

Dear Katherine,

I am writing this letter to thank you personally for the incredible work you do at **ForLikeMinds** for the mental illness community. I would specifically like to reflect on your *“Psych Ward Greeting”* cards initiative and its impact on both patients and staff at NewYork Presbyterian Hospital Westchester Behavioral Health Center.

Since our initial collaboration in June of 2020, our hospital has received monthly shipments of donated greeting cards with heartfelt messages and small treats for those who can partake. What began as a shipment of 50 cards for two units has expanded across all twelve in-patient units, reaching 1750 patients to date, including special holiday packages. Each shipment is a unique combination of handmade, creative cards with thoughtful words of encouragement and support.

I am so excited to receive each month’s package knowing the comfort that the patients will soon experience. The cards are picked up by the therapists and distributed to the patients in a group format. Each patient chooses the card they can relate to and shares why they chose the card. The reactions vary from smiles, tears, laughter and sincere gratitude. The group members learn that the donors once experienced similar states of distress and despair and have been able to recover in their own way on their own time. Even though the patients and donors never meet, the cards foster a connection of empathy, strength, and hope for the future. Some of the patients have in turn asked to create thank you cards for individual donors, fostering a sense of community while strengthening their own recovery. Some have made card writing for others a goal as part of their “stay well plan” after discharge.

The feedback from patients is always positive whether they were touched by a card, phrase, small paper gift or the candy treats. To quote one patient, “This has been the most helpful part of recovery, knowing that someone who never met me cares enough to make this for me. It’s humbling and I will never forget it.”

I echo that sentiment. Your approach is direct, empathic, and broad reaching to a population that is so often overlooked or underserved. I am humbled and awe inspired by ForLikeMinds, and grateful to you and the card donors for all you do.

Thank you for creating such a powerful program and for the ongoing collaboration.

Keep those cards coming!

With Appreciation,
Lisa DeFelice-Fratto
Lisa DeFelice-Fratto MEd, MA, LMHC
Manager, Psychosocial Rehabilitation Department
NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital Westchester Behavioral Health Center