

Palm Bay Is Born

With pomp and circumstance, Life Care Center of Palm Bay officially became the newest member of the Life Care family on Thursday evening, May 6. And it was some coming out party! The Ritz-Carlton of long-term nursing care, situated in beautiful -- and rapidly growing -- Palm Bay, Florida, was dedicated during a ceremony at 5 p. m. attended by leaders of the community, Life Care Centers of America and the health care profession.

Nancy McGoldrick, executive director, and her staff are polishing what will be a jewel in the field of skilled nursing care along the East Coast of Florida in an edifice constructed by Farrell Preston and his Life Care crew. Guests on tour raved about the facility's overall appearance, its decorations and its functionality for service. But the real beauty of that place, McGoldrick and her team have pledged, will be in its interaction with its residents -- the care and compassion extended.

Very important persons from the Palm Bay area who spoke during the dedication were Mayor John Mazziotti, Irene Byron of the Brevard Alzheimer's Foundation and Gail Schuneman, president and chief operating officer of Palm Bay Community Hospital. The Reverend Jim Wright asked God's blessings upon the residents, the staff and the facility in inspirational invocation and closing prayer. The audience of 200-plus citizens thrilled to the singing talent of 13-year-old Nicole Laudato, daughter of Ralph and Lisa Laudato, the center's receptionist. Greg Larsen accompanied her. Jimmy Rhodes, director of music services for Life Care, presented an array of crowd-pleasing selections on the piano, complemented by horns.

Don Giardina, Life Care's president, Cathy Murray, senior vice president of operations, and Bryan Cook, Eastern Division vice president, outlined Life Care's operational philosophy and commitment. McGoldrick introduced her department directors, who are:

Susan Gibson, director of nursing; Cynthia Droste, director of admissions; Colleen Johnson, director of community relations; Rosann Testa, director of business office services; Kathleen Norman, director of rehabilitation services; Linda Pitts, director of dietary services; Evelyn McHugh, director of activities; Emilee Williams, director of environmental services; and Kathleen Rowe, director of social services. Allen R. Condo, M.D., is the medical director.

Commander Joe Zuzio and the color guard from Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1005 presented and posted the colors.

Life Care Center of Palm Bay has been duly commissioned, and with 11 patients already, the lights are on, never to be turned off again.

--Beecher Hunter