

## *Our Nurses Are Here*

Life Care's Corporate Plaza in Cleveland, Tennessee, is jumping today. Directors of nursing from all the 28 states in which we are located – along with their regional and divisional support personnel – are here for the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their annual meetings. They create an environment like no other, and this event is always one of the highlights on the corporate calendar.

They arrived on Saturday by automobile, airplane and train (yes, that's right; three made the trip from New England to Atlanta that way, and then by bus to Cleveland). Sunday began with our first get-together as a group, starting with breakfast, capped off by a soul-stirring time of music and inspiration by the talented Charmaine Varlack Bridgeman, a former associate who now is involved in music ministry with her husband, Curtis. Sunday afternoon was devoted to activities, including whitewater rafting on the Ocoee River, a visit to the Tennessee Aquarium (the world's largest freshwater aquarium) and its adjacent Imax Theatre, shopping and movies at Hamilton Place Mall, a Duck Tour (rolling through historic Chattanooga and splashing in the Tennessee River in an amphibious vehicle) and golf.

It was Country and Western Night to close the day, featuring entertainment by Aubrey Preston, son of Life Care founder and chairman Forrest Preston, who brought his Homer Dever Band over from Leipers Fork, Tennessee. The nurses loosened up by participating in some contests – best theme costume, a calf-roping competition and a toilet seat toss (like horseshoes) – as well as hitting the dance floor.

Today, we get down to business, with opening ceremonies featuring a color guard from the Cleveland Fire Department, and a welcome from President Don Giardina, CEO Tony Oglesby and Chairman Forrest Preston. Dr. Dale Henry, motivational speaker and humorist, was keynote speaker on the subject: "The Power of TEAM – the Only Four-Letter Word Everybody Should Use." Educational sessions began at 10:15 a.m., with a focus on First Things First, led by Cathy Murray, chief operating officer, President Giardina and Scott Bardowell, general counsel. Breakout sessions on a variety of topics were scheduled throughout the afternoon.

Tonight's agenda will begin with a performance by world-class violinist Jaime Jorge, followed by a salute to excellence through a variety of performance awards. The two most prestigious recognitions include the Company-Wide Director of Nursing of the Year and the Mary Denton Award.

Tuesday morning will include a report on the Operation Christmas Child distribution in Ecuador from Lew Winters and Terri Wallace, who represented Life Care on the trip, a keynote address by Carol O'Flaherty, nurse-humorist, and more education sessions. Service awards will be given at lunch. Wednesday

starts with a devotional by Susie Hutchings, senior vice president of clinical services, and her brother, Gary Wilkinson, followed by side-splitting humor delivered by Ken Davis, entitled "Lighten Up and Live."

The highest interest of the meeting is always centered on the presentation by Life Care's leadership – Giardina, Oglesby and Preston – entitled "Looking Forward," which will take place at 10:15 a.m. Wednesday.

We welcome our outstanding directors of nursing, and we look forward to sharing some special times of fun, learning and inspiration together.

--Beecher Hunter