Willow Award

EXCELLENCE IN END-OF-LIFE CARE

5/28/2025

Dear Willow Award,

My name is Linda Kreuser, my family and I would like to nominate "Evergreen Living Center" for the Willow Award for their care and compassion during a difficult time.

Back in January my husband and I toured several facilities in the Benton area. But this one stood out above the rest. It smelled CLEAN when we toured the facility. Little did we know we were going to have to use the facility sooner than we thought. My dad was battling the horrible disease of Dementia. We wanted a place where mom and daddy could be in the same room.

January 24th, the day before Daddy's 81st Birthday, we admitted them both into Evergreen Living Center. From day 1, EVERYONE was so kind! The first week went well. But daddy started roaming all over the facility, especially at night. He would wonder, and then the wonderful staff would always bring him back to their room, night after night....

Two weeks after they were there, mom and daddy both ended up with Covid. They were then quarantined in their room for 2 weeks. I know it was not an easy job keeping daddy in that small room, but they did.

A couple of weeks or so had passed and Marsha, the Director of Nursing, called me into her office and told me at some point daddy may need to be placed in a facility to try meds to help with his aggression. It sure did help with her telling me in advance because she was preparing me for what was to come.

About a week later, I received a call at 7:30 am telling me daddy was being transported to the local hospital for evaluation. Well, that day lead into 7 weeks.....

When it was time for daddy to return to the nursing home, they told me he would have to go into the memory care unit. I understood 100%. Once he arrived back, I was so happy he and mom would finally be under the same roof once again. For the first few days mom would go and visit him, but he got to the point she thought he didn't know who she was. So she decided she would not go and visit as much as she had been, even though it was breaking her heart.

I was able to get daddy to take meds when no one else could. So one time they called me from the Memory care unit and told me I needed to come and calm him down, as he was being aggressive and not wanting to take his meds. My husband and I walked in the door, I sat down in front of daddy and got him calm and he took his meds good for me...That night a nurse told me it may be time for Hospice care for him. I cried and I agreed. So the following Monday morning I called Marsha and discussed what steps I needed to take to get him on Hospice, I think its time. She cried right along with me. She gave me options, (Options for hospice?? WOW I thought Hospice was Hospice) so I chose the one she recommended.

I contacted Hospice and got the ball rolling. It was a Monday afternoon, daddy started going down right after. It was on Wednesday of that week and I decided I was NOT leaving daddy alone. I asked if I could stay the night and the wonderful staff brought in a recliner for me to use. And on top of that they even brought in a different bed so my mom could stay in the same room with him as well. Normally they have men on one side of the hall and women on the other. But since mom and daddy have been married 60 ½ years, they made the exception. Plus, they had been apart for 7 weeks while daddy was gone.

The ENTIRE staff was so wonderful! OMG!!! From the Cleaning Lady, who had seen me ugly cry so much that week to the nurses, lunch staff, everyone!!! The cleaning lady stopped me in the hall one morning and told me she had been praying for us and that she had a card for me. The next day she told me she was so excited, that Habitat for Humanity was building her a house!!! OMG! This lady is sharing with me who may not have much?? I cried so hard! She was the sweetest!

The nurses, we can't say enough about them. Like I said, they brought a different bed in for my mom so she could stay next to my dad, a recliner in for me and we had family coming in from Wisconsin at 4:00 am. They never said a word!!! They just kept asking what do ya'll need? What can we do for you??? At times there were 10 or more of us in the room at 1 time, but NOT once did they say anything to us. We were treated like FAMILY, their FAMILY. Then there was the day daddy passed away. They were even crying with us! Hugging us and it was so genuine! There were many times I had to walk out of the room and just UGLY CRY! And "T" one of the nurses saw me and just came and hugged me so hard!

After daddy had passed, mom had to go back to her room. The staff would hear mom crying during the night and would come in and give her hugs. The day of the visitation, they made sure mom got her shower early and just made sure she had anything she needed. She even received flowers from the nursing staff a few days after the service.

So you see I can't nominate just "1" person, it takes a TEAM and that is what they are! Mom is so happy there and everyone thinks the world of mom. We could not have found a better place for Daddy & for mom. I just love them all sooo much! This facility is more than just a Nursing Home, they are FAMILY and that is the way everyone is treated. With Respect.

Thank you for considering Evergreen Living Center.

Sincerely,

Linda Kreuser

Family of Philip Morris Stiles and Martha Stiles