

Salute to Volunteers

Life Care owes a great debt of gratitude to a group of people who daily demonstrate their heart for serving others – with no thought of financial reward. They are our volunteers, and God bless them, one and all.

This is National Volunteer Week, extending through Saturday. It was created in 1974 when President Richard Nixon signed an executive order to establish the week as an annual celebration of volunteering. Every year since that time, each U.S. President, along with many governors, mayors and other elected officials, has signed a proclamation promoting National Volunteer Week.

It is a time to reflect the power that volunteers have to “inspire by example” – encouraging those they help and motivating others to serve.

One of those great examples is RJ Goff of Life Care Center of Orange Park, Florida, who was chosen as the 2006 winner of the Carl W. Campbell Wind Beneath My Wings Award. He has volunteered since 1997, when his mother-in-law moved into that facility. He makes woodcraft items, including birdhouses, for residents to paint and decorate. He brings in antiques, such as a butter churn, iron and syrup skimmer, to stimulate residents’ memories and to encourage them to reminisce. He escorts contestants in the facility’s senior pageants, treating each like royalty.

Others who inspire us by their devotion are:

- Beth Reale of Life Care Center of the South Shore in Massachusetts, who is confined to a wheelchair because of spina bifida, but uses her determination and inner strength to positively impact both residents and associates. She was last year’s honoree as Youth Volunteer of the Year.
- The Wheelchair Dancers of Life Care Center of New Market, Virginia, winner of the Volunteer Group of the Year in 2006, who have been coming to the facility for 14 years.

These are extraordinary people who touch us deeply by their good works and their commitment.

We are now searching for others like them to honor as this year’s award winners, to be announced and presented at the annual management meeting in September. The nomination materials have been sent to each of our centers.

To our thousands of volunteers: Whether you may or may not be formally nominated or recognized as winners in our awards program, many of you often

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tell us of the personal rewards you receive – the inner peace and fulfillment that comes from helping others.

You have our heartfelt appreciation – this week and every week – for graciously giving of yourselves.

--Beecher Hunter