

SENIORS HELPING SENIORS®

Offering Mature, Compassionate Care for Those Who Need Help At Home

Have you ever had a pet who always greeted you with unconditional love every day? Or spent some time petting an animal and watching their tail wag with happiness? Or how about a dog that brought a smile to your day and warmth to your heart? It's such a great feeling. If you could use a little companionship and help with your daily activities, SENIORS HELPING SENIORS® may offer the perfect solution.

Do you have an older relative who needs help? Or maybe you could use a little extra assistance around the house yourself. SENIORS HELPING SENIORS® offers mature, compassionate providers who bring their talents and support to other seniors who need help at home. It's a company designed to help meet the growing demand of older seniors who want to remain in their own homes and stay as self-sufficient as possible. Their offices in Stonington and Waterford serve all of New London County as well as parts of Middlesex County and Rhode Island. There are also offices in Branford, Fairfield, Granby, and Manchester plus nearby locations in Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

Maria Cerino owns the SENIORS HELPING SENIORS® agency in Stonington and Karen Wasserman owns the SENIORS HELPING SENIORS® agency in Waterford.

SENIORS HELPING SENIORS® owners really listen to what their clients need and work hard to make life easier for elderly seniors who are losing their physical and mental capabilities. While some may opt to move to a senior living facility, many people want to stay in their homes. By bringing a provider into the home, seniors may remain safely at home for months or even years longer, and at a much lower expense level than most assisted living locations. Providers can prepare meals, take care of light housekeeping, do the grocery shopping and run errands or assist with personal care. They can offer much-needed companionship so that an aging loved one is not isolated and alone in the house all day long. Some providers will aid with yard work or minor repairs around the house, too.

The availability of provider services can vary for each client and is determined on a personal as-needed basis: clients might choose to have a provider come to their home every day for several hours, or only once or twice each week for just a few hours, or on a temporary basis coming regularly after an injury or medical procedure. "We work with clients and their families to provide that extra support, whatever the need might be," says Maria. "And," adds Karen, "we try to provide assistance with a smile, or just an extra hug. Life should include the joy of companionship, especially when faced with the prospect of the loss of mobility and independence, isolation and the many complications that arise with the aging process. When one client needed to be in a rehabilitation facility longer than planned, she hired a provider to come in to feed and exercise her small dog."

The providers who work with SENIORS HELPING SENIORS® are special people.. The company specifically seeks out compassionate, caring people who truly enjoy helping others – in particular the elderly. Many of the providers are also volunteers in the community and they come to SENIORS HELPING SENIORS® so they can continue to assist people who need an extra hand. The income they earn from helping other seniors is a nice supplement to their retirement plans and allows for some of the "extras" that add up so quickly when living on a fixed income. Maria



noted, "We're here to help compassionate seniors who are looking for meaningful work and a little extra money, too, as well as the clients who benefit from having a mature provider, someone who really cares about their well-being."

Both Maria and Karen became involved with SENIORS HELPING SENIORS® after their own personal experiences helping family members. "Each of us decided to leave our prior careers and dedicate ourselves in a business where we could more directly help others. When you go through a situation where you are the caregiver for someone losing his or her mobility, you develop a whole new appreciation for some of the little things we all take for granted," states Maria. "Being able to just go out for a drive to the store when you need to, or to get a good night's sleep when you're exhausted, are little things most of us take for granted. These can become major challenges for someone who is caring for a loved one that needs constant care. I'm a huge proponent of Respite Care, which is one of the reasons I was drawn to this business. In many situations, seniors don't have anyone close by to assist with care, or may have one primary caregiver trying to do it all. It can be so hard to find quality, compassionate people to lend a hand."

"I agree," says Karen, "My Mom and siblings (five in all) spent many evenings and weekends giving my brother's wife a break from her 24/7 schedule nursing my brother. We came from all over and were constantly frustrated with our inability to find empathetic, care-givers."

Both Karen and Maria get a lot of satisfaction working with others, and they always look for a "win-win" situation. That means they want both the client AND the provider to enjoy their assignments and the companionship. "It really should be like 'getting a little help from your friends'". Maria explains, "Our goal is to come up with the best possible match between a client and a provider. Sometimes they share a hobby, or have complementary personalities, or a special talent or experience which benefits the clients. For example, I work with a provider who has a dog specially trained for pet therapy. She volunteers at nursing homes, using her dog as a friendly companion to brighten up the day for the residents. She brings her pet and her caring to our clients as well." In fact, Maria has brought her own dog to visit clients who told her how much they love dogs and miss their own pets. Adds Karen, "These men and women are typical of the care providers we work with. Our purpose is to bring joy and independence to our SENIORS HELPING SENIORS® clients."

The original concept of SENIORS HELPING SENIORS® came from Kiran Yocom of Pennsylvania in 1998. Kiran was originally from India and had volunteered for Mother Theresa in an orphanage in India for fourteen years. It was while working with Mother Theresa that Kiran developed a deep sense of compassion and the desire to lend support to others. After moving to this country, Kiran recognized a need in her new community and conceived her own concept to offer assistance to others based on her own life-learning experiences working with Mother Theresa. She saw that many elderly people were alone in their homes, sometimes without very much contact with others. In considering the best options to bring caring, loving and compassionate assistance to the elderly who needed it, Kiran found many recently retired, younger seniors looking for ways to remain connected to the community and who loved to help others. She knew that this more mature group of helpers would provide a respectful and compassionate kind of care. She also knew that the people who needed help were more likely to accept support and even enjoy the companionship of more mature individuals who often have more in common with them.

Two years ago, Kiran and her husband Philip decided to expand their brand of caring, loving and compassionate care for seniors to a national level by finding new owners who shared their philosophy, commitment and mission. Today there are six SENIORS HELPING SENIORS® offices in Connecticut, with more than 50 locations in 15 states, and the numbers are growing.

If you or a family member is seeking a compassionate, nurturing person to provide companionship, take care of the house and to look after a senior, call SENIORS HELPING SENIORS® for more information. Maria can be reached by calling (860) 535-9968 or to reach Karen, please call (860) 447-1316 — and please see our full page advertisement in the color center insert of this magazine for additional information.