored Carol McLain, MDS coordinator, with a retirement party, honoring her for 44 years of service at the building.

The event featured several special guests and surprises for the honoree. Beecher Hunter, president of Life Care Centers of America, presented her with a beautiful painting and a framed letter thanking her for her longstanding devotion to the facility and its residents. The mayor of New Albany, Jeff Gahan, granted a proclamation that states March 12 will be known as Carol McLean Day. McLain also received 44 carnations from the associates and residents in attendance, to represent each year that she has served at the facility.

“Carol is a true inspiration for us to follow,” said April Davidson, activity director. “Her dedication, care and compassionate personality have made a great impact on everyone who has had the pleasure of working beside her.”

Life Care Social Worker Recognized as Rising Star
On March 13, 2019, McKnight’s Senior Living announced the Rising Stars in its new Women of Distinction awards program. Natalie Law, social services director at Life Care Center of Stonegate in Parker, Colorado, was one of the 21 women recognized with this prestige. “It definitely an honor and a privilege,” said Law. “I was just very, very surprised and happy.”

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44-year Associate Retires at Green Valley Care Center
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At Life Care Centers of America, we are proud of the people we serve every day. As part of National Skilled Nursing Care Week 2019, we honored several of our residents who live soulfully by finding their happiness and contributing to the happiness of others. By paying it forward to help others achieve happy minds and healthy souls, these residents improve quality of life for everyone around them. We celebrated their influence on our lives and in our facilities during this year’s NSNCW, May 12-18, and we are thankful for them every day of the year.

**William Hickman**, Life Care Center of Greeneville, Tenn.

Born and raised in Kingsport, Tennessee, Hickman is a 73-year-old resident who lives life soulfully by helping his best friend to listen. He is also known to talking with residents who need a friend to listen. He is always willing to help whenever he is asked. “His smile is contagious and can light up a room. He is always willing to help someone, even if he is not asked,” said Vija Ridz, activities assistant. “He is a truly amazing man, and I call it reconstructing them,” said Ed Sullivan, activities director. When he’s done, large bouquets can take the smaller bouquets back to their rooms.

When Hickman was asked why he does so much to brighten other residents’ days, he said, “I just try to be nice.” “She is well loved and known throughout the facility,” said Sullivan. “I can tell she is genuine, and it comes from her heart and her soul.”

**Sheila Pantaleo**, Life Care Center of Pueblo, Colo.

When Pantaleo continually shares her soulful and positive spirit with everyone at Life Care Center of Pueblo, she tells everyone the idea of a meaningful life. Pantaleo embodies the idea of soulful living by brightening up the facility and promoting the happiness of other residents. She has taken initiative in the facility’s recreation room by organizing supplies and leading group crafts, and she continually makes the dining room cheerful by making seasonal and holiday-themed centerpieces for the tables. She also goes to other residents’ rooms to motivate them to stay social and active by engaging with the facility’s programs and activities. “She is an outgoing, cheerful and pleasant individual who always wants to help out and make life better for herself and for those around her,” said Evelyn Carrillo, activity director. Pantaleo is passionate about her encouraging role. “Everyone needs to know that they are worth something,” said Pantaleo.

**Carol Herrick**, The Westchester House in Chesterfield, Mo.

70-year-old Herrick truly knows how to live life soulfully. Born in 1949 after Russian communists took control of the country, she went on to marry George Herrick, who has lived at the facility for four years, where she serves as an informal ambassador. She welcomes new residents by introducing them to the rest of The Westchester House family. “Without drawing attention to herself, Carol expresses her kindhearted nature by remembering details from her conversations with peers and associates to instill a feeling of importance in everyone she meets,” said Patti Scofield, activity director. Herrick has battled cancer three times. Although it could be said that she has been dealt an unfair deal, her motto is, “Think positive. Life will get better. Keep your faith and believe.” “Carol Herrick is the epitome of living soulfully,” said Scofield. “Carol is a resilient woman who has never let the hardiness of her past affect the softness of her heart.”

**Vija Ridz**, Life Care Center of Wilbraham, Mass.

Ridz is an 81-year-old resident at Life Care Center of Wilbraham, who truly knows how to live life soulfully. Born in Latvia, Ridz moved to the United States with her family in 1949 after Russian communists took control of the country. “Vija often has ideas to make the craft easier for the other residents,” said Ed Sullivan, activities director. When flowers are donated to the facility, Ridz takes the different flowers and arranges them beautifully, while other residents watch in amazement. “I call it reconstructing them,” said Ridz. “When she’s done, large bouquets go to the nurses stations, and residents can take the smaller bouquets back to their rooms.

When Ridz was asked why she does so much to brighten other residents’ days, she said, “I just try to be nice.” “She is well loved and known throughout the facility,” said Sullivan. “I can tell she is genuine, and it comes from her heart and her soul.”

