

Your Vet Is Lonely - Have You Tried This?



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Dear Rebecca,

There's a scene in a movie starring Kevin Costner in which the main character rescues a co-worker who is pinned under a boulder in a cave filling with water.

Costner, haunted by his own wartime experience in Vietnam in which he left his wounded buddy to save his own life, calls out to his friend in the cave, ***"I want you to know, if I have to break your leg into ten pieces, I'm taking you out of here."***



The movie, *The War*, made in 1994, shows how Costner's attempt to return to a normal family life is hampered by nightmares and the loss of multiple jobs.

The Cruel Blow of Loneliness

Costner's character reminds me of the veterans that we see here at FirstLight Home Care. They are weighed down by stormy pasts, but we see hope for better lives ahead.

One of the results of a war experience is loneliness. Loneliness plagues many of the

elderly, but *it strikes an especially cruel blow upon those who have served in active military duty.*

A recent study found that loneliness is “highly prevalent” in U.S. military veterans, with more than half (57%) saying they felt lonely sometimes or often, and one out of five reporting feeling lonely often.

The study, published in the March issue of the *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, called it a “behavioral epidemic.” You can image the many mental and physical health problems that result which the study cited.

A Small Amount of Care

But you know that these people can be helped.

First of all, *vets are known to isolate themselves.* This is extremely common and dangerous. Very often they don’t know how good it is to have someone help them at home, or just provide companionship.

Now that we are coming out of Covid, we can say that vets, and the elderly in general, ***don’t have to be isolated.*** *Three hours of home care three times a week* can bring great dividends.

(I might add that at FirstLight, unlike some other agencies, we require no minimum number of days per week or hours, as long as our trip to the home on a given day is at least three hours.)

Thus, it need not cost a fortune to get the benefits of home care.

When we write up our Care Plan, we might find that the main need might be to simply have our caregiver *read books to the person.* Or to have a partner who can go along with them to *do the grocery shopping,* library, or bank. Thus, the plan could mostly call for a *companionship* type of care.

Alone and Vulnerable

But let’s also consider the person’s own initiative in all of this....

Some of the elderly have *let their self-image slip.* Many are single men, living alone in apartments.

You might find dirty dishes stacked for days in the sink. Clutter and filth fill the

Vets isolate themselves

Their self-image slips

rooms. They never get out of their pajamas.

“Why shave, or even get dressed?” they rationalize. “I’m not seeing anyone today.”

And how do we respond?

The soft touch won’t work.

“I Don’t Want to See This”

I’ll admit that some of our caregivers are a little rough around the edges. *But this can be an asset.* They can walk into a home and call the person out.

“It looks like a *mess* in here,” she might warn the client. ***“You need to get your butt in gear ... I don’t want to see this when I come back next time!”***

We might even call his social worker and doctor into the discussion.

“What the hell is going on there?” his doctor might yell.

Considering all this, wouldn’t you admit - *some people need to be snapped out of their lethargy?*

Of course, we know that a careful blend of discipline and compassion must be applied to a particular person. But self-pity must give way to self-respect, to accountability. *There is no room for victim status here.*

Our client might be angry for a while, but at the end of the day they have a smile on their face.

One of the themes in the movie *The War* was loyalty to others, especially to family members. In his role as a father, Kevin Costner made demands upon his son. His son responded, even though he had to overcome his tendency to get into fistfights.

In the same way a good caregiver will make *some demands* on the part of the vet, or elderly person. For one thing, *they should be willing to allow us to help them.* Thus, our responsibility as caregivers goes beyond just *providing a service* around the house. It’s a



At the end of the day, they have a smile.

Snapped out of their lethargy

relationship of friendship, and that means expectations are made and fulfilled on both sides.

I Feel I'm Giving Back

Our staff here at FirstLight Home Care of Deerfield/Lake Forest would be happy to care for your veteran patient, or any elderly or disabled person at home for those with non-medical caregiving needs.

Happy to care for your veteran

I love working with vets. My grandfather served in Vietnam, and my great-grandfather in World War II and Korea. When I help veterans, I feel that I'm giving back.

So, the next time you are talking with a family with non-medical home care needs after their loved one's hip replacement, cancer or heart operation, call us at FirstLight Home Care of Deerfield/Lake Forest at **224-880-6555**.

I can be reached after hours and weekends as well.

Our office is in Libertyville, and we have caregivers in your area. Call me today.



