

Living **50** Plus in *Cottage Grove*

Shirley McDaniels set to retire after 35 years

I care for the elderly," Shirley McDaniels says but she's careful to add, "Of which I'm not. I'm 80." And after 35 years of working to insure elderly residents of Cottage Grove could stay in their homes, McDaniels is ready to call it quits.

She's been working in the field for over three decades, first with Evelyn Hart who began efforts to establish a caretakers program in the city in 1987.

"She had a passion to elderly in their home so she started a program that included nurses, hospice and Operation Independence which was the caregivers who went into the homes and cared for the elderly. At one time had over 50 employees and 100 clients," McDaniels said.

When Magnolia opened, the pair lost a share of their clients but with the buyout of Cottage Grove Hospital to PeaceHealth, they had a new home. Operation Independence functioned under PeaceHealth until 2005.

"Then, I went independent," McDaniels said. "Word got around that I was doing caregiving and people coming into town looking for work or caregivers who lived here would call me and I would coordinate work for them and myself."

Then, three years ago, McDaniels joined forces with another Cottage Grove resident to start caregiver meetings on the first Monday

of every month. There, caregivers can share information and received it from guest speakers.

"I have a passion for caregiving," McDaniels said. A passion she thinks may have its roots in caring for her own grandmother and later, her aunts.

And while she'll miss her clients and the people she works with, McDaniels isn't slowing down.

"I have met a wonderful man and I'm getting married July 8," she said.

The pair plan to travel, where exactly they don't know yet but according to McDaniels a cruise may be involved.

"It's just going to be a lot of traveling. I had a couple of clients and whenever I started dating my future husband, we started planning our wedding so that took care of what I'm going to do the rest of my life."

When they return home, McDaniels says she'll enjoy her time with her new husband and become more involved with her church located here in Cottage Grove.

I'm going to miss the people, going into the homes and getting to know the people that I have many many memories of," she said.

Caregiver tips

Don't strive for perfection

It isn't possible to maintain a patient attitude and get everything done perfectly each and every day. People are not perfect and mistakes will be made. Do not punish yourself if you lash out or simply need a break

Pay attention to mood changes

Anxiety or depression can sneak up on you when you least expect it. Ask for help if you feel your tasks are becoming too overwhelming. Seek the help of a doctor if changes in mood, sleeping patterns, appetite, and the like become noticeable.

Take frequent breaks

Getting a break from caregiving and setting aside time for yourself can increase patience levels and the ability to bounce back from stress. Whenever possible, have a friend or another relative step in for you so you get a break. Explore resources available for professional aides to come and take some of the responsibilities off of your shoulders.

Senior Center Calender for May

18: Hand and Foot cards or Mexican Train dominos 12:30 p.m.

19: Pinochle 11:30 a.m.-4 p.m.


22: Bingo 12:45 p.m.

23 Painting, woodcarving, charity quilting 10 a.m.

24: Needle arts and crafts 1-4 and pinochle 11:30-4

25 BUNCO 12 p.m.

29: Memorial day



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An orientation meeting will be held Wednesday, May 17, 2017, 5:30-7:00 p.m. At Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce, 700 E. Gibbs Ave. Cottage Grove, OR 97424
Please call chamber for details Phone: 541-942-2411
Plan now to join Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce, with business leaders and friends for this once in a lifetime China Adventure. Space is limited.



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