

My mother and father were engaged and married within 3 months of meeting each other. They were married for over 60 years. They could not remember a time without each other and never spent a night apart. But my mother lost my father this past November from a stroke. She lost the love of her life, her best friend, and her caregiver in less than a week. It was a shock to all of us in the family, and we were not prepared.

My father had been taking care of my mom for a number of years now, which seemed appropriate because she had taken care of him for most of his life too. My mother, though, now needs extra care because she has terrible arthritis and had a failed hip replacement surgery. Because of these issues, she has constant pain and great difficulty walking. This pain limits her mobility to the point of only leaving her chair in the living room a few times a day. She cannot bathe without help or prepare herself a hot meal. She is homebound and does not even go outside without someone home for fear of falling.

My brother was able to move in with my mother, but he works full-time and sometimes 12 hour days, outside of the house about an hour away. I also live about 45 minutes away and have a family and commitments of my own. But my mother does not want to leave the home she has lived in for over 50 years. However, we know it is not safe for her to be alone for 8 to 12 hours a day.

When the Respite Volunteers of Shiawassee County were recommended to us, it was a blessing! Right away, they connected my mom with a Respite Volunteer who had similar interests and likes. They got along right away and now they play games, do puzzles, drink coffee, and chat like long-lost friends, which they are now. These visits give my mom something to look forward to every week and put a smile on my mom's face, which was a hard thing to do after the loss of my dad. Just this alone has helped my mom so much, but Respite Volunteers has done so much more for our family.

Our Case Manager at Respite Volunteers has been wonderful. She has helped my mom (who is hard of hearing) navigate the paperwork for other organizations that she can qualify for help. She helped my mom so she now gets Meals on Wheels while my brother is at work. A warm meal is delivered to her and someone comes in to see that she is up and ok, 5 days a week when my brother is working. Our Case Manager also helped my mom get someone to help her with a weekly shower and light housework. She always keeps me informed of what is happening and has been so wonderful to work with.

The help that my mom received from Respite Volunteers has helped improve the quality of my mom's life. But their help has also made it so my brother is able to keep his job and that I can still be at home for my kids who are still in school and also need their own mom. The help from Respite Volunteers has helped me to be able to sleep a little better at night knowing that my mom is okay to be in her own home where she is comfortable and happy.

Thank you so much to everyone at Respite Volunteers! You have made all of our lives better.

***Marianne M.***