

08/26/20

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Jamie Castellano and I am the daughter of James Whitfield. I am an LPN (Licensed practical nurse). I have been a nurse for over 15 years and have worked in long term care for much of my career. I had the opportunity to work in a rehab hospital for a year of my career. Now that you know my background, this is what I have witnessed.

I had received a call from my father in June of this year to say goodbye. He stated that he didn't think he would live much longer because he wasn't doing well and wanted me to know he loved me. My father is not a man who expresses his feelings this way, so I was in shock. I booked a flight that day to leave in 2 weeks because I had to give my job notice. He told me he was in a nursing home and had been there which I had no clue of. He told me to call his longtime friend Darryl Cotton to get the details of what had happened.

That night I spoke with Darryl regarding my father's condition. He told me he had fallen a few months back and went to the hospital where they had put a foley in him and sent him back home with the catheter and home health. A few weeks later he became lethargic, and unable to move. Although my father did not want to go, Darryl made him go to the ER where he was diagnosed with sepsis from a UTI. He was within hours of dying. After he recovered he was sent to Parkway Nursing and Rehab where he was getting "skilled" therapy. This was when my father had called me.

My father had been at Parkway for 3 months' when he called me. He said they weren't doing therapy because he couldn't stand without his blood pressure dropping. I decided then and there I had to visit him and help to get a handle on his care. I called my father every day until I arrived to motivate him to doing therapy.

I arrived in California on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020. The following day I met with Darryl who took me to 151 Farms where my father stays. He then took me to Parkway so I could see my father. My first thought when I saw him was that he needs to be on hospice. He was so emaciated, and weak. Therapy worked with him while I was in the room but he was unable to sit on the side of the bed alone, let alone hold his own head up. I was devastated. After some time, they laid him down to get his blood pressure up and then sat him up and stood him up to transfer into a Geri chair. This is a chair that reclines for patient's who can't tolerate sitting in a regular wheelchair. We went outside and had lunch which I brought him, and he began to eat. He was only able to sit up for an hour before he had to lay back down. We continued to do this everyday for a week. By the end of the week his blood pressures were stable and didn't drop. This was also after I spoke to the nurse practitioner regarding his medications and got him put on midodrine which is a medication to help keep blood pressures up related to orthostatic hypotension.

By the end of the week Darryl and I decided to bring my dad back to 151 (my primary goal was to get my dad to come home to Georgia with me which he absolutely refused to do). The first day he was back at 151 I thought to myself this is crazy; he doesn't need to be here. How is he going to be taken care of after I leave (I was only there for 2 weeks, again because I was going to get him home to Georgia). My father still had a catheter which attempts to take it out proved unsuccessful, plus he is

incontinent of his bowels. My father called me into his room several times that night to change out his movies he was watching. Just getting him to stand up from the wheelchair was a chore that required 3 of us. I was fed up.

I put my nursing cap on and took off my daughter cap. I looked around his room and started to think; what could I do to get him to do things on his own and not rely on someone else? That next day I got a siderail for his bed. I got other equipment for his room. I sat there every time he wanted a new movie I made him sit up on the side of the bed and change it himself. By that night he was doing it himself. **It took just ONE DAY to get him to where he could sit up on his own on the side of the bed and change his movies HIMSELF!!!** My thoughts on him being at 151 Farms were changing. I was getting excited! A few days later we decided to try a shower which was in an adjacent building from where his room was. It again took 3 of us to get him up out of the chair (his bed was up high enough he could just stand), we get him over to the shower, he starts to wash himself but then he just leans up against the wall because he's so weak. I finish washing him. By this time, I decided I was going to stay 2 more weeks to get him a little stronger. It's a good thing I did! I saw improvements I could not believe!

By week 3 he's walking at least two laps in the office, we did another shower were he walked all the way to the shower, washed himself and walked outside where he sat for another hour. By the beginning of the final week I'm there, Darryl gave him a job. He had to go out to the enormous fishpond they built while I was there. Mind you, I was staying there at 151 Farms too. Darryl opened his door to me and gave me a room to stay in, rent free. All he asked was that I help my dad get better. So, dad had to go outside to the fishpond twice a day to feed the "fishies" and give treats to the dogs. My dad had a purpose again!! I watched my father go from needing hospice because he gave up on life, unable to sit up or hold his head up; to loving live again, to having a purpose, to walking over 100 feet, feeding fish and dogs, changing out his own movies and even using the toilet!!!!!! Being there at his home at 151 Farms literally saved my father's life!

Since I left, I have decided to go into travel nursing. I currently am at a nursing home where I am watching the elderly wither away. **Just today I got so angry because the so-called therapy department isn't doing anything with these residents. They are lying there in bed watching tv. No activities, no therapy, no purpose.** Yes, there is COVID that is restricting things. But imagine a facility with 10 residents and not 75. **You're able to give that more one on one care, you give them a daily task, whether it's handing out newspapers, feeding the animals, gardening, FEEDING THE FISH! This gives them a purpose to LIVE again and not just lay there waiting to die!**

I'm saddened by the lack of activity the elder get in these nursing homes. Although I am just one person, I strive my hardest to get my 23 patients mobile and active so they don't just sit there and die. I believe the plan that Darryl has for expanding 151 Farms to make urban farming become part of our lives and his integration of the farm for elder care is a spectacular plan that I believe will save the lives of others, just like it has for my father. Let's give it chance. What we have right now is not working.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

*Jamie Castellano*

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