

ST. JOHN'S COMMUNITY CARE

Caring compassionately for aging and disabled loved ones since 1985

THERE IS NO PLACE LIKE HOME!

One Daughter's Story

Story as told by Lisa Brennan.

St. John's has been a wonderful part of our lives these past few months. My sister, Anita Schmitt, saw the marquee in front of St. John's when it had a message about a support group for caretakers. Because I had moved from Edwardsville in November of 2013 to take care of our mom, my sister thought the group would be helpful to me. I learned about St. John's Community Care at the support group.

St. John's is an excellent fit for our family. Although it was clear that my mom could no longer live alone, she was terrified to move into assisted living or anything even close to a nursing home. I sold my home and moved in with Mom, but after being here and seeing her dementia progress, it seemed as though my job as caretaker was about to get a lot more serious and time consuming. I work, am a student, and am a busy single mom with a hectic schedule, and I could not leave Mom home alone. We had two assessments done by visiting nurses and a private insurance company, and the professionals agreed: Mom should not be left alone. I was at a loss.

I could not leave my teaching position, and trying to work from home with my Mom here proved nearly impossible. We were reluctant to try the Adult Day Program, but I had met Director Stacey Rhodes, and her compassionate professionalism led me to think

that this might be a viable option. My mom's doctor told me that the best thing I could do for my mom was to engage her mind and keep her active.

I was comfortable with the physical setting of St. John's and Stacey helped me gather the facts to make my decision. In my Mom's view, the idea of coming to St. John's during the day seemed like the lesser of two evils; little did we know that the program here would bring my mom back into the world of the living. My mom is now engaged cognitively, socially, and physically. Before attending St. John's, I was watching her slip away into dementia, but just this evening, she spent an hour with me in animated conversation about her new friends and today's activities at St. John's.

Because of St. John's, my mom has a much higher quality of life. She is active and happy on the days she comes to St. John's. Her mind is sharper, and she is much more likely to converse with me, family members, and neighbors. She has a tendency to isolate herself and get lost in her mind, but when she has spent the day with her friends at St. John's, she becomes part of something outside of herself and so becomes much kinder and empathetic. When she has spent the day at St. John's, my mother becomes more like herself.

Mom has lived in Collinsville since the late 1950s; she and my dad moved here so he could attend St. Louis University, and it was in Collinsville they raised their six children. Mom was very active in

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her church, our schools, and the community; in fact, with a friend, she helped start one of the first 4-H clubs in Collinsville in the 1960s. The Collinsville Collinettes were 4-Hers, and we had a blast! My parents were also members of the Collinsville Recreation Club, and each February, our family hosted the monthly "steak dinner" that members attended. My dad was a dentist with an office on Main Street, and my parents taught us by example how to be active members of our community.



My mom really enjoys the social aspect of St. John's. She loves to tell me about all her friends and her bus ride home on the Collinsville Shuttle. I could not believe my eyes when I came one Friday afternoon and my mom was dancing to the music that a singer had brought in for his performance. Prior to joining the Adult Care at St. John's, my mom would simply refuse to leave her bed and would remain in her nightgown both day and night, but now here she was: dancing. Dancing, laughing, and pulling other clients up from their chairs to dance with her.



For me, St. John's gives me the freedom to pursue my career in higher education knowing that Mom is not only safe, but also having fun with professionals who treat her with respect and love. The staff members have taught me how to care for my mom and how to navigate the murky waters of her dementia. Jill has given me pointers on how to coax my mom into doing things when Mom is resistant, and I love that Jill and Lois (both nurses) check my mom regularly for weight and blood pressure. They

have been really great in teaching me how to be a better caregiver, and learning from them has been a great gift.

To be sure, there are still some very tough days caring for my mom, but St. John's has so greatly enriched our lives.

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222 Goethe Avenue—Collinsville, IL

- In Home Non-Medical Services 24/7
- Adult Day Programs—Collinsville and Edwardsville
- Financial Aid Resources
- Family and Alzheimer's Support Groups
- Medical Equipment Loan Closet

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