



# CHAPTER TWO

## *A SPRING IN YOUR STEP & JOY IN YOUR HEART*


**(Music and The Nursing Home Staff)**

**(VIDEO AT END OF CHAPTER)**

**How to Choose A Nursing Home**



# A SPRING IN YOUR STEP & A SONG IN YOUR HEART!



“A bird doesn’t sing because it has an answer;  
it sings because it has a song.”  
~ Maya Angelou

As each day dawns, we often find ourselves probing wildly for answers to the mystery of our being without stopping to realize that we are held tightly in the hands of the Great Giver of Life who has provided a simple but powerful tonic for our fears and frustrations found in the raindrops softly calling our name on the window pane. If only we would pause in sacred idleness and listen to their patter for just one precious moment, the verse: **“This is my Father’s world and to my listening ears all nature sings, and round me rings, the music of the spheres”** would suffice as a balm for the troubled soul; a time when the Spirit of God would enlighten us with the wisdom that “in Him we live and move and have our being.”

As the drops of rain softly sparkle and shimmer in route to, what is often misunderstood as their final journey, we would soon surmise that the dark rich thirsty soil below has been eagerly anticipating their arrival for the purpose of a resurrection just resting in the darkness beneath; that of a tiny seed longing to come to life as a flower attired in queenly clothes and saturated with a rich aromatic fragrance. Instead of being lost forever, the raindrop has been transformed into a new and perfect body; a rebirth only possible because it arrived on earth in a shower with others rather than alone.

In this, our Father’s world, there is nothing ever lost or neglected; for everything He creates has a purpose and reason; always to be resurrected in His time and for His pleasure.



Thus, accepting the fact that without God, we are helpless human beings lacking answers, just like the birds, we would greet each day with a spring in our step and a song in our heart; whether in work or play. Although our part in the whole scheme of things may seem minute, in the end, our actions will become the resurrection of hope for a better tomorrow in the hearts and minds of the vulnerable elderly residents we serve. Paul stresses the importance of the role we all play in life by stating in **1 Corinthians 12:12, "The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ."**

When analyzing this Scripture in the light of those caring for the elderly, this means that the owners and administrators of healthcare facilities are only as successful as the staff they hire, lead, and empower to do their jobs. Literally, once again referring back to the journey of the raindrop above, attitudes of staff members are dependent upon those making decisions at the head whose actions stream down as creative moisture into the body resembling the drop of water on the window pane on its journey to the parched ground below. An open-door policy along with walking among the people hired to make the three shifts in a healthcare facility efficiently run, will not only demonstrate support, but send the message of compassion to residents and employees as well. Having chosen staff members that truly love working with elderly people, coupled with a thorough training program, will serve as a winning formula and work for the good of everyone involved.

Thus, if we approach our day realizing answers are not within our ability to understand, but we still have a song to sing, the soil beneath our feet will be more fertile and new flowers of grace will bloom forever touching the hearts of the sweet old folks everywhere.

Dear readers, as I have completed the numerous collections found on [devotionalembbers.com](http://devotionalembbers.com), the importance of every member of the staff in reaching the goals set out by those in charge of a healthcare facility have become more vivid as each year passed. This fact is substantiated by simply observing the behavior of the staff members as they go about the business of each day. If they are in an environment where an administrator makes them feel special and important, like the raindrops described above, there will be an obvious spring in their step and a song in their heart that the residents will reap benefits from on a daily basis. Additionally, the atmosphere will become electric when the staff members serve the residents as an organized team and saturate them with showers of grace filled blessings.

In order to graphically demonstrate how a scene unfolds in the presence of wild and infectious joy, it is now time to witness the delight on both the faces of Glendale Gardens staff members and residents alike.

***Administrator Keith walking blindly into a water fight at OK Corral among his gun slinging Glendale Gardens residents and.....***





**RECEIVING A GRAND AND THOROUGH  
SOAKING!**



**FOLLOWED CLOSELY BEHIND BY LYNN, HEAD OF NURSING**





# ANOTHER DAY! ANOTHER SOAKING!



DIFFERENT DAY IN THE LIFE OF ADMINISTRATOR KEITH! TAKING PART IN THE SPRINKLER CLUB ABIDING BY THE RULE, "TO BE A MEMBER, YOU MUST GO THROUGH THE WATER SPRINKLER TWICE!"



