

Why Your Donation Matters

Christa's Story

As a homeless woman, my Mom had very little to her name when she was unexpectedly diagnosed with a terminal illness at just 53. I was so concerned that after 10 years of living day by day, my Mom's last days would be spent in a harsh, unsafe environment. My younger brothers and I were not able to assist our mother physically or financially so I swallowed my pride and went to speak with Sharon at the VNA's Vermont Respite House. She agreed, so kindly, to welcome my mother to be cared for in the house with no requirement for payment.

I was elated to witness the love, compassion, dignity and respect that my Mom received from all of the nurses, house staff and volunteers of Respite House. What remains so strong in my memory is that they allowed her to spend her last days with comforts that everybody else seems to take for granted - yet she hadn't had for years: a bed, pajamas, food and baths.

I wasn't able to be at my Mom's side the moment she died, but I spoke to those who surrounded her as she took her last breath. These were people who loved and respected my mother - yet knew very little of her. What an amazing gift. I owe so much to Vermont Respite House because they made what would have been a traumatic and endlessly sad situation to be a perfect situation and one that I can smile about... certainly not that my mother died, because I miss her so terribly - but in HOW she died, WHERE she died and WHO was holding her hands as she died.

Each situation is different. Some people can pay for their time at Respite House. Some cannot. Christa's story is one example of why your donation matters.

If you'd like more information about the charitable care mission of your VNA, please contact Ann Irwin, Director of Development and Community Relations at (802) 860-4437 or Irwin@vnacares.org.