

A CIRCLE OF CARE



COVER
STORY

CAREGIVER SPECIALIST



PROGRAM
SPOTLIGHT

GERIATRIC CARE MANAGEMENT



PROGRAM
FEATURE

At age 92, Elaine greets visitors, including her Springwell Care Advisor, Sinna Pho, to her cozy apartment with a smile and a wealth of beautiful stories to share. She is a lifelong resident of Waltham, had

Longtime Caregiver Now Gets Care from Springwell

happiness in two marriages, and devoted herself to caring for others. Elaine beams as she describes meeting her husband, Eddie, in her family's jewelry store when he brought in a watch for repair. Elaine and Eddie married in 1947 and by 1954, he began battling the first of many severe health challenges. Elaine became his loving caregiver and advocate, detailing his many miraculous recoveries in a short story. Several years after his death in 1991, Elaine remarried and soon became a caregiver again when her second husband was diagnosed with cancer. Most recently, she cared for her brother near the end of his life.



In addition to being a caregiver, Elaine has faced her own health challenges, including two bouts with cancer and ongoing struggles with arthritis. She began receiving a small amount of help from Springwell more than twenty years ago. She is especially grateful for "the support she gets from Springwell when something gets more serious." Prior to her heart attack in 2011, she received homemaking services. After the heart attack, she began receiving help with laundry and grocery shopping, and she also received an emergency call button to wear.

Sinna remarks that Elaine's care plan continues to be modest for all that she's been through. For Elaine, though, the help from Springwell makes all the difference in the world. At this point, she doesn't know how she would manage if she had to wash the floors herself. It is difficult for her to go out, especially in the cold weather, so having groceries delivered to her kitchen counter is a huge help. The emergency call button gives her the security that if she fell, someone would come to assist her. Finally, Elaine appreciates her regular check-in times with Sinna, and the opportunity to regularly reassess the care she receives. After many years of caregiving, Elaine is glad that Springwell's services enable her to live in her longtime home that she loves.



When A Caregiver Needs Support

Whether a family caregiver is providing help to a parent, a spouse, a sibling, or a child, the caregiving landscape is always filled with new challenges that can come from changes in programs and resources, a change in health condition(s), or changes in the relationship. New caregivers are often overwhelmed, and even experienced caregivers can be blindsided or hit a wall when faced with a new challenge or major change. Rebecca Petersen, Springwell's Caregiver Specialist, is here to help.

Because one size does not fit all when it comes to caregiving challenges, Rebecca is a problem-solver and a compiler of resources. It all starts with listening and letting the caregiver's needs drive the process. Sometimes one meeting and a follow up email with a list of key resources are all a caregiver needs. Often, caregivers need to connect with someone who understands the challenges they are facing before they can even think about what resources would be helpful. By listening, Rebecca addresses the immediate distress the caregiver is experiencing and gathers important elements of the family's story that enable her to find the solutions that will help.

Sometimes Rebecca needs to get creative to support a family. Sandy and Bob, pictured below with Rebecca, received a technology grant about a year ago that provided them with an iPad and headphones. Bob, who was experiencing memory loss, had become overwhelmed by everyday background noise. The iPad and headphones allowed him to listen to music and enjoy activities such as mall walking with Sandy. When Bob recently moved into a long-term care facility, Sandy reached out again to Rebecca, and she is now receiving support to help her adjust to this new phase of her caregiving experience.



For more information on how to connect with our Caregiver Specialist, visit www.springwell.com or call us at 617-926-4100.



DID YOU KNOW?

Springwell offers support to caregivers in a variety of ways. Help can come from our Caregiver Specialist, our Information and Consultation Department, the MA Home Care Program, or our Private Geriatric Care Management Program. Each year, more than 2,500 caregivers receive:

- 400 hours of Caregiver counseling and or consultation
- 100 hours of dementia coaching
- 450 Information and Referral consultations
- 15,000 meals for themselves or their loved one
- 1,000 days of adult day health
- 55,000 hours of in-home respite care

Some of these services are free, some are government subsidized, and some are available for a fee. Call Springwell at 617-926-4100 to find a service that fits your situation.

When You Can't Be There in Person

Families tend to live at a greater distance from each other than they used to, and sometimes, even when distance isn't an issue, a busy job or other responsibilities can make caregiving stressful. Many adult children worry about their aging parents and wish they could do more to help. Family members of local seniors often engage one of Springwell's Geriatric Care Managers to be there when they can't be – to bring their Mom to that important doctor's appointment, to check on Dad regularly at his apartment or at the rehab center, to take Mom out to lunch, or to help her get acclimated to the local senior center.

Sometimes the Geriatric Care Manager is the one who visits the senior in the hospital, helps to set up in-home services or find an assisted living facility that is the right fit. Phyllis, a retired teacher, has no remaining family and depends on her Springwell Geriatric Care Manager for those tasks. Over the past year, as she has struggled with hospitalizations and increasing needs, her Geriatric Care Manager has been her guide, advocate and support system.

Nancy hired a Springwell Geriatric Care Manager to facilitate a family meeting that would help solve problems and define an ongoing care plan that worked well for her and her daughters. After a few brief follow-up calls, the family was able to execute the plan on their own.



Joan, pictured above with her Care Manager, Natasha Smith, has been a client of Springwell's Geriatric Care Management Program for about a year. Natasha helped Joan find an affordable assisted living situation, facilitated her move, helped at several transition points when medical issues arose, and keeps Joan's adult children informed of her progress.

A Geriatric Care Manager can be a great way to bridge gaps in a family's ability to provide care by themselves. For more information, visit www.springwell.com or call us at 617-926-4100.

Elder Independence Fund: Filling in the Gaps

Robert and Debbie were enjoying their careers, their hobby of swing dancing, and long walks together, when Robert suffered a stroke in 2012. For months, Debbie worried because she had no idea how she would take care of him when he came home from the hospital.



Debbie's first contact with Springwell was with our Caregiver Specialist, who guided Debbie through preparation for Robert's homecoming and immediately helped her feel less alone. Eventually, Springwell programs have come to play a huge role in their lives. Springwell coordinates and manages Robert's significant in-home care support, provides him with home-delivered meals, and has offered Debbie respite care so that she could attend family milestone gatherings. Debbie and Robert appreciate this support, finding it invaluable as they face the daily challenges in their changed lives.



Unfortunately, there are some important needs for which there are few assistance options. Making their home accessible required investments which rapidly depleted the couple's savings. Springwell's Elder Independence Fund, supported entirely by donations, has saved the day twice. In 2017, Robert needed an additional wheelchair that provides better support, but it was not covered by insurance. A grant partially funded that purchase. Recently, the couple's stove broke and they couldn't afford to replace it. A stove isn't covered by any assistance programs, but it is exactly the kind of need the Elder Independence Fund is designed to address. The Elder Independence Fund allows Springwell staff to provide seniors and caregivers help they need to alleviate their distress, maintain their independence and improve their quality of life.



Solutions in Support of Health and Independence

Springwell is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to helping people who need long-term services and supports to remain independent and healthy in the setting of their choice. Services are made possible in part by contracts with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs, MassHealth, contracts with insurance and health care providers, and also through the generosity of individuals and institutions that provide critical philanthropic support.



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