

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.

share their EXPERIENCES

ANDY'S STORY

Beyond the basics of care

By Carol Edwards

When I first met Andy, he was anxious, exhausted and frustrated.

He was not sure if, in hiring a care manager, he was making the right decision for himself and for his lovely wife Vera, who has Alzheimer's disease.

Vera had developed a mild infection that exacerbated her confusion, which upset Andy to the point of exhaustion. With Andy's concurrence, 12 hours of daily private care was organized for his wife and her care closely monitored.

A turn for the better

To Andy's amazement, Vera responded positively to the care, her anxiety disappeared and her condition improved. In the next few weeks, the couple relaxed and started to enjoy life again.

Then Andy developed pneumonia and was hospitalized. It took 24-hour private care to maintain continuous oxygen as the treatment required. Over the next 51 days, his condition fluctuated wildly and his anxiety returned. His medication and test results were monitored regularly and up-to-the-minute instructions were given to the private caregivers.

The care manager maintained an advocacy role for Andy, while remaining in contact and receiving instructions from his brother who



Andy (far left) conducts his affairs from a mechanized Lazy-boy chair. Care manager Carol Edwards, a home care worker and his wife Vera provide him with the support he needs.

had personal power of attorney and his accountant who had financial power of attorney.

Andy recovered and returned to the nursing home where he lived with continuous oxygen and a wheelchair. While Andy's lifestyle had changed, his positive attitude remained.

A happy reunion

Soon after his return home, an invitation arrived for the 50th wedding anniversary of his friends from university. Arrangements for him to attend were made by his care manager.

Travel to and from the event, which involved bringing his wheelchair and continuous oxygen, was specially arranged through a cab company. The event organizer was contacted to ensure that Andy had access to

the washroom and that food would be brought to him while seated at a table. His caregiver accompanied him to the event at Edwards Gardens in Toronto.

Andy was delighted to meet his university colleagues with whom he had studied zoology. He was able to proudly reflect on his career with the Fisheries Research Board of Canada, and reminisce with his friends about his long and interesting past in aquatic research.

With the support of his wife Vera and help from his caregivers and care manager, Andy was able to return to good health and live life to the fullest. ☀

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