

## One Great Family

The stories about the dedication and sacrifices of our Life Care associates in Florida in the aftermath of Hurricane Charley are truly amazing and inspiring. And I've only heard a few of them.

Nina Willingham, executive director at Life Care Center of Sarasota, advised that at 6:30 a.m. on Tuesday, August 17, the facility received a call from the grandson of a 98-year-old evacuee who had been crying since he got there because he had not heard from his family. In the meantime, the family had been frantically trying to find him. With telephone service out, the family was severely hampered in the search.

"The nurse who answered the phone was the same nurse who had been trying to locate the family for the resident (a God thing, I am sure)," Willingham said. "When she went down to tell the resident, she had to wake him up to tell him. He was so happy that he pulled her down to his chest and held her and they both cried. What a beautiful moment for this sweet man. Now, he says he can live to be 100. The family is all coming in today (Tuesday) to see him."

One of the evacuees is a very short-term Medicare resident at Punta Gorda. All of a sudden, her five-day stay in the nursing home turned into a nightmare for her when Charley blew in. "She was afraid that her house was gone," Willingham said. "One of our associates drove to Punta Gorda to see if the house was still standing -- it is -- and relayed that information to the worried resident. The resident sat and cried and cried."

An e-mail was directed to Sebrena Sawtell in Life Care's public relations department, complimenting the staff at Life Care Center of Sarasota. "My mother, Winifred Rogers, is a resident at the Punta Gorda facility and, needless to say, I was quite frantic to locate her following Hurricane Charley's path of destruction. The staff at the Sarasota facility were very understanding of my situation, especially because I reside in Portland, Oregon, and was very quite helpless. After confirming that my mother had not been triaged to their facility, they were able to make other suggestions, and provided phone numbers for several local hospitals. In addition, they were able to check further and called back (within less than a half hour) with specific information about my mother being taken to the Port St. Lucie facility.

"As a result, I was able to call and was very relieved to actually be able to talk to her on the phone. She appears to be doing quite well, given the circumstances. I have no doubt that she will be well cared for until such time as Punta Gorda recovers. This has meant a great deal to me and my family. I will be forever grateful for the understanding and caring manner in which I was treated by your staff."

These are situations of extraordinary concern and compassion by our associates on the receiving end of the residents from Punta Gorda who were evacuated. It validates the claim that we are, indeed, one great family.

--Beecher Hunter