



Melissa Brown

Category: Caring with Courage

Nomination was submitted by care coordinator, Martha in Waterloo Wellington.

Melissa exemplifies the category of “Caring with Courage”. As a result of her tireless support and outstanding advocacy, Melissa brought about positive change for her husband in his final months of life. Melissa didn’t expect to be stepping into a caregiving role so early into her marriage. She acknowledged the sadness of their situation but her love for her husband was demonstrated through her strong advocacy for the best care. She held fast to the qualities of honesty, dependability and knowledge. Most of all she ensured that her husband’s voice and needs were heard.

She didn’t dwell on the negative. She insisted on living each day and focusing on family moments that provided joy to her husband and lifelong memories for their young son. Many caregivers do not reach out for support, due to feelings of weakness or rejection. Melissa stood in her vulnerability and acknowledged that she needed help in order for her husband live well with the time he had left. Knowledge empowered Melissa, prompting her to ask questions so that the couple could make some tough choices. She understood that making moments matter was her top priority; this included organizing small day trips to places that held good memories.

Melissa kept thinking outside the box to assist her husband with completing his memorial. She made the calls and organized every detail but before completing the plans, she was able to Face Time with her husband to show him the details of his final resting place. At the same time, she was normalizing the impending death for their son. A young boy, wise beyond his years was struggling with not being home with his father. Melissa gave grace to this special bond and allowed him to be involved as much or as little as he wanted to.

Although she needed to take on the role of caregiver much earlier than she ever could have expected, Melissa embraced the role with grace and dignity. She held fast to their family values and weaved these threads into her husband’s end of life planning. Scared and overwhelmed at times, she found the courage to reach out for help. This empowered Melissa to make decisions that supported her caregiving and her son’s experience of witnessing his father’s slow decline. Together as a team, they moved through the process with resilience and strength.