

Giving Care

PHOTOS BY WYNDE DYER/
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Resources help the helpers

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on fire or take the car and pass out behind the wheel. Her memory is fading and she has a hard time keeping names straight.

"Sometimes she gets difficult and I have to get rough," he said. "It hurts me to have to do it—I feel bad and I don't want to hurt her, but I don't want her to hurt herself either."

Three years ago, Moore decided to relieve the stress of caregiving by enlisting the help of Metropolitan Family Services, a respite care provider group designed to help older adults live independently and give primary caregivers a break.

Emma Johnson, a retired nutritionist who is a senior herself, comes and visits Claudia from noon to 4 p.m. each Thursday as a part of the group's Side-by-Side program. On Wednesday and Friday, Johnson takes Claudia to Trinity Day Care Center so she can socialize with other homebound seniors.

Moore said those few hours a day, three days a week, are enough to keep the walls from closing in. It gives him a chance to get outside, do some work in the yard and visit with old friends like he did before Claudia's operation.

"It's wonderful to have a person like her," Moore said. "It's a real relief. I get to do the things I used to do and go the places I used to go."

Johnson will take Claudia to her hair appointments, on shopping trips and visits to her sister's home. Other times they walk around the block or spend the afternoon in Irving Park—or they stay inside so Claudia can teach Johnson how to play the piano.

"She likes to entertain me," Johnson said. "I really learn a lot from my clients."

Johnson said it is her pleasure to do the work she does. She considers herself blessed to be in good health at her age and said she will care for older seniors for as long as she can.

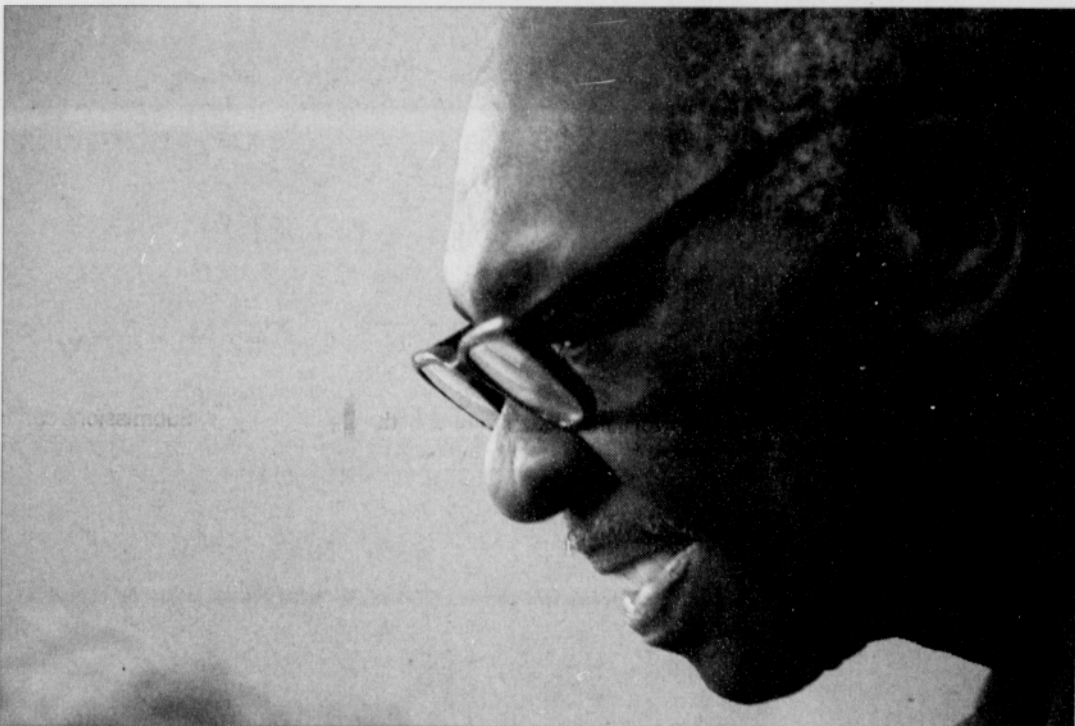
She hopes the popularity grows for Side-by-Side and similar programs like Senior Companions or Health at Home, a program that provides skilled nursing and personal assistance to help seniors keep their independence.

"So many people don't realize our programs are out there," Johnson said. "So many people feel like they don't have anybody and I feel sorry because we all need somebody."

For information on receiving respite care through Metropolitan Family Services, call program coordinator Cynthia Cohen at 503-232-0007, extension 201 or stop by the box office at 1808 S.E. Belmont St.



Claudia Moore (left) and Emma Johnson work on a scrapbook while Claudia's husband, Thomas cleans the house.



Thomas Moore serves as his wife's primary caregiver. 'I think it's harder on the giver of the care than the receiver,' he said.

