

## 'Guardian Angel' and ESP services help Allen remain independent at home

The first thing you notice about Allen is his friendly face. The second thing is his home. Support from the Clinton County Elderly Services Program (ESP) has enabled him to stay there and enjoy all the comforts of his A-frame in the woods.

Allen has enjoyed every minute of his full life. A 65-year marriage – including 14 years traveling the country together in an RV – three grandchildren, five great-grandchildren and military service, combine with his positive attitude and love of nature to give him many happy memories.

Allen has lived most of his life in Clinton County, not far from his birthplace in Warren County. His experience owning and operating a Blanchester gas station for more than 30 years taught him the value of hard work, as some 14-hour days began at 3:00 a.m. Fast-forward to his life today, and he still wakes early, is sure to make his bed and then fixes his cereal and coffee – Wheaties is a favorite.

"I thank the good Lord every day for the life I've lived and everything I've been privileged to do," Allen said. "I am surrounded by wonderful people."

Allen began receiving ESP services when he was caring for his wife, Jay. Now, 94 and a widower, he relies on support from ESP – especially his Council on Aging care manager, Carla – to remain independent in the home he and Jay shared for nearly 40 years.

One of the benefits of ESP is care management. Each enrolled client is assigned a Council on Aging care manager. The care managers serving Clinton County ESP clients understand the unique needs of older adults in the county because they work exclusively in Clinton County.



*Clinton County ESP client Allen, with his Council on Aging care manager - and guardian angel - Carla.*

Allen and Carla have a good working relationship. They communicate frequently to ensure Allen's needs are met. When a need arises, Carla works with service providers and other community resources to find a solution.

Under Carla's direction, Allen's home is more accessible. For example, a ramp was installed to help him get safely in and out of his home. Allen uses it for daily exercise to and from his mailbox. "I couldn't get in and out of the house without it," he says.

ESP also provided a walk-in shower, grab bars and a raised commode for Allen's first-floor bathroom, eliminating the need for a difficult trip to the downstairs bathroom.

Carla also arranged for home-delivered meals and a home health aide to help with housework such as cleaning, vacuuming and changing linens. An ESP-provided Emergency Response System puts Allen at ease knowing he can get help in case of a fall or other emergency.

Allen refers to Carla as his "guardian angel" and often sends her messages showing his appreciation. Referring to Carla, he jokes, "It's wonderful to have people like [her] to take care of us old folks!"

Allen appreciates the support he receives from ESP and Carla. "You know, if I wasn't at my home, I wouldn't even be alive, I don't imagine."