

The People in the Chair

We are never to forget that our companies – Life Care, Century Park and Life Care at Home – are in the people business. It is all about our residents, with the care they need being delivered by our most important resources, our associates.

An interesting illustration that drives home this point – from another profession – is related in *The Point Leadership Letter* by Susan Biro.

A young woman needed money to finance her college education, and the most lucrative job available was that of cutting hair in her family's barber shop. Only two problems remained: she didn't like cutting hair and she wasn't very good at it, either.

These were, indeed, worrisome issues, because making money at barbering is a long-term business. No one gets rich giving each customer only one haircut. How could a not-so-great barber satisfy her customers enough to build repeat business?

She decided to look beneath the hair she was cutting and focus on the people who grew it. In particular, she focused on making the time they spent with her a valuable part of their day.

Initially, she didn't know much about their personal lives, jobs or status in the community. She had to deal with them one on one, bantering but finding areas of agreement, and being courteous but acknowledging areas of disagreement.

What she found was that by the time she learned who they were and what they had accomplished, it didn't matter. They were the people in her chair; she was the barber in their lives.

The hair mattered, but less than the relationships that grew around getting it cut.

– Beecher Hunter