

Life in Rural America

Jacqueline Vance, who describes herself as “a real-life long-term care nurse,” is a regular contributor to *McKnight’s Long-Term Care News*. Earlier this year, she wrote about visiting some rural nursing homes in Tennessee. “There is something about rural America that is the heart of our nation,” she said.

As someone who was born in the country and spent a small portion of my life there, I agree. Perhaps you, too, can connect with some of her observations and conclusions:

I was driving along rural routes with a light rain falling, enjoying the deep-earth, fresh scent of farmland, with the air so clean you could smell grass being cut half a mile away. I admired manicured lawns with American flags proudly hanging on just about every home.

School buses stopped, with drivers chatting with moms while their children boarded – instead of kids boarding a bus with the same driver for numerous years and nobody even knowing the driver’s name, in a morning “zombie” rush and foregoing a pleasant exchange.

I know the best place for a meal is a small diner where mostly pick-up trucks will be parked out front. I know the post office will be a tiny building with a pole with a large American flag and a Coca-Cola sign out front. I know if I get lost, someone will give me directions that include, “Go off the paved road ...” and someone will ask me if I am “fixin’ to go somewhere.”

I know that MARS and TARS will be complete and accurate because, “By gosh, it’s supposed to be done.” I know that the staff will say, “Yes, ma’am” and “Yes, sir” to the residents because that’s how they were brought up, to respect their elders.

I know there won’t be a chandelier or fancy, laminated flooring or granite countertops like we may find in many suburban or city facilities; but there will be a row of rocking chairs on the front porch, and sweet tea at lunch and dinner. And no self-respecting cook in the kitchen would dare put something that came from a metal can in front of one of “their” residents.

This is a place where “God, Family and Country” is not a platitude but a way of life. This is America at its best, where you know it may not be fancy, but you can bet your family member will be “loved on” and cared for. I don’t know about you, but it makes me proud to be an American!



(more)

“The Real Nurse Jackie,” as she entitles her blog, has hit the nail on the head. Life Care has many facilities in rural areas – in Tennessee, across America’s heartland and in other states.

Vance accurately portrays life in small-town America, along with the desire to take care of others, because ... well, because they’re neighbors.

(Jacqueline Vance, RNC, CDONA/LTC, is senior director of clinical innovation and education for Mission Health Communities LLC and an APEX Award of Excellence winner for blog writing. She is a nationally respected nurse educator and a past national LTC Nurse Administrator of the Year.)

– Beecher Hunter

