

## A Daughter's Journey

My story is my own personal experience with Hospice Care of South Carolina. My story began when my father had a massive stroke that left him unable to walk or to communicate with his family from that day forward. After months of rehab and hospitals, we finally brought daddy home to take care of him which required 24 hour care. Everyday my mother and I had to give my daddy a bath which literally took hours to do because my father was unable to help. This care went on for months until one day I noticed that daddy's leg didn't look right, so we took him to Dr. Heidi's office. While he was there they performed different test and told us that my daddy had bone cancer and it was time for hospice.

I can remember being at home and feeling as if my world had stopped and my heart and soul was breaking. However my attitude changed the day a hospice aide came to ou house to give daddy a bath for the first time. Some of you may not understand why this simple task meant so much to not only me and my mother but also to my daddy. I could see the relief in my daddy's eyes knowing that his little girl didn't have to bathe him anymore. My father was a proud man and I could tell it in his eyes every time I had to change his diaper or bath him how it hurt him for me to see him that way. Daddy would look forward to the hospice aiding everyday and so did we. While my father was under Hospice Care of South Carolina he seemed happy because he knew how hard it was on me and mama. Finally we were getting some help.

I can remember one day when I was so sad and found it hard to even look at daddy without crying. I went in his room to talk with him and he pointed to closet where a hat hung that I had bought him and I gave it to him and he placed it on his head and started smiling doing everything in his power to make me happy when I was so sad. He then pointed at the bed which I then got in next to him and he started signing to me. None of the words came out right but I know what he was signing and I just sat there crying lying in my daddy's arms for one of the last times. Had he been in the hospital we would have never shared that moment and many more we had together. I never could tell him he was dying but I know he always knew. I could tell in the way he would hold my hand. Then in December the day came that none of us wanted to come but it was time to let my daddy go home.

I was at home alone with him and noticed something was not right I then called my mother who came home for work and then called the hospice nurse. My mama asked daddy if he was ready to go and he said yes and mama asked if he saw the angels coming for him and he said yes. It was only a matter of minutes it seemed that the hospice nurse showed up at our house. She was on her vacation but came to our house anyway and stayed with our family for 16 hours straight. She had a funny way of knowing when to leave a room to let us talk with daddy by our selves. However she stayed up all night while some of the family took cat naps throughout the house.

That night I told my daddy not to leave this world without him knowing that he was the best daddy in the world and in my eyes he could do no wrong. I also told him not to worry I would take of mama and we would meet again. That morning as we stood around my daddy's bed as he took his last breath at 8:15am. We laid my father to rest on Christmas Eve but our hospice journey didn't end there. At the funeral home we saw a beautiful quilt placed among several plants that was from the staff of HCSC with a poem attached. The quilt is still hanging on the back of my daddy's chair in the living room.

I later saw an opening for a Hospice Care of South Carolina Community Relations Director. I knew I had to be part of such a wonderful organization. I have been with HCSC for a little over a year and each day I know that I am giving back to others. It is an honor to make a difference to others in the same way that the HCSC staff touched my family.



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