

Candlelight Dinner

"Any mail today?" Mr. Engle's voice was hopeful, although the response always seemed to be the same. Though from his room at Rhode Island's Evergreen House Health Center he had written letter after letter to his estranged daughter, not once had he received a response.

Mr. Engle's roommate didn't even bother to ask about mail. Having never had children, he knew there wouldn't be anyone writing him.

Activity Assistant Rose Foster's heart broke as she talked with these two lonely men. Known for doing extra things to cheer up residents, Rose had an elaborate idea. "I don't want you to eat supper," she told the roommates. "I'm going to have a candlelight dinner for you."

The men waited with anticipation, wondering what Rose was cooking up for them. When dinner time came, they were not disappointed as they arrived in the dining room to find a table set up in 5-star restaurant style. On the lace tablecloth sat Rose's own fine diningware. And on the menu was fresh lobster, prepared in Rose's own kitchen. It was an evening the men would not forget, and a memory that gave them something to think about when they were tempted to feel lonely.

"I love people," says Rose, who continues to keep in touch with the roommates and happily reports that Mr. Engle and his daughter have reunited. "I know that even though the body deteriorates, the heart and soul are always alive, and they're always young. You can always find a ray of hope in anyone."

Rose Foster is one of Life Care's division winners in the Whatever It Takes program. Her story is featured in the book, "Everyday Heroes," published by Life Care last fall to celebrate the spirit and compassion of the company's associates. For your own copy, contact your facility executive director or Sebrena Sawtell, director of public relations, at the corporate office in Cleveland.

--Beecher Hunter