

Customer Service Nomination: Debra Walters

I would like to tell you why the property manager where I live deserves to be nominated for the Graceworks Customer Service Award for 2017. (Debbie Walters)

In order to explain how important she is as a property manager and how much of an impact she has had on my life personally, I must first give you some background on myself and what has brought me to Luther Community.

At the age of 5, my mother died on Christmas Eve. My father tried to raise my siblings and I on his own until he became ill. I was placed in foster care at the Children's Home at the age of 13. My father passed away when I was 15 just two weeks before Christmas. I continued to live at the Children's Home until I turned 18 years old. My childhood was difficult and Christmas was always a very difficult time of year for me. I never really had a true sense of home.

Eventually I was married and started my own family. Throughout my marriage, we lived in a few different apartment complexes and did the best we could, but struggled to find comfortable and safe housing in our area and within our budget.

In July of 2014, at the age of 56, my wife of over 30 years and myself moved into Luther Community. I was 300 lbs, and was only mobile through the use of a wheelchair, walker or cane. I took a cup full of medication every day and my health was falling fast. Just a few months after moving in – my wife left me and filed for divorce. This was one of the worst times of my life.

The Property Manager, Debbie, was very encouraging to me and could see that I was struggling. She encouraged me to take good care of myself and reminded me of the importance of getting to my counseling appointments when I barely felt that I could get out of bed. At first, she did not know that I could not read or write, but she did whatever she could to help me understand all the mail that I was getting, the bills, the divorce papers. She understood that I needed help and I did not even have to ask for it – she made sure that I was getting the assistance that I needed and always made time to help when I needed to talk or had a question. Luther Community was in a transition period of replacing the Service Coordinator at that time, so Debbie was needed extra by all of the residents, but she made time for everyone and always has.

One of the greatest things about Debbie is that she tries to make all of us residents feel cared about. Many of us do not have families and she always adds a very special touch to holiday dinners. I have always struggled around the holidays, mostly Christmas due to the losses I've endured around that time, but Debbie has a way of boosting the holiday spirit.

Because of the stability I have at Luther Community, I have also been able to focus on improving myself in many ways. I ended up losing about 100 lbs and was able to go off almost all of my medication. I began walking for exercise and stress relief, Debbie and others at Luther

Community supported me and encouraged me to get involved more at the building. They felt that I could turn my negative situation into something positive to help others. I started a Walk 4 Health walking club, and then I started hosting a BINGO game. I became a volunteer to the community and even sometimes host resident lunches for everyone to enjoy. I also am working very hard at learning how to improve my reading and writing skills. I have always been able to express my feelings and explain things very well, but putting it on paper is something I am trying really hard to improve. I know that I am a better person today because of the atmosphere of where I live and the positive people that support me. I still have my issues, but I try to do my best because I want to do better for myself. It's nice when someone like Debbie recognizes the value that you have as a person, because you yourself might not even know it, but she makes sure that you know it and then you start to believe in yourself too.

Luther Community is by far the best home that I have ever had. I take pride in my home. Debbie makes sure that this place is top-notch and well taken care of. She is a great manager to the residents and she is a great manager to a great crew- Lance, Kelly and LeAnne. Debbie has established a great team. She's a great person, a motivator, a supporter, great natured, good friend and one "hell-O" (heck) of a manager. For all of Debbie's pep talks and personal interest she takes in everyone, she is most deserving of the Customer Service Award. I have only been here for almost 4 years, while she has managed this building for almost 20. I can see why some of these residents have lived here for so long. I'm sure that Debbie has a lot to do with that. In fact, I know she has.

Thank you for letting me share my story and describe how much of a difference maker that Debbie is to me and those around her.


Resident of Luther Community since July 2014