

## Mary and Lee

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Many caregivers face the challenge of 24/7 caregiving, including Mary, a Hamilton County resident and caregiver for husband Lee. They have been married for more than 67 years, during which they raised six children and lived in their current home for 47 years.

When Lee was diagnosed with dementia and Parkinson's several years ago, Mary took on a new role as Lee's caregiver. She called Council on Aging (COA) for help. COA enrolled Lee in the Elderly Services Program (ESP). He began to attend an adult day program two days a week, with transportation provided by his son and daughter, giving Mary some respite.

Eventually, nighttime became very challenging for the couple, as Lee began to visit the bathroom multiple times a night, with Mary always by his side. This took a toll on Mary, and she became very exhausted.

Lee's ESP care manager referred Mary to COA's Caregiver Support Program. COA's caregiver support nurse, Anna, visited Mary at home, where she learned more about her role as a caregiver, and listened to her concerns about being overwhelmed, exhausted and losing patience with Lee.

"Anna provides me with reassurance about the emotional part of caregiving. I know she is just a phone call away for encouragement and resources," Mary said.

Anna advocated for a third day for Lee at the adult day program, including transportation.

"Anna is very helpful and understanding," said Mary. "My goal is to be in our home for at least two more years and COA helps make that possible."



*Pictured in top photo: Lee and Mary. In bottom left photo: Lee, COA Caregiver Support Nurse Anna, and Mary. As caregivers often do, Mary became overwhelmed with her caregiving responsibilities as Lee's symptoms progressed. She received much-needed emotional support from COA's Caregiver Support Program.*