

I discovered something was going on with mom in late 2013, I didn't know what it was, but something was wrong. Mom lived in rural Corydon Kentucky at that time and I live in Glen Carbon Illinois, so my visits didn't allow me to see much to give me any clues. As time passed and the disease progressed I searched for answers and soon learned mom had dementia.

I moved Mom to Illinois as soon as I realized that I needed help caring for her. While attending a bible study group, I heard from a friend of a friend about St. John's Community Adult Day Care Center in Edwardsville. I looked at St. John's website and scheduled a meeting and tour. After meeting with the director, Stacey, I was happy to find St. John's Community Care Adult Day Center. Although I thought it would be a great place for Mom, I was convinced she would not engage with everyone and want to leave throughout the day. I took Mom in for a visit and was very surprised to see how the employees engaged her with warm smiles and hugs to reduce her anxiety.

St John's afforded our family the ability to care for both our needs. For that we are grateful for their services. Mom enjoys socializing with other participants and special guests, arts and crafts, playing games, working puzzles, exercising, watching TV, singing and listening to music. Because of these activities/therapies Mom is in a better mood, less agitation and less periods of "blank stares" and sleeping most of the day. She talks and laughs so much more now. Mom has a sense of belonging again and St. John's Adult Day Center is a great outlet for fulfilling Mom's social needs.

Helping Mom to remain independent is so important to me because I see her engaging in her environment every day; she's almost like the "Mom I've always known". Sharing those moments with her are so enjoyable..... we laugh and talk about things from our past, baking cakes and pies or preparing Thanksgiving dinner together! She feels good about herself and proud she can accomplish some of her day-to-day tasks with my support.

For me, St John's has given me the security of not feeling that I am alone in this "journey" since I am her primary/only caregiver. When she is at the facility I can rest assured that she is with caring people helping her throughout the day. I recently attended a Savvy Caregiver workshop taught by St John's. We met for 6 2- hour sessions learning about dementia /Alzheimer's, sharing best practices with others attending the workshop, managing those feelings of helplessness, learning to take care of yourself and other valuable resources provided by St John's. The information provided was invaluable!!

We are so Blessed to have St John's as part of our lives and because of St John's Adult Day program I can "honor Mom" by giving her the quality of life she so deserves!!

**Towanda**