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Drumming up Happiness:

David Currier’s Ministry to Dementia Patients

By Heidi Pino

In 1988, David Currier’s world changed. His loving parents, Ralph and Fern Currier, were both diagnosed with dementia – Ralph with Alzheimer’s disease and Fern with mixed dementia. For the next five and a half years, he was their caregiver.

Among the sadness of the experience, Currier discovered a key that helped bring to the surface the personalities and liveliness that Currier missed so much music. One day, he put on “The Twist,” and watched in amazement as his parents started to smile and jive to the familiar tune. He got out a drum, and his mother started drumming along to the rhythm.

David Currier’s Ministry to Dementia Patients

Currier learned a lot from caring for his parents and now considers it knowledge a ministry to pass on to others. Although he was once a drummer for the band Boston and helped write movie soundtracks in Hollywood, these days he finds fulfillment in his job as director of dementia education and program development for Life Care’s Northeast Division.

Currier first got involved with Life Care about nine years ago. He started working at The Highlands in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, and now he travels to facilities throughout the Northeast, doing associate training, drum circles and disco parties.

Currier spends the majority of his time training caregivers and teaching them ways to help their dementia patients live as normal and self-fulfilled lives as possible. For example, he recommends using non-rinse soap when bathing dementia patients and using routine activities to not throw off their procedural memories.

Resident profiles are another tool Currier supports. Those brief histories of each resident can be kept at the nurses stations and give associates a starting point for conversations with residents that help put them at ease. When he isn’t training, Currier also helps facilitate drumming circles at the buildings. It’s done on a circle of chairs with the facilitator in the middle, so everyone can see and be part of the activity.

The facilitator leads the group in drumming a variety of rhythms, from people’s names, to phrases such as “I like apple pie,” to singalongs. Often, residents will tap their toes or wave their arms.

According to Currier, the drumming lowers blood pressure, creates moments of joy, helps residents reminisce, gives them a chance to socialize, provides a form of motion exercise and therapeutic music and is a good way to reduce antipsychotics, anxiety and depression.

“The regions of the brain that seem to be untouched by dementia are those areas of the brain that pick up pulses and vibrations,” Currier said. “Music reaches deep down inside, and it pulls that real person out past that thick skin of dementia. It brings them to the here and now. I think it’s spiritual. I think it’s a gift that God has given us.”

Currier added that even though dementia patients don’t always remember participating in a drumming group, the happy feelings remain for hours – if not days.

One time, Currier brought Dave Mattacks, Paul McCartney’s former drummer, to sit in on a drumming circle. After the session, as people started talking to Mattacks about his career, he stopped them and pointed out in wonder that the residents were facilitating themselves.

“I’ve never seen another activity where you can have multiple levels of people with dementia and people that don’t have dementia who can sit there and enjoy this,” said Currier.

Currier recommends following the drum circles weekly, a practice that residents of differing functional abilities enjoy as part of their routine. It elevates their spirits too.

Currier brings happiness to Life Care facilities, whether he is training, drumming or leading a disco party. The happiness comes back around to him.

“I’ve been given this wonderful gift to help others, and it energizes me,” said Currier. “When I really think about it, this is the most rewarding job I’ve ever had.”

Currier is working to get discounted drumming equipment to more Life Care facilities so their residents can benefit, too. He is also planning a video showing how to start the drum groups.

The third major thing Currier does in his role is put on disco parties at the centers. The name might be misleading, however – the music is a wide variety, from “What a Wonderful World” and “Pretty Woman” to the Beatles and Motown. The key is upbeat and happy music.

“The Baby Boomers right now are even beyond Elvis,” said Currier. “It’s a different group. I put on ‘Uptown Funk,’ ‘YMCA.’ When you play this music, it’s the staff’s music, so when they hear ‘Uptown Funk,’ impromptu, they’ll dance through and then dance out, and the residents see that, and because the residents love our associates, they feel like it’s a happy house, like everybody’s celebrating, and it elevates their spirits too.”
Few people have influenced Life Care Centers of America like musician James “Jimmy” Rhodes. From performing at the grand opening of the very first facility in Cleveland, Tennessee, in 1970, to traveling around the country, ministering to residents and associates in the company’s 200+ facilities, Rhodes made a difference wherever he went.

“The first time I met Jimmy was within my first week or two as a brand-new executive director at Life Care Center of Sierra Vista, Arizona,” shared Matt Ham, Life Care’s Southwest Division vice president. “I remember being excited to meet Jimmy, because I’ve always loved music. When I heard he had arrived, I went to find him and introduced myself as the E.D. He said, ‘Why, you don’t look old enough to be the E.D. I’m not sure I’d feel comfortable putting my loved one here. I was a little shocked, but worked hard to prove that we could do good things and that he or anyone else could feel very comfortable placing their loved one in our care. I’m not sure if he meant to have an impact with those words, but they drove me to work hard.”

