

Cheryl's List Blog #14, 2/17/2015

After a breathing treatment, Willie crossed the room to try out his new sofa. Placed at a right angle to the matching loveseat, it divided the efficiency apartment into living areas. The sliding door that opened out to the third story balcony had just been closed; the room was starting to feel warmer. Directly in front of the longer couch sat the old television on a small stand. Behind the TV was the wall that would soon hold the new silver and black, framed mirror. Glass topped end, console, and coffee tables and silver-based black lamps with white shades filled in the appropriate spaces.

Relaxing into the sofa's deep cushions, Willie surveyed the room and, with a smile so full of contentment that his eyes nearly closed, declared, "Now this room is starting to look like a home." Hearing that unsolicited rendition of our Cheryl's List motto, I turned to confirm that Eddie had heard it too. He had. Shortly after that Willie and Eddie posed for my photo.

Our inside layers were wet with perspiration, but for this moment, we were all smiles and celebrations. Going back down the narrow steps and out the door to the truck was sure easier when you feel victorious.

Moments before, completing the delivery had been in doubt. The smaller items were no problem; the loveseat was a tight fit; the sofa, however, was quite a challenge. Because the cushions compressed, the fact that the couch was wider than the stairway wasn't the problem. The problem was that the couch, which would not make the turns, was longer than the landings were tall. We couldn't stand it up and pivot it at each landing. It had to be turned like a compound miter while dragging against both floor and ceiling. The first try ended in frustration when one arm got jammed into handrail while the other was wedged against the wall. After backing the sofa down to the building's entrance, we considered our options.

All the other matching pieces were up there. Willie said other deliverers had used a rope to haul the bed up to the balcony. We decided to use our three-inch wide nylon straps to lift the couch up to the outside balcony. Without a pulley and not trusting the deck's construction, we couldn't get the couch high enough to clear the handrail. Slowly and carefully, we let it back down to the ground below. Thinking we were done, another third floor neighbor who had been watching the whole thing pulled his blinds and went back to making dinner.

Eddie, ever the problem-solver, suggested we try the steps again only this time we flip the couch 180 degrees. Doing so would mean the arms would be on the other side for the challenging middle turn. I agreed and quickly asked the Lord to please help us. Five minutes later, we had that couch in its spot.

Now you know the "rest" of the story.

Actually, that isn't true.

The story began when Willard decided to donate his furniture instead of moving it to his new home. The furniture matched because he gave it as a set. His gift meant Willie's living area not only functioned, it had a satisfying, confidence-inspiring look. The donation didn't fix Willie or the issues that caused him to become a homeless veteran in the first place, but Willard's donated household items did come with a guarantee for better.

There's more. Sunday, at church, the visiting reverend said to us, "Love God. Love people. Do stuff." The challenge confirmed what we at Cheryl's List are all about. As the reverend closed the service he asked, "Are all hearts clear?" My answer was a restful "yes."