

Love Makes a Difference

Demonstrations of love make such a difference in the lives of the residents we serve and the associates we lead. We see it every day in Life Care, Century Park and Life Care at Home.

Author and minister Max Lucado offers a compelling story demonstrating the power of love in his book, *You Changed My Life: Stories of Real People With Remarkable Hearts*. Here it is:

You know your love is real when you feel for others what Catherine Lawes felt for the inmates of Sing Sing prison. When her husband, Lewis, became the warden in 1921, she was a young mother of three daughters. Everybody warned her never to step foot inside the walls. But she didn't listen to them.

When the first prison basketball game was held, in she went, three girls in tow, and took a seat in the bleachers with the inmates.

She once said, "My husband and I are going to take care of these men, and I believe they will take care of me! I don't have to worry!"

When she heard that one convicted murderer was blind, she taught him Braille so he could read. Upon learning of inmates who were hearing impaired, she studied sign language so they could communicate. For 16 years, Catherine Lawes softened the hard hearts of the men of Sing Sing. In 1937, the world saw the difference real love makes.

The prisoners knew something was wrong when Lewis Lawes didn't report to work. Quickly the word spread that Catherine had been killed in a car accident. The following day, her body was placed in her home, three-quarters of a mile from the prison.

As the acting warden took his early morning walk, he noticed a large gathering at the main gate. Every prisoner pressed against the fence. Eyes awash with tears. Faces solemn. No one spoke or moved. They'd come to stand as close as they could to the woman who'd given them love.

The warden made a remarkable decision. "All right, men, you can go. Just be sure to check in tonight."

These were America's hardest criminals. Murderers. Robbers. These were men the nation had locked away for life. But the warden unlocked the gate for them, and they walked without escort or guard to the home of Catherine Lawes to pay their last respects. And to a man, each one returned.

Real love changes people.

(more)

The profession we have chosen is grounded in love. It is the basis of all that we do. Without love, our mission is empty and hollow. With it, our work is vibrant, fulfilling, and one of eternal significance.

As our Lord said, *I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me ... Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these, my brethren, you did it to Me* (Matthew 25:36, 40).

– Beecher Hunter