

A LIFELONG FRIENDSHIP AND A NEW CHAPTER: SARAH AND BETH'S JOURNEY TO HARMONY



Sarah and Beth first became friends over three decades ago, working together as social workers in the field of mental health and housing. In those early years, Sarah remembers Beth as caring, outgoing, and enthusiastic—the kind of person who had many good friends and an active social life.

When the Darkness Deepened

But as time went on, Beth began to change. In her late 40s, she started struggling with periods of depression. She actively pursued psychiatric treatment, including medication and therapy, and was therefore able to carry on in both her professional and social life. However, her 60s brought deepening depression, suicidal ideation, anxiety, and isolation. Beth was worried and feared she was “losing her personality.” She experienced more frequent and lengthy hospitalizations. Her family and friends became increasingly concerned about her safety and her inability to return home.

Beth had visited a few assisted living programs in and around Somerville, where she lived, but “nothing felt right.” Sarah explained, “Beth is a very casual person—these places just didn’t fit her personality.”

Discovering a Place That Felt Like Home

That’s when Sarah heard about the Harmony Mental Health Assisted Living Program at Mary Ann Morse at Heritage in Framingham. “We scheduled a tour and we’re so glad we did.” From that very first conversation, they felt at ease.

During their tour, Chet Olson, Program Director, joined them: “He took the time to address our questions and concerns.” Sarah added, “Everyone was so warm and welcoming and down to earth. As we left, Beth turned to me and said, ‘This is where I need to be. You can cancel the other appointments.’”

“All of the staff here are always ready to help out.” One moment in particular stands out to Sarah: “On Beth’s first night here, she felt hesitant to go to the dining room for dinner. A kitchen staff member came out to greet her and gently helped her find her place at the table. That meant so much to both of us.” Beth told Sarah that “all of the staff are kind and friendly and take good care of me.”

Finding Hope and Healing at Harmony

Since moving to Heritage, Beth has begun taking small, meaningful steps forward—made possible by the thoughtful care she receives. “In particular, Mary Poirier, Social Worker, has provided gentle, patient, but persistent encouragement to Beth,” Sarah says. “There is no pressure here. Beth can move at her own pace and comfort level. This is a special and very supportive program.” Beth has not needed to be hospitalized since she moved into the Harmony program.

Today, Beth continues her journey surrounded by a community that understands her needs and meets her where she is. And for Sarah—a friend who has stood by her for decades—the Harmony program has brought something she thought was slipping away: hope. “Beth’s friends and family are so grateful,” Sarah says. “For the first time in a very long time, there’s a feeling of safety, support, and the chance to heal.”

This article uses fictitious names of an actual Harmony resident and her friend for privacy and HIPAA compliance.

The Harmony program at Mary Ann Morse at Heritage offers a supportive, non-institutional assisted living environment for adults managing chronic mental health conditions. As part of the Mary Ann Morse Healthcare Corp. nonprofit network, Harmony provides individualized care from dedicated staff, social workers, and clinicians, all in a comfortable, safe residential setting. Mary Ann Morse Healthcare Corp. offers a full continuum of senior living and healthcare services, including assisted living, memory care, short-term rehab, long-term skilled nursing care, and Medicare-certified home health and personal care—ensuring compassionate, coordinated care at every stage of aging.

