

It's all about LOVE!

Linda Love (Yes, that's her real name!) is a Family Home Provider.

People who become Family Home Providers have room in their heart and home to welcome an individual with developmental disabilities to live with them.

Day Spring has 35 participants living with Family Home providers across the city of Louisville. Our families live in the East End, West End, South End, and in every neighborhood.

Q: Will you tell us a little bit about yourself?



A: I'm Linda Love. I'm from Louisville, and until a few years ago I was a Professional Hair Stylist. I've lived in the same home in Hikes Point for 30 years. My home is also where my hair salon was located. For many years, my house was filled with my family. My dad lived with me. Also, my daughter, her husband, my three grandchildren, AND their three dogs all lived with me in my small home. I also had clients coming to my home every day for appointments. Life was very full. I loved it. Then my father passed away. Next, my daughter and her husband were offered good jobs out of town, and they, their three kids, and three dogs moved out of the house. I was an empty nester. The house was way too quiet, and I missed taking care of people.



Q: Can you tell us how you found out about the Family Home Provider program?

A: I shared with one of my hair clients how hard it was to have an empty house. Her name was Alice, and she was a Family Home Provider who told me about the program and about George, who had lived with her for over 25 years.

As soon as she started telling me about it, I felt a spark of hope! I thought this was for me, and so I applied!

Q: Did you have any experience with people with developmental disabilities?

A: No, but as I was going through the process to become a Family Home Provider, Day Spring provided many hours of training, and they still provide on-going support.

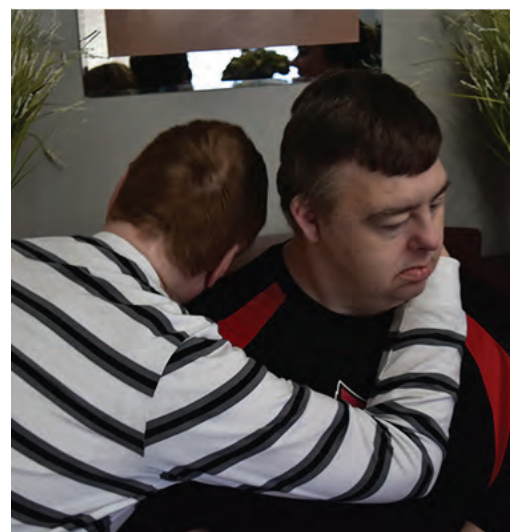
Q: You completed the process to become a Family Home Provider, and a man named Rusty came to live with you. Linda, can you tell us about how this happened?

A: Well, to tell you the truth, I imagined that the person who would come to live with me would be a woman. I thought we would go shopping together, that I could do her hair, that we would enjoy some of the same kinds of activities. But then I was introduced to Rusty, and I fell in love. It didn't hurt that the first time I met him, he looked at me and said, "You're so pretty!"

Q: Tell us about Rusty?

A: Rusty is 59 years old. Rusty lived in a facility since he was a teenager. His parents loved him, but they couldn't take care of him. Rusty was not an easy person to be with because of his high energy, and he had tried many placements outside the facility, but they had never lasted more than a couple days.

When I met him, like I said, I fell in love with him, and I knew I wanted to try. So Rusty began visiting me at my home. He would come for short visits, then he would stay for dinner, and eventually, overnight. We got to know each other and after a few months he moved in.



Q: How long has Rusty lived with you?

A: Rusty has lived with me for six years! And next George moved in with us, too. Alice, who originally told me about the Family Home Provider Program, told me she was sick and said eventually she would no longer be able to care for George. She asked me if I would be his family. I said, yes! With George, I feel like our family is complete!



Q: Can you tell us how Rusty and George are doing and how life has changed for them since coming to your home?

A: It was not easy, and both had many struggles and challenges to overcome. But I never gave up on them. Rusty and George are both doing so well. They are like brothers. Rusty is now able to go to a day program during the day, and that has really enriched his life. Most of his challenging behaviors are gone.

Q: What kinds of things do you all like to do as a family?

A: Our favorite thing to do is to go out to eat together. I take Rusty, George, and my 85-year old neighbor, Cathy, who uses a wheelchair. My sister, Teresa, often joins us, too. We are quite a crew!

Q: Linda can tell us about your relationship with Rusty's mom?

A: I talk to Rusty's mother, Joanne, on the phone every single night to give her an update on Rusty's day. And because Rusty is doing so well, he often is able to spend weekends with his mom.

We're so sorry to say that George passed away in November 2020. To live on in the hearts of those we leave behind is to live on forever. Take comfort in knowing that George lives on in all of our hearts.