

December 30, 2009

Judy Berry

I first knew Judy Berry when she spoke to our women's group at my church. As a retired physical therapist I felt embarrassment that the system I had been a part of had failed her. I reflected on my own life experiences. As a twin with a blind retarded twin sister I remember my parents struggled to find adequate placement. I also remembered how hard they worked to improve services for the developmentally disabled. Next I thought of the positive experience my family had with my Fathers time in a Nursing home as I listened to a woman who was willing to put her whole being into making changes in dementia care for others.

Little did I know the impact this woman would have on my life. My older sister began to fail. Fortunately we had an early diagnosis and an understanding of what was needed. We were scheduled for an appointment with Judy for day/respice care.

A severe infection, hospitalization and placement in the local nursing home occurred. The care for my sister was adequate but I was not allowed to help as I had with my Dad. My sister was able to use a walker but limited staff time allowed it only as exercise.

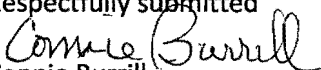
I appealed again to Judy. She was interested in my needs as well as my sisters. We were unique in that the Dassel Ranch is 3.4 miles from our home. We were welcomed at the door by Judy and her staff. From then on I was welcome at any time. We were encouraged to interact with other residents. Although problems were rare, I always felt free to bring them to the staff and they were resolved.

Harriett's last illness lasted eleven days; the Comfort Care she received was outstanding. This included the thoughtful care our friends and I received. Many staff and some of the residents came to her Memorial Service. Three years later I am still recognized as family.

My sister was not a complainer; she accepted her dementia with grace. I remember shortly after moving to the Ranch she said "Thank you for moving me here, I couldn't have stood that other place much longer."

I believe Judy's greatest contribution to the community is her ongoing effort, in the face of many challenges, to provide a loving caring place for clients with dementia to live with dignity. She also provides a place for families to find security and peace knowing their loved one is safe. She is a pioneer in her field, working always to improve her plan.

Respectfully submitted


Connie Burrill