



A "PERSONAL" THANK YOU...

The focus of the upcoming AAHSA Future of Aging Services Conference & Exposition (March 31-April 2) is *Solving the Workforce Challenge*. Read the conference agenda and you'll see a series of sessions focused on finding solutions to workforce challenges, from supervisory and leadership challenges to recruitment challenges. "The solutions must be daring-...says the brochure. "We need bold, innovative answers that are dramatic enough to create a lasting change in our field."

Educational sessions that provide answers are, by definition, academic. Their content, though, when implemented can bring life-changing results. "Life-changing" is what my family has experienced and will provide encouragement, I hope, to the efforts of so many providers who have signed on to AAHSA's Quality First initiative.

In an October [Z-News \(10/19/07\)](#) I shared a personal story to reflect how the challenges of long term care funding are affecting the lives of my parents and the CCRC (Willow Brook Christian Village in Delaware, OH) where they reside. My parents moved to Willow Brook about 10 years ago; my father moved into an assisted living residence within an easy walk of their cottage about 2 1/2 years ago. The earlier Z-News described my mother's concerns about the cost of my father's care. The burden of these fears was lightened greatly by the care provided by the CCRC staff. Though some staff changes occurred during my father's stay in assisted living, they were few. The continuity allowed my parents to grow in their comfort and knowledge of their caregivers. My use of the word "their" was purposeful -- this staff cared every bit as much for my mother and her needs as they did for my father's. My father died in late January, one week after my mother's 87th birthday. When my mother and I arrived in my father's room the morning of her birthday, he had been dressed and was sitting up to greet her. Flowers, balloons and a card were waiting for her. The card held a signature ("love, Tom") that was nearly illegible, but it melted my mother into tears. What wonderful staff person was so thoughtful? We finally learned the source of this gift, but it took some work.

Time after time, the staff responded to my father's call for help. Always cheerful, always willing to help. What kept them so patient as they responded to call after call for help? My father dubbed one staff person "The Real McCoy"... she made lifting him out of his chair look so easy; my attempt to do the same reduced my parents to laughter!

These caregivers expressed a love and concern that went beyond anything that we could pay for. I was in my father's room talking quietly to my brother the last morning of his life when one of his caregivers stopped in to check on him after arriving on her morning shift. Unbeknownst to her, I was watching as she took his hand and saw the tears roll down her cheek. As the final hour approached, the same nurse arrived and prepared us for what she believed was his imminent death. My mother asked if she would like to stay with us, along with the nurse who was just arriving for the new shift. There we were, family and caregivers, sharing a very personal and intimate time together.

February 22, 2008

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Ziegler AAHSA National CFO Workshop
Hotel Monteleone
New Orleans, Louisiana
Thursday-Friday
April 23-25, 2008

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AAHSA Future of Aging Services Conference University-Affiliated Senior Living: A Growing Trend
Sunday, March 30, 2008

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"Workforce" sounds so impersonal. The staff members who cared for my father (and mother) are termed "angels" by my family. And how do we thank them? Certainly Employee Appreciation Funds are a critical way to show appreciation, but they're not very personal. When my family delivered Cheryl's Cookies to the different shifts you'd have thought we'd showered them with cash. Nearly every staff person, even the doctor on call, stopped us in the hallway or stuck their head in the room to say thanks (you may have to be from Ohio to understand how special Cheryl's Cookies are). Perhaps we should develop an educational session directed to those of us who receive the care of the workforce AAHSA is helping to educate ... "10 Practical Ways to Show Your Appreciation to the Caregivers Who Change Lives".

Senior living providers who are reading this Z-News probably feel I'm preaching to the choir. Industry professionals, investors and others, like we at Ziegler, who serve senior living providers of all types may be touched by the words my husband (also a Ziegler banker) used in his email sharing news of my father's death to our Ziegler colleagues: *This experience has been an almost daily reminder of why we are pleased to work with our clients and assist them in carrying out their missions.*

Thank you AAHSA for dedicating your efforts to elevate the quality of care delivered to my father, to my mother and to the myriad of others across our country. Though we don't express it well, the families of those served are eternally grateful.

By Kathryn Brod, Director of Senior Living Research, Ziegler Capital Markets

Z-NEWS FOLLOW-UP

In the **Z-News** of 02/01/08 we referenced Ziegler Research's Dozen Continuing Disclosure Best Practices. If you'd like a complete copy of this document it is available at www.zieglerseniorkingfinance.com

NONPROFIT SENIOR LIVING RATINGS ACTIONS

ORGANIZATION	RATING AGENCY	RATING/OUTLOOK	TYPE OF ACTION	DATE
Masonic Homes of Pennsylvania	S&P	A+ Stable	Affirms Rating	2/13/08
PHS Senior Living (aka Presbyterian Homes and Services of New Jersey)	Fitch	A- Stable	New Rating	2/14/08
Orchard Cove Inc.	S&P	BB- Negative	Downgraded from BBB-	2/14/08

Contact Dan Hermann in Ziegler's Chicago office or the banker in your area with questions or comments about Ziegler.

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