The piano was Rhodes’ first instrument. His mother wanted him to learn it so much that she purchased an old upright piano for $100 and ordered a correspondence course so that she could learn to play hymns that she could then teach him. Though he initially resisted, he was playing for weddings, funerals and other services by the age of 10.

Rhodes attended Southern Missionary College in Tennessee and graduated with a degree in music education, which required him to learn many different instruments. Helping people was always part of his goal, however, and he wrote his master’s thesis at the University of Southern California on how music affects people’s behavior. This research would give him the basis of understanding music therapy.

“My all-time favorite story involved a concert at Heritage Health Care Center in Globe, Arizona,” shared Beecher Hunter, Life Care’s president. “Jimmy concluded the dining-room performance, took a list of names and quickly, ‘Oh, no, I couldn’t do that.’

Jimmy placed the keyboard on the wheelchair arms, programmed it to play upon a touch of the hand, and said, ‘I bet you can!’

“When Uncle Henry’s fingers touched the instrument, it took off, and he excitedly moved his hands on the keys as if he were actually playing it. Leaving his room, Jimmy went down the hall for some more solo performances. Starting back toward the lobby, he met Uncle Henry in the hallway, with a throng of associates with cameras gathered around him. He wanted to play again. As before, Jimmy programmed the keyboard, and Uncle Henry took off in his finest concert style. Halfway through the song, he looked up at Jimmy and whispered, ‘I know I’m not playing this thing, but we’re gonna do it for them,’ as he pointed at the audience.

In addition to his work with Life Care, Rhodes recorded 15 albums, performed internationally and played background instruments on several releases for Chapel Records. His work won him an Angel Award in 2004 and a Telly Award in 2008.

“I’ve done everything musically that a person can do,” Rhodes said of his life of music and helping others. “Recording, touring, selling, I’ve done it all. But [working with Life Care residents] is the most fulfilling thing that I’ve ever done.”

At the age of 83, Jimmy Rhodes passed away on Feb. 5, 2019. After almost 50 years of using music to positively influence the lives of residents and associates, the indelible impact he left on Life Care is undeniable. Although he is gone, his music will live on.
2018 Fit for Life Contest Winners Step up to the Challenge

Tagisia Bucio, director of health information management at Life Care Center of Escondido, California. “I was shocked to say the least,” said Bucio. “I never thought I would be the grand-prize winner! I always tell my family that I never win anything!” Bucio expressed her gratitude and excitement at winning the prize money and shared that she is going to use it to plan a family reunion in New Zealand.

She also shared a bit of advice and encouragement for other associates who want to get involved with the wellness program and the Fit for Life contest. “I think that everyone needs to remember that it’s not just about healthy lifestyles. What makes the wellness program so special and exciting is all the other activities to record. What makes the wellness program so attractive is the variety of activities it offers.”

The second prize of $2,000 and two vacation days was awarded to Yazzie Bucio, maintenance assistant at The Bridge at Farmington, New Mexico. “I was shocked after finding out I had won,” Yazzie said. “It was completely unexpected and came at a time when it was needed. I’ve never received anything like this.”

Yazzie described how the Fit for Life contest motivated him to stay active outside of work and how winning the contest has motivated him to continue counting his steps and to encourage others to track their steps.

Life Care congratulates its winners and all who participated in the wellness program and the Fit for Life contest in 2018! If there is one thing that can unite people, it’s food. It does not matter the age or background; if a meal is offered, the masses will come. Food is worth celebrating for that very reason, and Century Park communities across the nation are recognizing monthly “food days” throughout 2019, inducing full hearts, and stomachs, with every celebration.

The 2018 grand-prize winner of the Fit for Life contest. She and other Highland Cove associates would promote the contest at staff meetings, announce monthly winners for most steps at the facility and walk one mile every day during their lunch break. Knight was using her prize money to take herself, her husband and their five children on a trip to Disneyland.

“I was so excited to hear that I had won and so grateful for my award that it brought tears to my eyes,” said Knight. The third prize of $1,000 and one vacation day was awarded to Zane Bridge at Century Park of Escondido, California.

“I was shocked to say the least,” said Jake Cash. “We try to combine theme days with efforts to raise money for our local charities,” said Erka Stewart, executive director at Harbor Place at Port St. Lucie, Florida. “Our National Pancake Day breakfast benefitted the American Red Cross. We’d like to thank the American Red Cross for everything they do to help our friends and neighbors across the globe!”

