



SPREADING OUR STORIES

Avera Health's Daily Line-up

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Laughter bubbles up the open staircase at the Avera central office from the first floor where some 25 employees are gathered to participate in the Avera Daily Line-Up, a 10-minute, system-wide message and discussion.

Avera PACE* vice president Jeff Nielsen, responding to the day's topic about finding the face of Christ in others, tells about his experience on an airplane the day before with the somewhat peculiar looking woman next to him. At first he describes her and acknowledges his disappointment on discovering they were seatmates. Understandably, he wanted that middle seat to stay empty for his comfort. During the flight, he fell asleep, learning only later that he had evidently leaned against the 81-year-old woman the entire time.

When the plane landed and he awoke, the woman thanked him for falling asleep on her arm. She explained that her husband had passed away 15 years earlier and that she appreciated the comfort of having a seatmate who leaned against her.

Imagine being present to another person by just falling asleep!

The Avera Daily Line-Up is a daily meeting where sharing of this kind takes place every shift, every day, in every department at every Avera-sponsored and many Avera-managed facilities. It fosters timely and consistent communication, education and staff recognition. The marketing department at the Avera central office in Sioux Falls, S.D., crafts the universal messages, which range over a variety of topics designed

to impart mission and values, improve service excellence and form good ambassadors for the organization.

A system-wide team meets quarterly to contribute topic ideas and provide feedback about effectiveness.

Included in the core communication are a question for discussion, a humorous or thought-provoking quote and a prayer. Each day's focus is one of Avera's Five Keys to Excellence: ministry, people, quality, service and financial stewardship.

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The format is designed with open sections to accommodate adding information relevant to local facilities and departments. Facilities receive the Avera Daily Line-Up by e-mail a week ahead of time in order to give them time to incorporate the local information. The tool has proven nimble enough that last-minute communication from the system level can also be achieved.

Employees say they have found these daily gatherings to be an effective and preferred way to communicate, and many nursing units have found it to be invaluable when shifts change.

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*PACE: Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly