

CAREGIVERS

Each family's caregiving story is unique with a common thread: the desire to care. We thank these families for sharing their stories so that others can learn from them.

share their EXPERIENCES

ANNIE'S STORY

Coming out of her shell

By Thea McCarthy, VON Canada

A resident at The Village of Erin Meadows has made a significant improvement since coming to long-term care a few years ago. Annie arrived at the home as a quiet woman who kept to herself and didn't participate in any of the activities. After seeing the high quality of life enjoyed by fellow residents, she slowly became more active. She began participating in activities and making new acquaintances.

Annie's daughter, Marlene Wilson, applauds the work of the staff for the positive impact their efforts have had on her mother. "They helped her so much to build her self-esteem," she says. "The nursing care there has been exceptional. She's made a real turnaround." Not only can long-term care help to improve the emotional well-being of residents, in some cases it picks up where acute health leaves off.



"The family is so happy because they say they've found their mom again after so many years," says General Manager, Agarwal. ☀️

KEN'S STORY

And they danced

By Thea McCarthy, VON Canada

Ken Brown, 68, arrived at OMNI Healthcare-owned Pleasant Meadow Manor in April 2007, shortly after suffering a fall that left him confined to a wheelchair. Doctors said he would never walk again. Thanks to the support he has received from staff, along with a physiotherapy routine at the home, Ken was again on his feet again within just a few months.

"We told him that we would do everything we could," says Barbara Ross, a physiotherapy assistant who works with Ken. "He has worked really hard, and with a lot of encouragement

he has carried on."

After four and a half months of physiotherapy, Ken is out of his wheelchair and today uses his walker full-time. Since he no longer requires a wheelchair, he had to keep a promise to Barbara. "I told him that when he got better that I was to have the first dance with him," she recalls. In October, while attending a performance by Otonabee Fiddlers at the home, Barbara cashed in on that promise. "I turned to him and said 'It's time to dance,' and we got up and danced." ☀️



The joy of children's laughter

By Robert Miller

Paul Miller is a big strong man who lost a leg in World War II. He is a war veteran, but is jolly and has a soft spot for his grandchildren. Paul Miller is my dad and he is currently living in a long-term care home, where my kids and



I visit him every other Sunday. He is not quite as big as I remember him—he's a bit more feeble and he feels lonely a lot. But as soon as he hears Molly, 8, and Charlie, 10, come running down the hall, a big grin spreads across his lined face.

The kids don't mind that gramps is old and wrinkled, they just know that when they laugh, so does he. I think it's the sound of their laughter that keeps him going—keeps him playing cards with his friends in the home and sharing war stories in the lounge. It makes me remember he's still a big strong man inside. ☀️

GEORGE'S STORY

A box of memories

By Janine Crusoe

My husband was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease a few years ago. I wasn't too worried because a friend of mine has Parkinson's and doesn't seem to show any of the symptoms. But George has the tremors and the stiffness. I didn't realize that some people display the signs while others never do. It's been hard, but he gets by quite well—just slowly. George is a carpenter and still maintains a few projects for friends and family. This summer he made me a huge box and filled it with old photos and trinkets that we've exchanged over the years. George's

memory box reminds me every day of the human ability to overcome even the most daunting obstacles. ☀️



Birthday blues

By Jodie Fitzgerald

Next week is my 65th birthday. Sixty-five was the age at which my mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. She lived with her disease for 11 years, with her children caring for her first at home and eventually moving her into a long-term care home. The last few years were very difficult for all of us. She lost her teeth and her ability to speak. It was terrible. I've been worrying about



putting my own children through the same thing my brothers and sisters and I went through. Thankfully, I'm not feeling any of the signs or symptoms or the disease. Mostly, I'm thankful that I can remember my mom, not just in those last painful years, but as a young woman with her four children and husband. ☀️

Got a tale to tell?

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