When the pressure is too much

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herself, Dorothy has difficulty cleaning the apartment and it's virtually impossible for her to lift her husband from his chair to his bed.

"I just wish I could get up and walk by myself," Dorothy said. "But I can't so I'll just have to deal with the problem."

Family and friends sometimes pitch in to give Denise a chance to rest, but most times she hardly has a chance to change her clothes before getting back to her parents. The only substantial relief she gets is from Leslie Hollinquest, a respite caregiver from Senior and Disabled Services who visits her father three days a week.

Hollinquest comes from 9 a.m. to noon but Denise said they need her there more. In a few weeks, Hollinquest will be able to spend four hours a

day with Willie, five days a week. Denise said if that isn't enough to relieve the stress, they would look into finding a live-in caregiver.

"So far we haven't found anybody but we are weighing the options," Denise said. "I would never want to see my

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—Stephanie Spann of Lifespan Respite Care of Multnomah County

parents in a home."

It is because of sentiments like these that Lifespan Respite Care of Multnomah County formed in 1997 with legislative support to help elderly people maintain their independence and to give caregivers a break. Lifespan attempts to be a clearing-house

for caregiving resources by connecting caregivers with services and support groups and curb caregiver stress and burnout.

According to Lifespan's Stephanie Spann, the group is a resource center for caregivers of all ages caring

for loved ones of all ages. Services through more than 30 Lifespan partner agencies are available for all people regardless of age, income, race, ethnicity, special needs or situations.

"Our goal is to promote dignity and choice for family caregivers," Spann said.

"Caregivers are at a high risk for mental and physical health problems because of the stress on both the body and the mind."

She added that many times caregivers lose connection with the healthy, balanced life they once had. They often live in isolation with those that they care for and have the idea that they have to carry this responsibility on alone.

"At the end of the day they don't have time for themselves," Spann said.

By connecting caregivers with other caregivers in supportive environments, hooking them up with respite options and looking into financial support for caregivers, Lifespan hopes to lift some of the burden of giving care and reduce some alienation.

For more information on Lifespan Respite Care, contact Stephanie Spann at 503-988-4790.

Programs for Caregivers

Senior Companion

Older Adults who need assistance to live independently receive companionship-based services provided by older adult volunteers.

Side By Side

Side By Side supports the independence of older adults and people with disabilities through companion-based services. The program also provides part-time employment for older adults.

Health at Home

Integrated home care services are provided to older adults and people with chronic health conditions or disabilities. These services help them live independently and include nursing care, medication management, personal care and homemaking.

Living Skills Coaches

Coaches provide individual and parent skill development, respite care, mentoring and community integration for families and individuals with mental, emotional or behavioral disorders.

Project Linkage

This program helps seniors and people with disabilities remain independent in their own homes. Volunteers provide services that include rides to medical appointments, grocery shopping, yard work, home repairs, friendly visiting and telephone reassurance.

For more information on any of the programs above, contact Cynthia Cohen of Metropolitan Family Services at 503-232-0007, extension 201 or by email at cynthiac@metfamily.org. Metropolitan Family Services can also be visited in person at 1808 S.E. Belmont or on the web at www.metfamily.org.

Lifespan Respite Care

Lifespan Respite Care gives primary caregivers a break by connecting families with resources like support groups and respite care providers. The following list includes some of Lifespan's 30 partner agencies that offer caregiving help for family members of any age, income, race, ethnicity, special need or situation. The Lifespan Respite Program can be reached by calling 503-988-4790.

Caregiving Alliance; 503-233-2398

Legacy Caregiver Services; 1015 N.W. 22nd Ave; 503-413-7706

East Portland Community Center and YWCA Mid County Senior Services Program; 740 S.E. 106th Ave; 503-988-6073

DHS Child Welfare non-needy caretaker relative project; 3965 S.E. Powell; 503-731-3111, extension 235

Home Instead; 4415 N.E. Sandy Blvd, Suite 203; 503-335-0626

Multnomah County ADS Family Caregiver Support Program and Client Employed Provider Program; 421 S.W. 6th Ave, Suite 300; 503-988-3620, extension 26263

Volunteers of America Velma Joy Burnie Center; 537 S.E. Alder St.; 503-335-9980

Alzheimer's Association; 1311 N.W. 21st; 800-733-0402

Arc of Multnomah County; 619 S.W. 11th Ave, Suite 234; 503-223-7279

Glisan Street Center; 5600 N.E. Glisan St; 503-215-2220

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill; 503-228-5692

National MS Society; 1650 N.W. Naito Parkway, Suite 190; 503-223-9511

Parents for Alternate Support Solutions; 503-262-9322

United Cerebral Palsy; 7830 S.E. Foster Rd.; 503-777-4166

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