

Dear Ms. Jacobson,

I was looking for a way to get Pat Cline named “Best Lifecare Manager in the world,” when it struck me that a letter to her boss describing the water she walked on in dealing with my brother, L, would be a more productive use of my time.

I expect that you already know that Pat is an extraordinary problem solver, has a frighteningly astute perspective on psychology, and is a dogged and incredibly focused social worker. Just in case you have any doubts as to the place to be reserved for her in the Social Workers’ Hall of Fame, let me tell you the following story.

My brother has been disabled for over 15 years. Eight years ago, when my grandmother died, she established an Illinois Trust for the Disabled. Two years ago, it became clear that the trust’s principal had been so depleted that he would soon lose that source of financial support. Moreover, my brother was associating himself with people who were not only scroungers of an expensive and unhealthy lifestyle, but financial predators, as well. At that time, the trustee suggested that I hire a Medicaid consultant who would find a Medicaid facility for my brother to move into. In other words, unless I took over his entire financial world, my brother would very shortly be unable to afford his house, his car and the “style of living” to which he had become accustomed.

We hired such a consultant. Two years later, the trust ran out of money. The Medicaid consultant—despite having been paid by me for services—had accomplished absolutely nothing.

I was thus confronted seven months ago with a disabled brother who was unable (or unwilling) to work, whose total income was \$1,000 per month from Social Security, but who had out-of-pocket expenses for a mortgage, car, food, utilities, incidentals, and “entertainments” that exceeded his Social Security payments by about \$45,000 per year. Worse, I had a brother with only the most tentative grasp on practical realities, no understanding of his financial situation, and no willingness to voluntarily cut his expenses.

I saw only two possible results: My brother living on the street (or worse) or me financially supporting him for the rest of his life. I knew I could not emotionally live with the first result or justify to my family the consequences of the second. Enter my cousin, who referred me to Lifecare Innovations. After my first call with Pat to discuss my “problem,” it immediately became clear that Pat knew the ropes, understood the “human factors” at work, and recognized the absolute necessity to find a third alternative to the current situation.

Pat also told me that I could work with someone else at the company at a lower hourly rate than hers, but I wanted Pat! I knew that Pat was the right person and I was prepared to pay her rate. I wanted to move ahead right away. I have never regretted that decision.

So, what did Pat do? In less than four months time, Pat gained my brother’s confidence, collected his medical records and drug history, formulated specific recommendations as to his medical and

pharmacological needs, joined him for his far-flung doctor's appointments to evaluate the amount and quality of care he was receiving, assessed his living conditions and personal support needs, evaluated the conduct and character of his live-in roommate and other paid caregivers, had a psychological evaluation performed, convinced my brother (not at all easily) that his physical and social needs would be better served in a Medicaid-funded supportive living facility, accompanied him on a visit to such a facility in Chicago, got the state screenings and state approvals processed (a very tricky business), and physically and emotionally assisted his move into the supportive living facility. And she is not done yet. Pat is now working with him to understand that he must sell his car to pay for the repairs needed to his house so it can be sold. She has put a new medical team in place and is working with L to maximize his chances of staying in his current facility and not falling back into his old self-destructive lifestyle.

Here is what my sister had to say about Pat:

"Pat's incredible knowledge of the system and tenacity to climb over hurdle after hurdle is greatly appreciated by our whole family."

Our family friend, R, who worked closely with Pat in getting my brother out of his house, said:

"Pat has been spectacular, not only in getting L placed, but in being compassionate yet realistic. I think she has a perfect balance of realism and heart that has made the whole process move so swiftly. She has an amazing ability to convey information to L in a way that he actually understands it. And I have not even mentioned her vast knowledge of the ins and outs of the system."

And my cousin, who sent me to Lifecare in the first place, said:

"Pat has treated L with kindness and respect while maintaining a firm hand in directing him toward a very beneficial move. In just a few months, Pat has moved this unhappy, apparently hopeless, situation farther than I could have ever dreamed. Pat is a wonderful, caring and very professional person and I cannot say enough good things about her and the staff at Lifecare."

So where are we after having worked with Pat for four months? Most obviously, Pat has made my brother's move into a supportive living facility happen. But, just as importantly, she is little by little reintroducing my brother to a sense of reality, responsibility, community, and recognition of just how lucky he is.

Pat now knows my brother's games, tricks and manipulative tendencies. But she also sees the person he once was, and she has never lost hope that he could become this person again. Without Pat, my patience with my brother would have ended months ago. We would have fought. I would have thrown up my hands. He would have been evicted from his house, and I would be living with an unbearable guilt and self-reproach. Because of Pat, there was a third alternative. I can clearly see that there is light at the end of both the financial and human relationship tunnels. This past Friday, I even got a call from my brother to thank me – something that many thousands of dollars in loans and gifts has never produced before.

I am not exaggerating when I say that because of Pat, I believe that my brother and I will be able to maintain a positive, non-dependent relationship for many years to come.

I have thanked Pat. But I want to thank you for employing such a marvelous person and in making her available to me and my family.

With gratitude,

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