

8/11/2010

Director Kleinglass,

Early this year, our mom passed away after a very short battle with Lung Cancer. We took for granted that she would be around for many years to come, continuing to tenderly care for our father, who has progressive Multiple Sclerosis. With her passing, our family was left with a horrible feeling of loss and the concern for our father's care. We never thought a nursing home was in the near future for our young father and struggled with the decision to seek out options for outside care.

With some research, and many calls, we discovered the numerous opportunities available to our father for being a Veteran. Knowing that we could not afford private care, we turned to the VA for help in finding the best care for our dad. We wanted to make sure that he was able to get the care that he needed and still maintain a close family environment without us kids having to stop our lives to care for our dad. Being very young, we wanted him to have a happy fulfilling life. After looking at our case, a social worker suggested that our family (and especially our father) would be a great candidate for a new program called Veteran's Foster Care.

Our caseworker put us in contact with a great woman who we refer to as the "ANGEL". She came to visit us at our father's home and seeing our struggle with grief from the loss of our mother, and the struggle with the decision to put our father into a home at a young age, she stepped in and immediately helped us with our difficult situation. From then on, we were assistance throughout the selection process. Our family was offered assistance in filling out the extremely intimidating forms. We were also assisted with finding the right foster home and caregiver. We had help finding the financial assistance opportunities that our dad qualified for. We even were supported and assisted with convincing Dad that foster care would be a great opportunity for him.

When hearing the word foster care, a person thinks of a loving home where an orphan is temporarily adopted by a family until they are able to be permanently adopted. VFH is the same concept, only adult veterans are not orphans, but are individuals that require the medical attention of a nursing home or cannot care for themselves. The VFH also provides the veteran's family with care and assistance that they may not be able to provide on a full time basis. Our family has found a great home and "family" to care for our dad. Dad does all the things he loves to do including watching his favorite sports on TV, sitting around a bonfire and often spend evenings on the patio outside, eats all of his favorite foods and gets out in the community. He has more opportunity now in the foster care program than he did under the care of our mother.

The VA has helped in more ways than we ever imagined. All the equipment and aid that our dad needs are given to him through the VA foster care program. He has a new wheelchair and a great lift that decreases the difficulty of transporting to and from his bed. He receives free transportation to and from his doctor appointments and even spends two days a week at a day center where he can interact with others to stay involved in the community and get more interaction with people.

The greatest opportunity our family has now been given since Dad moved into his foster home, is that we are now all able to spend quality time together with our dad that we were not able to do before. Quality time with our dad was considered cooking, cleaning and caring for him. We are now able to sit and talk with Dad and not have to worry about those other things.

We could not have asked for a better outcome from such a heartbreaking and unfortunate situation. The VA and the VFH have been wonderful to our family and we could not have done it without the people involved in the program.

Our dad is happy, thriving and living a quality life...and now we are able to do that as well.

Sincerely,

Stephanie, Angela and Christopher Dehart