**QUESTION:** What value does Keith place on the activity department?

**ANSWER:**  
He allocates funds and considers activities an integral part of each resident's care plan!





**MEET BRIAN, SOCIAL SERVICES DIRECTOR, MOVING WHEELCHAIRS ON AN OUTING AT FELLOWS LAKE. YOU WILL SEE HIM EVERYWHERE; OUT OF HIS OFFICE AMONG THOSE HE SERVES BY KEEPING HIS FINGER DIRECTLY ON THE PLUSE.**



**CINDY, STAFF MEMBER FROM THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE, OUT AMONG THE RESIDENTS DRESSED UP AND PARTICIPATING AT A HALLOWEEN PARTY.**

**Let the good times roll.....**



**A SPRING IN THEIR STEP  
AND A SONG IN THEIR HEART  
LOOKS LIKE THIS!**



**LYNN HEAD OF NURSING  
SHOUTS FOR JOY AS AN  
EXAMPLE TO HER STAFF.  
AND...LOOK AT THE RESULTS!**





**THOSE NURSES  
ROCK! THEY  
LOVE THEIR  
RESIDENTS!**





**HAPPY MEALS COME  
FROM THE KITCHEN!**



***DRUM ROLLS FOR CLEAN  
DISHES!***



# THE ENTIRE NURSING HOME SPARKLES!



JAMES FROM  
MAINTENANCE  
DANCES WITH  
DAM! DAILY  
FUN!







***THE THERAPY WON'T MISS OUT ON  
THE ACTION! WORK IS A  
BALL OF FUN!***



***LET'S SHAKE OUR BOOTY!***



**AND THE BEAT GOES ON AND ON!  
LET'S ROCK THE HOUSE!**



**AND...RESIDENT DON SMILES!**







*A STAFF WITH A SPRING IN  
THEIR STEP AND JOY IN  
THEIR HEART...*

*BLESSED RESIDENTS*

***Team work means everyone is on the same page regarding patient care; a win/win for both the staff and residents.***

**Results: A wholistic approach regarding patient care by staff members will mean happy well cared for residents. Each day will be a time of restoration.**

- 1) Clean rooms will sparkle like the stars in the sky that will not only deliver a message of pride in the task performed but be evident to the occupants that people care about the space in which they live.
- 2) Activity departments will be recognized by those in charge as important to the health and welfare of the residents and a primary factor in the care provided by the nursing staff. Instead of thinking of this department as "just occupying time playing bingo," it will become the central hub for those residing there; an integral part of the healthcare plan for each individual, thus, making certain the activity director/s are a part of every critical team meeting. The insulting words, "They are just activity directors" will never be uttered again but be provided with an ample budget to accommodate the ability of those in charge for coloring outside the lines. Having taken this approach, the community at large will soon be aware of how alive their loved ones feel because of the electricity permeating the air. The success of this department depends



on hiring energetic people that love old folks and possess the willingness to try new and exciting activities based on the needs of those residing there.

- 3) Compassionate aids will be trained to give showers to residents using such expert hands on the fragile skin of the aging bodies, that they will respond with a resounding, "Yes" when asked if they desire to be scheduled for a shower today.
- 4) Training will be offered to a kitchen staff that has them up to the task of preparing food for residents that have created recipes their own children still cherish today. (Reasonable \$ allotment per resident to assure nourishing meals as a primary goal; resulting in a delicious fare, not institutional food.)
- 5) Therapists that are considered by residents to have the "magic touch" and well-trained ears to listen to their stories of "times gone by," repeated with every session, will be on board.
- 6) Those that care for building maintenance with efficiency and pay special attention to the needs of the residents; along with showing equal concern for their beloved wall decorations, will turn an ordinary room into an extraordinary living space.

# **RESULTS! RESULTS!**

# **EVERYONE WINS!**

Let us now take these comments to application level and watch what happens when one staff member named Jesse not only does her job as a therapist, but also goes way beyond the lines as it applies to a resident's care. First please note that step one was intently listening with compassion to the longing a resident expressed during the course of one therapy session that propelled her into action. Instead of simply performing her job responsibilities as stated on an employee document, her desire to reach out in a meaningful way took wings within her heart. In other words, she became the raindrop that allowed the love in her own heart to trickle down into fertile soil where the resurrection of a man's dream was waiting to be activated.

