

TESTIMONIAL

SarahH, May 2023

BACKGROUND: Words by Sally:

I accompanied Sarah from Auckland to Adelaide in May 2023 to be reunited with her dying mother. Sarah contacted me Sunday night and we liaised at length Monday morning to put an immediate plan in motion. Sarah suffers from mental illness and she required support to get to her mother who was very ill. Time was of the essence. I did talk to her mum to assure her that I would do all it took to get Sarah to her. This required numerous communications with, and a visit to, the Australian Consulate office on Wednesday, as Sarah required an emergency passport in order to travel to Australia. Although she lived in Auckland, she is an Australian citizen. The passport was available later that day and I could then organise a suitcase for her and book our flights. On Friday morning, we flew to Adelaide and Sarah was picked up by her mother's friend. I returned home to Auckland.

Sarah and I kept in touch via email and Sarah made the big decision to move her life to Adelaide to be with her mother to the end. She felt this was the right thing for her to do, and I totally understood and gave her some guidance. Sarah cared for her mother until she passed away in August. I continued to liaise with Sarah via email; I wanted to be there for her as she grappled with this huge loss whilst coping with her mental health and an uncertain future.

I was again in Adelaide in October leading a group tour. It so happened that the group had a few hours of free time one afternoon and I reached out to Sarah to suggest meeting up. Serendipity prevailed in terms of time and place and we spent an hour or so together, along with a friend of her mother's. Although going out in public is challenging for Sarah, it was a valuable reconnection for both of us. Sarah is a special client and I hope we travel again together one day. Sally

TESTIMONIAL: Words by Sarah (written Oct 2023)

I wanted to share my experience, and that of my mother's, with BEYOND Travel Companion Services in 2023. This may be a little lengthy as meeting Sally Blyth became a part of my family's story.

I knew my mother was sick, and in fact she was dying. Still, for a few days I had been filled with a deep sense of unease; that sort of knowing you sometimes experience in life. She wasn't responding to messages as she normally did and, when we finally spoke, I knew it was bad. She hadn't told me things had progressed to this point and a friend of hers said that if I didn't come now, it would be too late. Most people would get in a car, drive to the airport and go home. For me, it was not so easy.

I have suffered for most of my lifetime with mental illness to the point of disability. I had, at this time, not stepped outside for over three years. Getting to my mother was something both of us felt was impossible. We had not seen each other for almost a decade. Still, I am a

practical person and I started searching the internet for travel options. I came across a couple of websites and one of those was BEYOND Travel Companion Services.

From the moment we first emailed, Sally put me at ease with her clear communication and responsiveness. She would respond so quickly to messages and grasped the urgency of the situation immediately. She was confident, kind and very efficient. I realised very quickly, if anyone could get me on a plane and through an international trip, it would be her.

There are times in life where I struggle to find acceptance. There is a lot of instant judgment around my issues and people can even unknowingly make you feel like less of a person than they are. Sally treated me with respect and spoke to me like I was a normal person. She shared her experiences of knowing loved ones with mental illness and her deep compassion for others shone.

Sally arranged everything: flights, itinerary, airport issues, consulate trip, suitcase purchase, passport photos and much more. We met very quickly and she took me everywhere and did things exactly as she laid out. She went above and beyond in so many ways, including putting herself as my emergency contact so I could get an emergency passport to travel.

She dedicated every ounce of her being to reuniting me with my mother. My mother felt that us meeting her was a special moment, something that was fated. She truly believed Sally was sent to reunite us. I think she was onto something. There were so many things that fell into place and family friends said my mother could have died at any time. She almost died the night before I arrived. She held on though, knowing Sally was bringing me to her. This she did with great ease and the confidence of an experienced traveller. Never once did she leave my side, and she always checked on me and made sure I was comfortable.

If you are looking to send a child, a friend or anyone you love to travel accompanied, you could not do better. Sally is that female companion that puts you at ease, she's a motherly figure, outgoing, bubbly and confident. She is so organised and thinks of everything; all you have to do is walk or sit by her and she takes care of the rest.

My mother died a couple of months after Sally took me home. We believe she kept going because we were able to be together again. We frequently got emails from Sally, and I would read them to my mother as she lay in bed. She was part of our conversations in those last days and we were forever thankful for her.

Tomorrow (October 2023) I will get to see Sally again for the first time since she reunited us. She holds a very special place in my heart for what she did for my family. She did the impossible really, and she gave me a newfound confidence in myself too.

I hope you choose to go somewhere with Sally as I am sure her empathetic nature and generous being will become a part of your story too.

Thank you, Sally, words can't express how much what you did for us means. I hope that I will continue to have the pleasure of knowing you for years to come and that we may travel together again one day.

SarahH