

The Fourth Hurricane

Life Care's residents, associates and buildings in Florida weathered yet another onslaught of a destructive storm -- the fourth since Friday, August 13 -- over the weekend, and came through it in good shape overall. Hurricane Jeanne, packing 120 mile-per-hour winds, came ashore at Port St. Lucie about midnight Saturday, striking its first blow in the same area hit three weeks ago by its sister, Frances.

"The good news is that none of our residents or associates was hurt," said Cathy Murray, chief operating officer. "Our buildings are built very strong, and they have withstood all these storms very well, with only minor damage to roofs and tiles."

Darcy Hall and Lakeside Health Center, both in West Palm Beach, experienced "a little flooding," she said. The biggest problem has been the loss of electrical power, and this morning eight centers are operating with generators. They are Darcy Hall, Lakeside, Port St. Lucie, Palm Bay, Winter Haven, Altamonte Springs, New Port Richey and Orange Park.

The Port St. Lucie campus is without telephone service, and even cell phones are not working. "Communication is tough, but they are doing fine," Murray said.

Life Care's associates and residents "just hunkered down and weathered it," Murray said. "After the fourth hurricane in six weeks, they are so prepared. They know exactly what to do. But there is a certain numbness to it. They are very, very tired, but the adrenalin keeps them going. They know they must be there for the residents, and they are."

Jason Canlas, Eastern Division marketing director, said the onslaught of the storms has bred perplexity and exhaustion, "but at the same time, with each hurricane, they are asking themselves, 'How can I do this to make it better?'" Their routine is go home, get their homes and families ready and report back to the building. They know what their commitment is at work."

Life Care President Don Giardina said that once more "the Life Care associates working in our Florida buildings have proven that 'Whatever It Takes' is more than a slogan. With the challenges presented by Hurricane Jeanne, these dedicated servants of their fellow man have demonstrated courage and selflessness beyond comprehension. As the State of Florida has now experienced the most problematic and costly outbreak of severe weather since Texas in 1886, Life Care's 'Everyday Heroes' have been up to the task. Once again, they have placed our residents above their personal desires and their own self interests in order to serve those in most need of their assistance. Without their sacrifices and dedication to the residents, the pain that I know everyone in Florida is experiencing now would have been significantly increased. Again I say thank you for a job well done."

--Beecher Hunter