Thus, not having an answer in her own mind, the song she sang to others was heard and answered in the form of team work; one drop instantly became a gentle shower that would provide moisture for years to come; the birth of a program called "Swan Song" designed to impact residents' lives in an enormous way.

Read now how resident Garry's longing became an extraordinary reality; one that would impact his heart forever.





## **“OPERATION SWAN SONG”**

**(A person's final public performance or professional activity before retirement:)**

**(“he has decided to make this tour his swan song”)**

When you arise each day with a spring in your step and joy in your heart, the opportunities that unfold will not only be limitless, but extraordinary in nature; so spectacular that a life may be touched forever. Folks, it was all because a physical therapist modeled this behavior while working with a resident at Glendale Gardens Nursing Home, that **“OPERATION SWAN SONG”** was born; whose mission, if possible, is to honor the last requests of the critically ill residing there.

No matter what capacity an individual is hired to accomplish as an employee of a health care facility, there is always an opportunity to learn from these wise elderly people that have successfully traveled life’s highways and byways. Certainly, it requires only a short amount of time around those that reside there to realize they have an uncanny ability to recognize when their earthly journey is nearing its conclusion; this fact, over time, proven through their comments and questions.

Thus, as resident Garry B. carried on a spirited conversation with therapist Jesse, the words he proclaimed, *“If only..... If only..... If only I could see the beautiful landscape of Ha Ha Tonka State Park just one more time”*, took on a life of their own. Having created the windows and catalogues for the St. Louis based store called Famous and Barr during his career as a designer, his love of color and textures had lasted a life time; causing him to absolutely adore Autumn’s glorious display that covered the



hillsides in this wonderful park every year. Many times, when reminiscing about his favorite trips to Missouri's finest festivals and landmarks, although he held an appreciation for them all, it was the landscape of Ha Ha Tonka State Park that had forever captured his heart.

Therefore, finding Garry's conversation playing repeatedly in her mind, therapist Jesse felt led to make his last request known to the administrator and activity director; resulting in a barrage of conversations among an array of staff members around the question, "How can we make this last wish come true for Garry?"

Ladies and gentlemen, this is an example of the stuff that makes dreams come true, for not just one person, but the multitudes; all because employees realize the importance of the role they play each and every day in the lives of the sweet old folks they serve. Jesse did not have an answer but had a song to sing; causing a dream to become reality for a deserving resident.

Thus, when Garry learned that his wish to soak in the beauty of his favorite park just one more time was to be granted the very next day, his behavior was beyond description. His face absolutely glowed as he learned that his friend Tom, resident friend Driscoll, Administrator Keith, Activity Director Tim, and Nurse Cindy would be accompanying him on this special occasion; the final request of his life.

Folks, the thoughts that bounced around in Garry's brain during the night, must have resembled the dance of the sugar plum fairies. Certainly, all of us have experienced the inability to get a good night's rest due to the anticipation of what tomorrow might hold. The reel that played in his mind must have been filled with scenes stored up in his treasure chest of Ha Ha Tonka State Park from the many journeys enjoyed over the years. Would the colors be as rich as he remembered? Would the scintillating fragrance of the foliage be equal to those he breathed in previously? And...Oh, those sweet little creatures that scampered everywhere! Would they still be as active, mischievous, and plentiful?

*Garry soaking in the beauty.*





# SURROUNDED BY FRIENDS



# ONE MAN'S DREAM CAME TRUE





**If a resident doesn't have an after death guide on file, this can be used as a model.**

## *My Wish List - After Death Guide*

I am providing the following information to close friends and relatives to assist with the handling of my affairs in the event of my death.

### Personal Details

Full name:

ID number:

Where I have placed my will:

Where I keep my ID Card/ID Book:

Organ/tissue donation / entire body for research:

Arrangements for organ/tissue/body donation have already been made with:

Organ Donor Foundation/Tissue Bank/Medical School

Living Will:

Guardianship of Children:

My Pet's Needs:

Please make an announcement of my death on Facebook/twitter/WhatsApp/other, e.g. notify my old high school Facebook page:

**Friends, relatives, neighbors and colleagues to be contacted in the event of my death, (add more pages, for a funeral guest list):**

Name:	Relationship to me	Contact details, tel/e-mail
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## Funeral Details

Payment for funeral:

Name of burial scheme/funeral insurance:

Financial Institution where policy is held:

Policy number:

If more than one funeral policy, provide details:

If you prefer a specific type of coffin - provide details:

### **Requests regarding burial / cremation / placement of ashes**

If you own a burial plot or mausoleum / ash niche, where is the deed kept?

