

Mission Statement:

COPE Eldercare provides seniors and their families compassionate care to promote independence, safety, and quality of life

COPE Eldercare is a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) organization.



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COPE Eldercare Courier

Luke

by Donna Brown

It was a sunny day and Dottie & I were having our usual walk through the facility visiting here and there, sharing smiles, love, and conversation with the residents. We had no idea that we would soon have a Life Experience that would stay with us forever!

A woman came out of her father's room to stop us and ask if we could please come in to see him for a minute... "Sure, we'd be glad to". It seems that he had basically been unresponsive for 3 years fighting end stage Alzheimer's disease. Sure enough, there he was curled in a fetal position, in his own world, surrounded by his wife and 2 grown daughters. They were happy and animated in their voices, putting on a bright face to stimulate their Dad in any way possible.

Dottie worked her way to the head of the bed. That is no mean feat considering she's 100 pounds of loving yellow Labrador Retriever, and there were tubes, bed-rails, and chairs blocking her path. But she has learned that it's OK when I encourage and squeeze her into a tight space. So here we were,

me talking to Dottie and Luke while one of the daughters slowly moved his stiff arm so he could feel Dottie's head. The very instant she laid his hand on top of that broad warm head he started to "talk", not clearly you understand, but definitely communicating & happy about it!

Needless to say the family was elated, and kept saying "this is like a miracle", "I can't believe it"! Dottie and I held our position and enjoyed Luke's garbling noises, while his loved ones were ecstatic. This is the first time he's communicated in 3 years!!!!

This was thrilling enough, but one more thing was yet to happen. Having been raised in a home where my Dad was the only male, I remembered something that would have mattered to him, so I leaned way down and said "Luke, you have made your ladies very happy today". He answered me!!! "...ood", what a wonderful "...ood" that was.

To think that Dottie and I had been able to reach down into that black hole and touch



Dottie

someone so hopelessly isolated from the world. I cannot tell you the feelings it stirred. I felt bonded with Luke's family. We had just shared a magic moment. I had goose-bumps and Dottie knew something special had happened too. We were walking on top of the world! Am I glad I followed through with my New Years' resolution to pursue learning to do Therapy Dog work? You bet.

There's so much love exchanged in this work it is unbelievable. It seems hard to imagine, we are just one volunteer team and fairly new to the work. If this can happen to us, there must be untold numbers of joyous moments that are waiting to happen for other team members and their canine companions. What a wonderful 'natural resource'...

Go, Teams, go.