

ONLY THE BRAVE

by Joan, Tenant at Oak Meadows 05-25-2020

The Sunday of Memorial weekend at Oak Meadows was eerie. The day began overcast and, as I focused on exercising, attending "virtual worship", and going through the normal daily routine, something hung in the atmosphere that was strangely distracting. It wasn't the presence of some "thing". It was the absence of some "thing". It was Sound! In place of the usual early morning sounds, movement, activity, there was silence! I opened the door, peered down the hall. Nobody! Nothing! The next day I shared this experience with others who immediately knew what I was talking about. As if silence has its own "sound" that calls our attention to our need for a sense of "being". That sound, or lack of it, somehow causes me to question my existence...my belonging...my significance in the scheme of things. Giving in to my imagination I pretended to shout, "Where did everyone go and why did you leave without me?" The next day, several residents sharing in humorous conversation, admitted to walking around the halls searching for some "sounds of "life" or at least, some evidence of it to insure we hadn't stepped into a Twilight Zone.

Returning to Sunday, after checking "life on the planet, I settled into routine, cooking, having dinner. With evening, I turned on the Memorial Celebration, televised this year with videos of the past as well as the addition of honorable mention of the brave persons serving through this pandemic who are sacrificing their lives to stand in the frontlines of a viral invasion, including those welcoming, supporting and tending survivors returning to us "wounded and weak from battle". I allowed myself to weep on and off through testimonies of WW 2 veterans. Stories of innocence and horror and the loss of our youth that preceded victory so astounding worldwide that we are inspired to gather on Memorials Day every year to remember lives lost, as well as to celebrate lives saved. Choosing to be present to this Memorial, I began to grasp the tragedy coupled with the honor given to the brave. Not only for the suffering endured, but for their humble acceptance of our gratitude for themselves and for those who served with them and died heroes. Bravery still marks a lifetime of courage to live life's full experience on or off the battle field. Perhaps it is this bold Spirit that we share and honor. Who inspires us to celebrate daily the silent Hero alive in all of us.