

Hearts of Gold

Category: House Calls and Home Care

written by Ronna L. Edelstein | December 1, 2025

Even when the sun shone, our apartment was enveloped in darkness. A look of confusion or pain replaced Dad's usual smile; I frowned all the time, caught up in a period of pre-grief as I prepared for the inevitable passing of my beloved father. Dad was tired of trying to live, and I was exhausted of trying to help him maintain some quality of life. Then, a miracle occurred. A diagnosis of pancreatic cancer made Dad eligible for hospice at home. The light returned to our lives.

Four days a week, a nurse visited. She talked to Dad as if he still had all his faculties, she spoke to me with kindness, and she provided us with medication to help alleviate Dad's pain and sleepless, anxious nights. For three days a week, an aide came. She gave Dad a shower and foot rub, cut his toenails, and helped him brush his teeth. The physical therapist, during his twice weekly visits, walked the hall with Dad; his goal was to keep Dad strong enough to walk to the bathroom with his walker. A pastor came weekly. Even though he was not part of our religion, he offered profoundly needed solace. Conversations with him eased my angst and gave me the spiritual strength to nurse my father with the respect and love he deserved. Several times during these final months of Dad's life, his primary care physician stopped by, simply to provide a familiar face and a friendly hello.

Caregiving is a formidable challenge. If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a city to care for a loved one who is ill. The home care providers kept me sane. They gave me the support I desperately required to make it through the hours when it was only Dad and me. Their patience and care lessened my burden and made me feel less alone in my caregiving journey.

After Dad died in my arms, I called the nurse before I even notified my children. Although it was in the wee hours of the morning, she immediately left the comfort of her home to come to me—to call the funeral home and physician. She arranged for the hated hospital bed to be removed that morning. And she embraced me as Dad was transported from our apartment to the hearse.

Home care providers are extraordinary individuals with hearts of gold.

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