

# VALOR VOICE

Valor continues to strive for excellence this year and we are always so thrilled when we receive heartfelt testimonials from the families we serve. These provide our technicians with a direct insight into the lives and minds of those dealing with a traumatic death and pushes our team to continue to improve. We chose to keep this testimonial written verbatim as it was sent to us as we wanted to convey the raw nature of these events. We hope that this perspective is insightful, and we appreciate the hard work you all do every single day.

## Compassion & Professionalism Amid Tragedy

In the wake of loss, families face not only emotional pain but also practical challenges that can feel overwhelming. The aftermath of a loved one's death—whether from natural causes, suicide, or even violence—leaves behind not just memories but a physical space that often requires expert attention. Given your role, you may be the first point of contact for families dealing with these unimaginable circumstances. The decisions they make in those critical moments can set the tone for their healing process, which is why guiding them toward the right resources is so important.

The testimonial we've included in this month's newsletter is not just a story of Valor's service but also a window into the feelings and mindset of a grieving individual. The author, who recently lost their brother, found themselves in the difficult position of needing help after discovering his body weeks after his passing. The overwhelming shock of loss, compounded by the condition of the home, created a scene that required both technical expertise and deep compassion.

What stands out most from their words is not the specific tasks completed, but the way our technician, Kerry, approached the situation—with empathy, integrity, and professionalism. The family was in emotional turmoil, struggling to make decisions, and yet they felt heard, supported, and treated with respect. That's the core of what biohazard cleaning should be.

For you, the professionals who guide families during these moments, it's important to understand that your role extends beyond a checklist of duties. When you refer them to a service like ours, you're offering them the chance to have someone step in who not only cleans but cares. The act of helping with the physical burden of a loss should be seen as part of the healing process, allowing families to grieve without additional stress or guilt.

This testimonial below also touches on an aspect that may be less visible to the casual observer—the integrity of the people tasked with this work. Kerry's attention to detail, his honesty in handling valuables, and his commitment to doing the job right, even in the most difficult of conditions, show the value of entrusting this work to professionals who genuinely care. It's a reminder that the work we do isn't just about restoring a space; it's about providing peace of mind and dignity to families during one of the hardest times in their lives.

Thank you for the work you do in supporting these families. We realize this perspective could be helpful and we hope that you were able to take something from this. Thank you for always being of service.

## THE TESTIMONIAL

*“ Thank you for returning my call earlier today. As I mentioned in our conversation, typically in our world people frequently call to complain, and this couldn't be more the opposite. Your technician Kerry Starr has been the most incredible person and without a doubt the embodiment of what every employer would want!*

*On August 23rd it was discovered that my brother (my only sibling) had passed away in a home that we both own and he was living in for the past year and a half. Apparently the air conditioning had stopped working and the temperature in the home was legitimately 90 degrees and it was also said that my brother had probably passed away 3 weeks prior (hence the smell that the neighbors were calling me about). I was at a loss and didn't know what to do and so I used the card that the coroner left that listed 3 or 4 cleaning companies. I looked them all up and Valor just seemed so awesome being owned by Veterans, so that is why I decided to call. Josh, when I called you and explained the situation, I remember saying that the police said it was "a little messy" and I shared that when my brother was younger I'd cleaned several homes of his that were "borderline" hoarding scenarios. You handled this all with calm, caring and confidence. Shortly thereafter I was contacted by your technician Kerry Starr... and that is the purpose of this letter.*

*Kerry was and has been the most incredible person while handling this nightmare situation. He has been kind, caring, empathetic, and so very honest and that truly just scratches the surface. Kerry was tasked with handling not only the most horrific smell...but a hoarding situation that still defies my comprehension. He passed no judgement at all in any of our conversations - even though I was all over the place with anger, sadness, disbelief, more sadness, and disgust. When asked about things I may want to have, he didn't rush me and explained things multiple times as this was so difficult to process. My parents' entire belongings (many things of value or sentimental) were in this home and then my brother's hoarding nightmare stuff on top of that. Kerry just handled everything so professionally, calmly and with patience, empathy and respect.*

*Kerry is without a doubt the hardest working person I've ever come across. Please know I don't say that lightly, as I'm a teacher and coach that works 60 hour weeks during the school year. The next door neighbor to the home has even texted me multiple times about him working around the clock and she's even said, "I've never seen 1 person work so incredibly hard" and she was spot on. At one point when I went into the home, even with an N95 mask, it was the most putrid thing I've ever smelled - but Kerry was so professional and never made me feel bad about any of this and just quietly continued working. Anytime I was around - he never stopped working.*

*Integrity absolutely defines Kerry. He came across about \$1,000 in \$20 bills that were randomly throughout the house - which he could have easily put in his pocket and nobody would have known. But of course he didn't! There were coins that he found and put them all in a bag - again, he could have pocketed them. I for sure would never have known. There were so many things of value in that home that he easily could have taken and I'd have never known or at most would have thought got thrown out - but anything that could be saved he did. He is a man with so much integrity.*

*I know I reached out to him multiple times as things would pop in my head that I'd forgotten to ask or I'd want to see if something could be saved that I'd suddenly remember, and he was never annoyed or bothered, but rather quick to get back to me and very honest and professional about whether something could be saved or not. Each interaction I could sense his compassion and understanding as I was clearly at a loss processing so much of this.*

*Integrity, professionalism, respect and an incredible work ethic are what truly define Kerry Starr. I hope Valor Technical Cleaning recognizes him for who he is and the work he does, as it is unmatched and literally above and beyond all possible expectations.*

*Thank you Josh for sending such an amazing technician to handle such an awful situation with so much professionalism and compassion.”*

## Valor in the Wild



Our CA market leader, Aaron Borg, spent his Saturday a few weeks ago at the Sacramento Run with the Cops 2024.



It's always so great getting a chance to spend time in the community – especially when there is an awesome SWAT vehicle to pose with!



Luke Warnke, Minnesota market leader, had a chance to stop into the Midwest Medical Examiner's office in Ramsey, MN last week. Look at those smiles!



Here we have our Ohio market leader, Tony LaRosa, posing in front of the state-of-the-art Hamilton County (OH) Coroner's office with the lovely Andrea Hatten.

## Upcoming Valor Events

**OCTOBER 7, 2024**

Oklahoma Sheriffs' Association Annual Training Conference in Midwest City, OK

**OCTOBER 9, 2024**

Colorado Coroner's Association Fall Conference (CCA) in Cripple Creek, CO

**OCTOBER 14, 2024**

Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance Conference (COVA) in Keystone, CO

**OCTOBER 20, 2024**

National Funeral Director's Association Conference (NFDA) in New Orleans, LA