

## Trouble on the Highway

Carl Mays of Gatlinburg, Tennessee, is a member of the National Speakers Association who has given challenging addresses to various annual meetings of Life Care Centers of America. He also co-hosts, along with entertainer Louise Mandrell, an annual "People of Passion" conference at her theater in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee.

Among those attending this year was a group of women from the Friendship Baptist Church in Tallassee, Alabama. This group also participated in last year's conference. On the way back home from the event in 2003, the women pulled off at a rest stop between Knoxville and Chattanooga. There they met a group from the Faith Free Methodist Church in Pleasant Grove, Alabama. Mays tells this story of what happened:

The group from Pleasant Grove was having van problems, with the battery refusing to respond. Repeated attempts to start the vehicle were unsuccessful. A woman from the Friendship group used her cell phone to contact the Tennessee Highway Patrol and explain the situation. The two groups stayed together, talked, prayed that a solution would be found, and waited for help. A highway patrolman arrived, inspected the scene, and then drove the van driver with the stubborn battery to the nearest town. They discovered that the battery had a dead cell. A new battery was purchased, and the patrolman returned the driver to the vehicle. The battery was installed and both groups were on their way back home.

From beginning to end, the experience lasted more than two hours, and members of both groups got to know each other rather well. As a follow-up, a member of the Methodist group, Lois Moore, wrote to the pastor of the Baptist church and told him about how unselfishly the representatives of his church had given their time, effort and support. She described how very impressed she and her group members were by the kindness and faithfulness of the women from Friendship. The pastor read the letter to the church and commended his members for their concern and actions.

Ms. Moore also wrote to the Governor of Tennessee, Phil Bredesen, and related to him the experience and how the highway patrolman graciously came to their aid and remained with them until the van was again roadworthy. Col. Lynn Pitts of the Tennessee Highway Patrol responded to her letter and reported that the patrolman would be recognized for going the extra mile to help them, and that her letter would be placed in his personnel file. The Baptist group and the Methodist group stayed in touch, and renewed their friendships at the 2004 "People of Passion" conference.

Mays' story proves what we already believe and practice in the centers of Life Care and American Lifestyles and in the work of Life Care at Home: Kindness creates new friendships, and enriches long-standing ones.

--Beecher Hunter