

# *Guardian Angels on the Job*

I don't have to tell you that working in health care and hospitality is demanding. It is the nature of the careers we have chosen. After all, we are serving human beings with a wide range of personal needs and expectations.

But the service we provide can also be fulfilling and heartwarming in a manner that few other professions can match.

As you might expect, the president's office receives a lot of communication – telephone calls, emails and letters via the postal service. Some contain concerns, some raise a variety of questions and some – maybe more than you would imagine – are letters of praise and commendation of the care our facilities offer.

Last week, Todd Fletcher, vice president of Western Operations for Life Care, forwarded me a copy of a handwritten letter he received from Nicole Long Roberts, the senior executive director at Harbor Place at Cottesmore in Gig Harbor, Washington. The letter was penned by the daughter of a resident of that facility who recently passed away. You will want to read this:

## ***To the Nursing Staff***

*One evening, rather late, Michelle was reassuring me that it was OK for me to go home. She told me that, even if I wasn't there, Mom wouldn't be alone, that each of us has a guardian angel who accompanies us in difficult times. I'm not a religious person, but I found this idea comforting, and I wearily headed home for the evening.*

*On the morning that Mom passed away, Michelle's words came back to me and it occurred to me that she was right; Mom's guardian angels had been with us all along.*

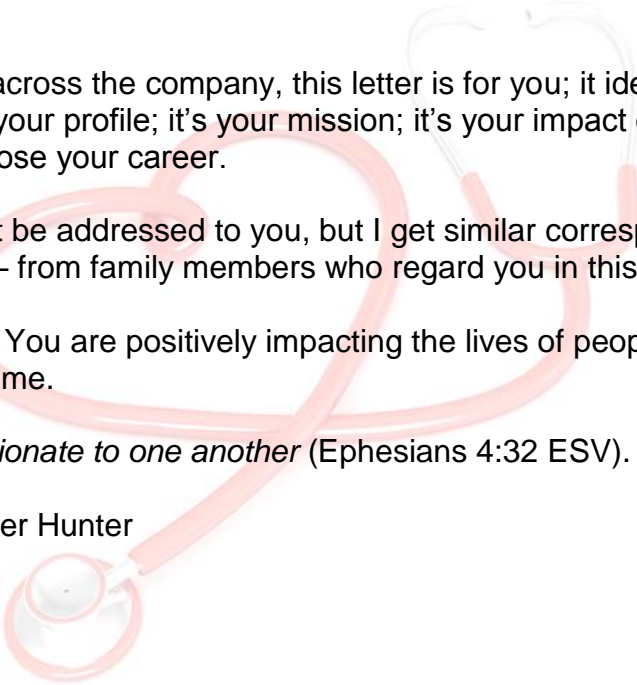
*You were there to treat her with dignity and respect, to offer an understanding smile or warm hug. You were there to share small anecdotes of your time with her, to let me know that you had seen how special she was. You were there to make it easier for both of us, and to guide us through her difficult final days.*

*I witnessed your dedication and unwavering kindness and, even when I wasn't there, I knew that Mom felt cared for and surrounded by people who loved her.*

*I know that your days are long and I imagine that, at times, it must be trying to keep going in a place where saying goodbye is often a part of the job. But I hope that you carry in your hearts the knowledge that, for residents and families, you are more than the nursing staff. You are the guardian angels that prop us up and surround us with the sheen of your kindness when we need it most. For this, I am forever grateful.*

*Sincerely, Joanie*

(more)



To our caregivers all across the company, this letter is for you; it identifies who you are and what you do. It's your profile; it's your mission; it's your impact on the people you serve. It's why you chose your career.

Oh, this letter may not be addressed to you, but I get similar correspondence – most not so eloquently written – from family members who regard you in this light.

So, be of good cheer. You are positively impacting the lives of people, one resident at a time, one family at a time.

*Be kind and compassionate to one another* (Ephesians 4:32 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter