

Robert's Story



When Senior Helpers' Care Manager, Susan Leport, first visited Robert, he was thin and pale, had no appetite, recently had a knee replacement, and was on oxygen 24/7. As a result, he barely left the couch during the day. Since Robert's wife passed away, his son, who lives nearby, was assisting Robert with almost all his care needs. His son was stretched thin between his family and Robert's care and was concerned about falls because of Robert's weakness and poor mobility.

Robert is a veteran of the Army, living in the San Francisco Bay area. Once an active man who liked to be outdoors fishing and working in his garden, Robert spent all his time watching TV and no longer went outside. Robert felt that he only had a few months left to live and was waiting to die. Susan knew that improving Robert's quality of life, even if for a short time, would make a world of difference.

"I have stopped waiting to die and I am really living again. I am looking forward to my next birthday," Robert said.

Part of Susan's initial meeting with Robert and his son included an in-depth analysis of his daily life and surroundings. She used Senior Helpers' LIFE Profile, a detailed assessment tool that identifies **Risk Factors** to help reduce falls, unsafe occurrences, and hospitalizations. Fortunately, Robert's veteran benefits helped provide resources to address these risks and ensure a safe environment, including obtaining durable medical equipment (DME) and other mobility tools. Once the risk factors were addressed, the focus turned to the others areas of concern highlighted by the LIFE Profile assessment: improving Robert's **Quality of Life** and providing **Caregiver Support** for his son.

Robert's veteran benefits also allowed him to be eligible for home care services. Even with his allotment of care hours, Robert was resistant to having someone in his home, so he only agreed to four hours a week to start, and only wanted a male caregiver. With limited hours per week, Susan knew it was imperative to make the most of the time they had with Robert, and had the perfect caregiver in mind. She assigned Greg to begin visiting Robert each week, with a focus on nutrition and companionship.

Even though Robert was receiving prepared food from Meals on Wheels and his family, he was still barely eating. Because he was weak and pale, nutrition was a top priority. Many times, unwell people say they are not hungry and do not bother to make a meal. However, if a family member or care provider offers them a warm meal, often seeing and smelling the food can trigger their appetite.

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LIFE Profile by the Numbers

Robert in Napa, CA

RISK OF HOSPITALIZATION

Within the Next 6 Months



MEDICAL CONDITION MANAGEMENT

7 is Fully Managed



RISK FACTORS

Out of 144 Environmental, Task, & Personal Risks





“Robert started going outside just to look at the yard and is now able to work in the garden—one of his favorite things to do!” Susan said. “When I met him, he was afraid to walk across the room. Now he is living his life again.”

Photo: Robert with his caregiving team in his backyard

Greg was the perfect choice for this—he used to own a restaurant and is excellent at putting together a nutritional and appetizing meal. Greg was able to interest Robert in eating again, which was the gateway to opening Robert to so much more.

The increased nutrition helped Robert gain strength, which meant that increasing his mobility was next on the list. While Robert was initially wary of a caregiver in his home, it turned out that Greg’s support gave Robert confidence to move around. Greg noticed that Robert seemed to be scared to go outside and leave his home. He encouraged Robert to start small with short walks to the garden or mailbox.

Robert enjoyed Greg’s company so much that he agreed to additional shifts. Robert even asked for more caregivers to visit him, so he could meet new people! This relieved the burden of care on his son so they could spend quality time together instead of focusing only on care tasks.

Robert now has caregivers visit him six days a week, and he says it gives him a reason to get up in the morning. He began going on special outings, such as to the grocery store to pick out new foods. He even helps prepare meals, which encourages him to eat more and continue to build his strength.

Robert transitioned from barely moving around the house to using a walker. He then gained the strength to use the walker only as a precaution. He stands up straight and is no longer shuffling when he walks. Every time he goes out for a walk or to his garden, he gets stronger.

During his most recent assessment, Robert sat outside with Susan, named the trees and bushes that he had planted with his wife, and shared facts about each one. He has gained weight and has a little tan from spending time outside. He is no longer frail, and his renewed confidence means that he now enjoys participating in conversations and can speak with strength.

When Susan commented to Robert about how well he was doing, he said “You know, I think I got a couple more good years in me!” Robert is 92 and still going strong.

“I wish you could meet him, the look on his face is priceless. He’s one of the happiest people I know,” Susan said. “His countenance is completely different. He smiles so much and his face just glows.”

Special thanks to the Senior Helpers office in Napa, CA for sharing this story with us.

Visit us online to find out more at www.seniorhelpers.com/LIFEProfile.