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"On this tablet we can look up anything," said the Activity Director. "Here let me show you," and he did! "Google, show me a pink bear." Well, imagine my surprise when up came a pink bear that was even moving! We both laughed at such an odd sight. All went fine until he had skipped down the hall and then abruptly turned around. WRONG MOVE for this pink bear. "Guess we better change sites before we wind up in trouble," the A.D. uttered with a bit of a grin and a snicker. Off we went into a new world ..., the world of the internet.

I had, for quite a long time, been watching employees, on their breaks, take out their phones or their tablets and talk, look up something or, in one case, play games. I watched with much interest as smiles went from ear to ear and they seemed to relax, if only for those few minutes of internet. MY curiosity had been peaked! One nurse, seeing my interest began to show me how to play a different type of solitaire (Spider) and I still am working on that one. I watched as one worked those Hidden Object Finds. They looked too hard for anyone, never mind me. Guess what! I not only do those silly object finds, I love doing them and do them very well too.

Now here is a real problem for me. These tablets aren't cheap and I am not rich. How in the world am I to get one? Thinking for quite some time I found my out! My friend in Maryland sent me money from time to time for me to have my favorite thing ... barbecued chicken wings. Oh, how I love them, not only because they taste good, but because this special friend had made it possible. I began to save that money, which was not easy, no more wings for me! Not telling anyone what I was up to, I waited for the day to come when I told my friend I was ordering a new tablet. She was so excited to know this telling me how the world would open up to me. And then THAT question I knew would be asked was! "How are you affording this?" (Silence on the phone.) I put off answering for as long as possible and then said, "Well, you know all those times you sent money for wings? I sort of saved it and that is what I have now ... "a chicken wing tablet."! It isn't as tasty as those other wings but certainly keeps me busy and occupied and I probably have seen the last of those wings too. No so. She still sent me money from time to time for my wonderful wings. They are so tasty. Messy, but tasty, nonetheless.

I ordered the tablet I wanted from a local department store, gave my money to the person who put it on her credit card and waited, and waited, and waited. Guess what!? It was on backorder!! Ever want something so badly you could almost taste it! (not those chicken wings though) and learn you must wait what seems like an eternity. The day came when she walked into the dining room smiling and handed me my long-awaited package. Opening it, I realized the contents would open up a new world for me, but to what extent I was not to learn until a while later as I played with this new THING that so wonderfully had entered my life.

Now let me tell you. My world did open up to me. People that I knew for a long time but had lost touch with over the years were suddenly coming out of the woodwork. High school classmates, former neighbors, a teach from high school who had moved and lost touch with me, even a long-lost playmate from childhood. For Heaven's sake, my mom made both of our tutus for our first grade play. You cannot get better than that. Kathy and I grew up together, went everywhere together, slept at each others homes and knew about the other's family just like we were related. I found her on Facebook after an absence of 40 years. What a happy day that was and, oh my, talk of ladies talking the night away. I think

we burned the midnight oil and the sun by day for quite awhile. She finally decided to visit and I anxiously awaited that day.

Before long I found a person from Queensland and sent her a friend request which she accepted. Now I don't know anyone living in a long term care facility who can say that, but I can. Love it. There are so very many people out there who are ready to have you as a friend. No matter what you are going through, there is always someone that says, "I will pray for you." Or, if they have a need, they get on the net and they get needed prayers and, in some instances, receive just the right words for the situation. We become a type of family. Family... What a great thing for those of us without one. Love that too.

I finally had my tablet and enjoyed it so much. Friends all over the United States and beyond were in touch making jokes, sending special items over the internet to be liked, commented on and then share with some other friends who might be blessed as much as we had been. I never stopped being amazed by what I learned and how much was out there for me to pick up and learn some more. Life and God had taken on a deeper and more personal meaning in my life.

AND THEN IT HAPPENED

I was in my room and was preparing to change clothes. My tablet slipped out of my hands, the screen hit the corner of my bedside dresser and BOOM, my world came to a resounding halt! I picked it up hoping that not much damage had been done ... but it had. It was the stock market crash of 1920 all over again!!! I was on a desert island with no hope of rescue, no way to ever have another tablet in my life, not on the allowed money each month. My world had changed. MY friends had no idea why I was no longer on the net and I had no way to contact Kathy to see when she was coming for a visit. That visit is still on hold. Vacations come but once a year.

To quote a nurse, I had "Tablet Withdrawal." That sounds odd and funny at the same time but it was anything but. Now I consider myself a Christian and I try to love everyone and always find something good about each one whenever I see them. I just couldn't seem to shake the fact that my world had changed so much all because my little part of modern technology had come to a screeching halt. I still read my Bible, searched the scriptures, prayed for myself and others as I had before but it was different. I had a loss and didn't know what to do to fix it.

I recently asked others how I acted without my tablet. Some said I was lonely, withdrawn, sad, anxious, and stayed in my room. Days were long, the nights longer. With no way to contact friends I became frustrated. Kathy had no way to contact me for directions nor did I have a way to send motel rates to her. You see, I failed to get her address or phone number. That won't happen again. My roommate who is ill knew something was wrong but didn't understand a table and its values. All she knew was I stayed in the room more. I still made sure her needs were taken care of and that she was OK but something was wrong. I had to put on a smile and be happy for the residents, which was probably good for me too, because they were used to it and expected nothing less. I couldn't disappoint my friends, many of whom had only me to welcome them to another day made by God.

Still I wasn't being truthful to them. They had never had a tablet and could not understand my loss, why it had meant so much to me and the emptiness I felt and the disjointment I had with my world. A Q,

which is an aide who has trained to pass meds, said she feels my Post Traumatic Stress Disorder may have acted up due to this event and my feelings would have been worse due to that.

The first day I was irritable, nothing pleased me, and I was agitated like someone who has changed medicines. I was better after a few days. I was now emotional and cried a lot, felt emotionally on a rollercoaster, didn't laugh as much but, with God, I still had his joy in my life because no matter what you go through He is there and will, if needed, carry you over the hard places. "Someone said, "We all go through hard days and it should never be made an issue."

I was angry with myself for feeling like I did. My grumpiness was because I was flustered at not being able to stay in contact with my friends and the world, I felt cut off from things ... this said by my Administrator. According to her, "I was on an island surrounded by sharks and couldn't escape the depression." Goodness, I was a real mess!!!

Now to my reason for writing this. Many individuals in long term care facilities have little or no family or visitors to speak of. I had a tablet that opened up the entire world to me and I am constantly amazed at what I read and learn on a daily basis. My friends from school, be it locally or college level, were only a tablet away from me as were my childhood friends, those I haven't seen in more than 40 years. What a marvelous part of technology just waiting for me to purchase and get busy looking up those from the past.

I am asking for help from businesses that make tablets, organizations willing to get involved, and yes, even that individual who maybe wants to help but cannot do it on a large scale. Residents need to have access to the world. It is out there. I know for I have experienced it first hand. Never again do I want to be without a way to communicate with those I love and care about. Life is a joy and one should feel as I did, a world at my feet and my Lord and Master in my heart to guide my every step. Once again my "chicken wing friend" came to my rescue and I have another one to replace the one I broke. I am fortunate to have her. But there are many, many out there who would benefit from the use of a tablet who have no way to obtain one. Please, won't you reach into your hearts, then agree to help get those tablets out there? It is a monumental task I ask I realize, but, over time, I believe that it can be done. Please won't you help? We residents thank you one and all.

Judith Mangum... Resident