

A Gift Called Life

Life is precious. I have been reminded of that truth a number of ways recently:

- Eddy Arnold, the affable “Tennessee Plowboy” who brought elegance, sophistication and millions of fans to country music, died this past Thursday, May 8. One of my favorite musical artists, Arnold sold more than 85 million records and was ranked as *Billboard* magazine’s single most popular country artist of all time. He passed away at the age of 89 in a nursing facility near Nashville. A memorial service is scheduled for Wednesday at 2 p.m. Where? At the Ryman Auditorium, of course.
- Gospel singer-songwriter Dottie Rambo was killed early Sunday when the tour bus she was in ran off a road in southwest Missouri and struck an embankment. Ms. Rambo, 74, of Nashville was a giant in the gospel music industry. She was on her way to a Mother’s Day performance at Fountain of Life Church in North Richland Hills, Texas, to sing with Lulu Roman and Naomi Segó.
- At Parkridge Medical Center in Chattanooga, Bob Easterly, 92, a dear friend and former postmaster of Cleveland, is recovering from heart surgery that included replacement of a valve and three bypasses.
- Brynna Nunnery, Life Care’s corporate events coordinator who occupies the office next to mine, is preparing for the May 30 wedding of her daughter, Jacqueline, launching a life shared with Chad Hagy.
- And all around our company, babies are arriving almost every day. The years stretch before them with hope and promise.

Truly, life *is* precious. What makes it bearable, exciting and fulfilling is an emotion described in a little four-letter word, love – love for parents, for a spouse, for children, for country, for friends, for a full moon, a tranquil ocean or a blue sky. We show love in many ways. It could be a touch or a handshake, a look, words fitly chosen, a hug, even tears, or by helping someone meet a challenge.

That’s why the theme of this year’s National Nursing Home Week – *Love Is Ageless* – is so appropriate, because love endures beyond life itself for both the lover and the loved.

In Life Care centers, life and love are celebrated every day by very simple acts of humanity, such as respect, selflessness, kindness, gentleness, helpfulness, patience and caring. Throughout this week, activities and events have been planned to spark new relationships and rekindle old ones. We will be involving families and friends from the community, and giving them a first-hand look at what our mission is all about.

And what it’s all about is life.

--Beecher Hunter