Because the celebration was also a fundraiser, residents and guests enjoyed the day while being given the opportunity to give to a charitable cause at the same time.

A few other communities celebrated by serving pancakes for dinner, an unusual treat.

The 2019 food day calendar includes both sweet and savory celebrations:

- National Pie Day – Jan. 23
- National Pancake Day – Feb. 21
- National Brownie Day – March 18
- National Grilled Cheese Day – April 12
- National BBQ Day – May 16
- National Strawberry Shortcake Day – June 14
- National Ice Cream Day – July 21
- National Root Beer Float Day – Aug. 6
- National Cheeseburger Day – Sept. 18
- National Pizza Day – Oct. 17
- National Nacho Day – Nov. 16
- National Brownie Day – Dec. 4

As the year progresses, Century Park associates are excited to continually find the most creative ways to celebrate food and showcase their devotion in going the extra mile to put our residents’ happiness – and palates – first.
Deb Rivera, restorative aide, Life Care Center of Wilbraham, Massachusetts

On a resident’s day of passing, Rivera kept close watch over the resident and ensured all her needs were met, even though Rivera was not assigned to watch the resident. The resident’s daughter described how Rivera comforted her and her family on that day and how Rivera became like family to her.

Tammy Malone, registered nurse, Life Care Center of Post Falls, Idaho

Malone, upon noticing a resident was having a bad day, took time to sit with the resident and listen to her. Malone complemented the resident’s music, and positive attitude made her feel better.

Desiree Delorenzo, certified nursing assistant, Life Care Center of Collegedale, Tennessee

Delorenzo was caring for a resident who wanted to get in touch with her sister-in-law, so she helped the resident locate her using what little information the resident already had.

Donna Tomescu, laundry assistant, Hallmark Nursing Center in Denver, Colorado

When a resident’s room became overfilled and was in need of cleaning and reorganizing, Tomescu came in on a day she was off to help the resident organize the room and to comfort the resident when the process became difficult. At the end, the resident was so proud of the progress they had made that she showed her newly cleaned room to several people.

**Resident Voices**

**WHAT MAJOR HISTORICAL EVENT AFFECTED YOU MOST? WHY AND WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT IT?**

- John F. Kennedy’s assassination. I mourned like it was a family member. I was very emotional, especially when I heard his voice on the radio. [John Cromer, Life Care Center of Pontchartrain Beach, LA]
- World War II was a traumatic time. I completed a draft card, and there was sent to Washington, D.C., to the War Department. It was my job to type letters to the families when I knew I was dying. It was very difficult and emotional. [Amy McKinney, Life Care Center of Coeur d’Alene, ID]
- The Moon landing. I saw our nation’s resources flown into the World Trade Center. I turned on the headline, “Breaking News: Two planes have flown into the Twin Towers.” [Bobbie Ott, Life Care Center of Wilbraham, MA]
- Pearl Harbor Day was a huge day. I was listening to the radio, to the New York Philharmonic, and they interrupted to announce the bombing. I ran into the kitchen to ask my dad, “Was Pearl Harbor Day?” [Nancy More, Garden Terrace at Fort Worth, TX]
- I was in southeastern Idaho when the Teton Dam broke! My family’s farm was directly at the foot of the dam. We were out of the water. [Susan Holcomb, Life Care Center of Coeur d’Alene, ID]
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- “1973. It was the last day of the draft, and the draft age was 18. I was born in 1955. My draft number was 6357. I was never called. I was lucky. I had lied to get out of the draft. I would have been proud to serve.” [Carol Lattimer, Life Care Center of New Port Richey, FL]
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- “I was in southeastern Idaho when the Teton Dam broke! My family’s farm was directly at the foot of the dam. We were out of the water. [Susan Holcomb, Life Care Center of Coeur d’Alene, ID]
- “1973. It was the last day of the draft, and the draft age was 18. I was born in 1955. My draft number was 6357. I was never called. I was lucky. I had lied to get out of the draft. I would have been proud to serve.” [Carol Lattimer, Life Care Center of New Port Richey, FL]
On March 28, 2019, The Highlands in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, hosted a Red Sox Day to honor Major League Baseball’s Opening Day – with the Commissioner’s Trophy as the guest of honor!

The facility is only about an hour away from Fenway Park, home of the 2018 World Series Champion Boston Red Sox, so The Highlands is home to many die-hard Red Sox fans.

“The residents were eagerly waiting for the arrival of the trophy,” said MaryAnn Melanson, admissions and marketing director. “They all began to sing ‘Take Me Out to the Ballgame’ when the trophy arrived with two security members of the Boston Red Sox franchise.”

Residents, family members, associates and community members stopped by to admire and be photographed with the trophy, while everyone enjoyed favorite ballpark treats, including hot dogs, popcorn and peanuts.