Provide cemetery name, address, contact details and plot number:

Name and address of preferred cemetery / memorial park:

What I want done with my ashes: interned / memorial wall / buried with spouse or child / kept at home / planted with a tree / scattered...

Ash details and final resting place:

Preferred funeral home / funeral director:

### **I would like the following people to act as pallbearers:**

1. Name:

Contact details:

2. Name

Contact details:

3. Name

Contact details:

4. Name

Contact details:

5. Name



Contact details:

6. Name

Contact details:

7. Name

Contact details:

8. Name

Contact details:

9. Name

Contact details:

10. Name

Contact details:

I want my funeral / end of life ceremony to be religious / secular, provide details:

I prefer not to have a formal service, but rather...

I would like the ceremony to be at my place of worship / retirement village / family home / graveside / crematorium / funeral venue - provide details:

I want the service to be run by a particular speaker/minister/priest/imam/rabbi/other:

I wish to have an open casket / closed casket / no coffin present:

I wish to be dressed in:

I wish to be buried / cremated with (favorite possession):

I want the following to be written on my ash niche / tombstone / grave marker:

I have the following preferences:

Readings:

Prayers:

Music:

My favorite song is:



Eulogy Notes (to help with a eulogy speech)

Milestones in my life:

My philosophy / causes I strongly believe in:

People I want to thank, my favorite things, what I love most, what I live for:

Funniest moments:

I have a special message that I would like to be read at my end of life ceremony:

I give my sincerest thanks to those special people in my life that I have been able to trust with this information. May your continued journey on this earth plain be filled with inspiration, prosperity and love.

Name:

Signature:

Date:



## **CHOOSING THE RIGHT NURSING HOME FOR YOUR LOVED ONE**

One of the hardest decisions you will ever have to make in your life is choosing the right nursing home for your loved one. When and if this time ever rolls around, you will immediately recognize that your roles have switched. The person, or parent, that raised you and offered wisdom throughout your childhood suddenly is no longer capable of dealing with the task of performing his/her own daily living requirements and now needs your attention; a situation that feels not only strange but very painful.

Then, when you have finally accepted the fact that it is time to choose a facility that your loved one will call home, a new wave of terror rushes through every fiber of your being. Having been thrust into the role of evaluating the facilities, what criteria do you use in reaching the correct decision?

Many people in this situation get caught up in a nursing home's interior decorating and mistakenly use it as the major tool in determining that it must be as efficient and loving as it appears. However, the old saying, "All that glitters in this world is not gold", suddenly should take front and center in your mind.

So, you shout loudly, "HOW DO I GO ABOUT MAKING THE CORRECT CHOICE?"

Folks, that is exactly why the following 30-minute interview between Administrator Keith Steenbergen and Activity Director Tim Trafford has been included in this chapter. Since both have been vastly successful in the field, the writer felt it was imperative that you have answers to as many questions as possible regarding this important issue.

Given the relevance of your task at hand, it is the writer's belief that you will reap great rewards from the fountain of knowledge imparted to you by these two experienced individuals. Since the writer has seen them up close and personal every Thursday for many years and has observed them masterfully deal with all aspects of residents' needs, it was an obvious choice that you be offered the privilege of hearing their viewpoints on the importance of team building and how it relates to your loved one's life.



**Keith Steenbergen**  
**Administrator**

***Listen now.***



**Tim Trafford**  
**Activity Director**



**LET ME BE A GIVER**

*God, let me be a giver, and not one  
Who only takes and takes unceasingly;  
God, let me give, so that not just my own,  
But others' lives as well, may richer be.*

*Let me give out whatever I may hold  
Of what material things life may be heaping,  
Let me give raiment, shelter, food, or gold  
If these are, through Thy bounty, in my keeping.*

*But greater than such fleeting treasures, may  
I give my faith and hope cheerfulness,  
Belief and dreams and joy and laughter gay  
Some lonely soul to bless.*

*(By: Mary Carolyn Davies)*

**“A bird doesn't sing because  
it has an answer; it sings  
because it has a song.”**

**By: Maya Angelou**

