

30 September 2009

Dear Keith,

I just wanted to thank you for the roll in shower that you had installed for us back in May, it has been such a big help! When we used to have the tub and transfer seat it wasn't very safe for my husband, even though we are in a handicap bathroom. The bars were great but he has limited ability to lift his legs in order to get into the tub. It used to take 2-3 of us to get him showered; now it only takes 1, sometimes 2. The drop down seat is also a blessing! If he is having a good day and is able to stand and transfer then we use the drop down seat. If he is having a bad day where he's leaning a lot then we just flip that up and wheel his chair in. We also have aides from Hospice of Dayton that come in; they come every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. If we wouldn't have had the shower they would have had to send another aide on the days that he/we wanted him to have a shower. This has made our lives so much easier and is so much less stress on him. He can't handle change very much at all so this has helped with his frustration with showering.

On a separate note, as I mentioned above we are now enrolled in Hospice of Dayton, a great organization. We were unaware of this program until the first part of August of this year. I know, when you first hear the word hospice you think that the person is going to die within the next couple of months. I was also afraid of that word, but after talking with the folks from hospice, they are so much more than that. Yes, they are there at the end but they are also there throughout the entire living process. What I mean is, you are assigned a social worker/case worker that you have for the entire time you are enrolled. You don't see this person then that person, it is the same person. When your loved one does, eventually, pass, that social worker is the same person you saw in the beginning. They come out at least every month to month and a half, depending on their load. You are assigned a nurse; the same one comes out every time no unfamiliar faces. My husband has vascular dementia after the strokes, so having the same person has really been great. The frequency of the nurse's visits depends on the degree of care that the person needs, she sees my husband once a week. You are also given the option for a pastor/religious person, aides, volunteers, etc. They have been such a blessing to us; they are on call 24 hrs, 7 days a week. Our first phone call doesn't have to be 911 anymore, we call them, they patch us through to a nurse and she/he will either come out or send someone for him. They are like another care plan. I don't have to worry as much now as I used to before.

Being in the military it has been difficult for me at times to try and split my time between my job and my home. With the services that you provided with the shower you have improved not only my quality of life but also my husband's, which outranks mine anytime. I look out for him like a mother bear looks out for her cubs. I am fiercely protective of him and would do anything for him to make him comfortable. I am glad that you were able to do this for him and I hope that you are able to do many other great things for others. I also ask that you let others know about Hospice of Dayton, I know how hard it can be as and is, since I am both a caregiver and the bread winner. Through them there are so many more doors that have opened up that we never knew existed, they are just great. I thank you for your time.

Stephanie R. Bresette, TSgt, USAF