

## Meet Two Heroes

What is involved in the making of a hero? How can a person be identified as one? There are several definitions, to be sure, and probably every one of us would have our own descriptions. Among them, according to the dictionary, is “a person noted for special achievement in a particular field,” or “a person noted for courageous action.” To those, I would add my own observation: “A person who meets the substantial or critical needs of others at his or her own personal risk or sacrifice.”

Let me introduce to you two genuine heroes, by either definition. They were brought to my attention by Sandy Hammett, admissions director at Life Care Center of Columbia, South Carolina. Here is her note:

“Yesterday (January 27, 2005), I attended a hero’s funeral for Bertha Young’s son, Timmy Young. Bertha is our housekeeping supervisor at Life Care Center of Columbia. She has been with Life Care Center since we opened our doors 10 years ago. Bertha has always been a dedicated associate, and has worked in long-term care for many decades.

“Timmy suffered a massive heart attack on January 7, 2005, while responding to an emergency call for the Columbia Fire Department. Timmy was 41 years old, and had been a Columbia firefighter for 20 years. It was a job he truly loved and had always wanted to do. Timmy was comatose for three weeks before he died as a result of the heart attack.

“Yesterday, hundreds and hundreds of community leaders, firefighters, police officers and emergency workers and friends honored Timmy and his family for serving those in need. I thought, ‘How do you raise a child to be so honorable and self-sacrificing?’ And then I look at how Bertha has served thousands of our area elderly by simply showing up for work for 30-plus years to be sure they had clean rooms and clean clothes. Bertha is a very quiet and simple lady, but she gives of herself every single day. She has raised three children who do the same thing.

“I know Bertha’s heart is broken from the loss of her only son, but I thank God for people like Bertha and Timmy who look at their jobs as a calling and not just a means of income. For without associates like Bertha, where would Life Care be?”

We thank Sandy Hammett for her tribute.

We join her as our hearts ache for Bertha and her loss. But at the same time, we celebrate the example set by both Timmy and Bertha, who show us what real living and personal fulfillment are all about – serving others, and especially those who have substantial or critical needs.

--Beecher Hunter