Caleb

Sincerely,

Caleb Johnson

Owner

FirstLight Home Care of Deerfield/Lake Forest

1580 S. Milwaukee Ave., Libertyville, IL

224-880-6555

PS: Your patient may pay with personal funds, long-term care insurance, and other possible sources. ***Funds are also available for non-medical home care for certain vets through the Veterans Administration.*** Please contact me to see if your patient qualifies.



www.lakeforest.firstlighthomecare.com

Kindness Rock Garden Helps Healing in Highland Park

On October 8, a rock garden in Highland Park was launched as a memorial to the victims of the July 4 parade shootings in that city.

The garden, called the “g2 Kindness Rock Garden,” was built in a cooperative effort by the city, the non-profit Gratitude Generation (g2), and FirstLight Home Care of Deerfield/ Lake Forest.

The purpose of the rock garden is to lend a sympathetic hand for the healing of the community. People are invited to paint a rock with a positive message as a memorial. Kindness should win the battle instead of violence and hate.

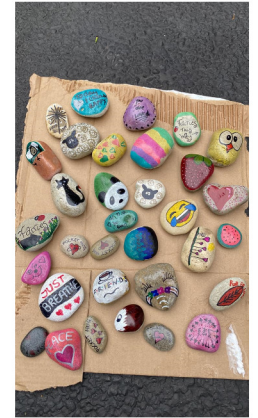
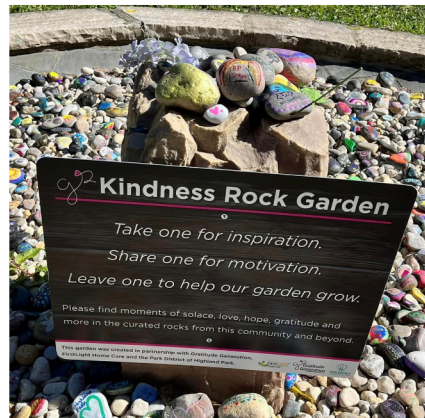
With more than two thousand decorated rocks, the g2 Kindness Rock Garden is a popular interactive attraction.

Our FirstLight franchise, located in Libertyville, donated funds, and our staff members spent forty hours helping to build the garden – a small token of prayers and well wishes for all those affected. We know how the July 4 tragedy affected those in the community since we have clients in Highland Park and in the surrounding area.

Our friends in the healthcare field are invited to join our effort. They may mail a rock to our office, and we will paint it and make sure it gets to the rock garden.

An alternative is to mail an offering to our address. We will get a rock, paint it, and place it in the rock garden.

(Photos: Highland Park Rocks Facebook page)

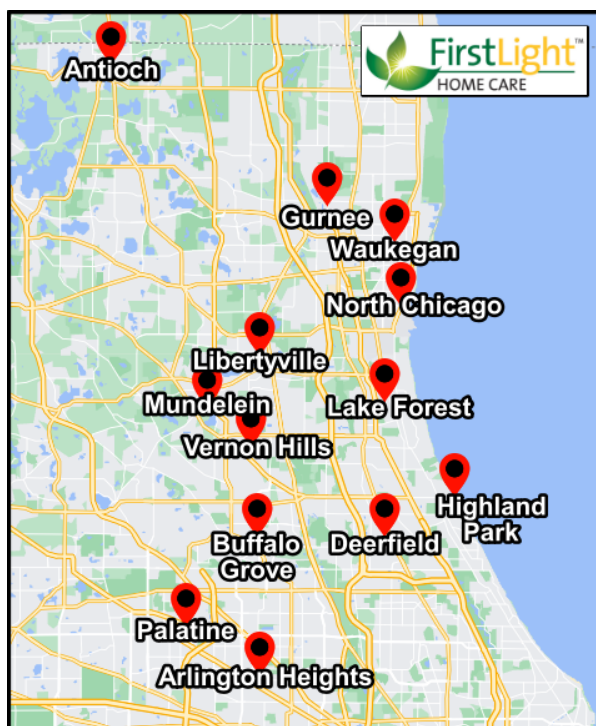


FirstLight Home Care of Deerfield/Lake Forest
1580 S. Milwaukee Ave.
Libertyville, IL 60048
224-880-6555
www.lakeforest.firstlighthomecare.com

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Rebecca, think of FirstLight Home Care of Deerfield/Lake Forest when your patients need:



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- Transferring and positioning
- Continence & Toileting
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The best non-medical home care – whether at home or in your facility. Call us today!

Caleb Johnson, Owner 224-880-6555

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