

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Seniors can help other seniors

Do you need a little help?

After my grandfather died, my aunt's family uprooted from Bridgewater and moved in to care for my grandmother, who was starting to develop dementia, in Belmont. Over the years as it worsened, my mother in a Philadelphia suburb took responsibility for half the year in my parents home. My grandmother couldn't be left alone for long and so it was a challenge for my mother to get a break, even with my father lending a hand. She did try hiring help, but she never felt comfortable with the agency she found. This is not to say that one cannot get lucky and find a suitable match, but, it may not last, or scheduling could become an issue.

It would have been great to have access to Seniors Helping Seniors (SHS) In-Home Services to bridge the gap, and keep grandma at home. SHS is just what it says — seniors

looking to help other seniors live comfortably in their own homes. In the process, both the providers and receivers needs are met. The respect, understanding, and assistance in these relationships are two-way as both learn from each other. Each person is special, so SHS strives for the best match possible after building relationships with both sides.

The types of help may vary widely, as well the frequency. Examples include cooking, housekeeping, companionship, shopping, house maintenance, yard work, transportation, computer help. And while you may enjoy caring for an ailing family member, you may need a break for a few hours to run errands or just plain take care of yourself. Or you may need round the clock care for a short period of time. SHS can adapt to any schedule or any non-medical need.

It's amazing how consistently people tell me what a great idea SHS is. Just this past Thanksgiving holiday visiting Liesje's mother, Jane, in New Jersey, Jane received a call from a friend who needed to return early from holiday and needed a ride home from Kennedy Airport in New York City, an hour and a half away. Jane starting making calls to her senior friends to see who could help her friend, but was unable to find someone, as most seniors simply wouldn't make a trip of that length in the crowded metropolitan area. Public transportation with multiple hops isn't trivial either for many 90 year olds! SHS could easily have met this simple need.

To receive or provide SHS services, contact SHS, headquartered in Reading, at 781-205-

4930 or SHS_ReadingMA@comcast.net. December Holiday Special: Give the gift of giving, \$100 for six hours of service (can be used any time).

Dave Damerjian

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