

All the Little (and Big) Things: Sterling's Quality Care

Written By Batya Cutshall

When I walked into Sterling Hospitality to work as a private aide, I was nervous. Like most people starting out at a job, I was scared that my skill set wasn't sufficient for the work I had signed up for. My fears were quickly allayed by Evelyn and the nursing staff—they did not talk down to me or embarrass me because I didn't know how to do something, and readily filled in the gaps in my knowledge. I realized that their priority was care for the residents, and I began to understand just how important (and how uncommon) prioritizing human life is. Making human life a priority is a Jewish value, and I saw it lived out every day at Sterling.

Everything at Sterling, from how the food was made to how residents were cared for, was done with care—genuine care. During my time there, I saw new residents go from apprehensive and fearful of a new environment to happy and comfortable, making jokes and conversing with staff and other residents. The well-being of residents was priority, and that led people to trust the care they received.

On a personal note, I saw the man I cared for, Mr. Katzen, enjoy the remaining years of his life at Sterling. Menachem and Evelyn made it possible for him to attend Simchas Torah and Rosh Hashanah services, which he loved. He recounted to me how his father used to dance on Simchas Torah and how his mother made tzimmes (and he enjoyed Evelyn's homemade tzimmes later that day). Being able to attend services again reminded him of those happy times.

The music, activities, and visitors (all the residents love when children visit them) at Sterling alleviated anxiety and eased the loneliness and isolation that many in long-term care feel. The community was an important part of Sterling—whether it was visiting elementary school children, local musicians giving their time, people coming to help with minyan, community members helping with activities, or just sitting down for a homemade meal, the sense of community was obvious. I believe that because the residents at Sterling were given a sense of community from people within and outside of Sterling, they were much happier and healthier than they would have been in any other place.

Through Sterling, it was possible for Mr. Katzen to receive care with dignity and to enjoy the pleasures of daily life. While in many facilities, residents do not receive the personal attention and time they need, at Sterling there was no need too big or small to be met. Staff went out of their way to ensure that every resident was safe, comfortable, and happy.

Sterling provides what people need—security, community, and care. My experience working at Sterling prompted me to go back to school to get a nursing degree, so that I can share what I learned at Sterling with others. More long-term care facilities like Sterling would do so much good. Sterling makes joy possible even in the face of old age and illness. I hope that anyone with a relative in need of care would consider Sterling.