



Elder Care

Meet the People We Help...

Problem

Cheryl and her brother were worried about their mother Belle. Her increasing frailty and continued sadness over the loss of their father were alarming. But both Cheryl and her brother lived outside of Pittsburgh, and Belle was adamant about not moving from the home she had lived in her entire married life, and community where she had lived since birth. Knowing that her mother's needs far exceeded anything that Cheryl could provide or manage from a far, she began her search for someone who was not only going to meet the tangible needs of her mother's health, but would also provide the compassion and care that her mother so desperately needed.

Solution

Cheryl sought out the help of Jewish Family & Children's Service. Working with Cheryl, geriatric care coordinator and clinical social worker Pearl assessed Belle's needs to determine what services Belle needed to be safe, comfortable and maintain as much independence as her physical and mental health permitted. Pearl recommended a plan of care that included care coordination, caregiver services and counseling to address Belle's depression.

At first, however, despite Cheryl's overwhelming acceptance of Pearl, her mother was not as inviting.

With her persistent compassion and patience, Pearl was able to secure a place in Belle's life assuring her she was not there to take away her independence, but simply to help. In the beginning, Belle would call on Pearl for small tasks like taking her to doctor's visits and bringing her food to make sure she was meeting her nutritional needs. But as time went on, Belle's declining health necessitated increasing changes to the plan of care. Frequent visits helped keep up Belle's spirits and Pearl began paying some bills to help ensure Belle's financial stability. All the while, Pearl kept Belle's safety and need for independence in mind.

Outcome

In her many years of caring for Belle, Pearl has established a bond with her and Cheryl that has made Pearl an extended part of their family. Belle enjoys when Pearl brings her children over

for a social visit. And it is because of this bond and trust, that if Belle fights going to the hospital or seeking medical care, Pearl is able to be politely insistent in making sure Belle receives the care she needs. Cheryl depends on Pearl's realistic professional opinions to suggest the best possible care for Belle and finds comfort knowing that Pearl can relate well with other medical professionals and can understand treatments and care. Something Cheryl feared would be difficult if she had to handle by herself. And when it's necessary, Pearl alerts Cheryl and her family that they should come to be with their mother. And for all of this Cheryl and her family are truly grateful.

Do to her health needs, Belle was moved to an assisted-living facility, which Pearl helped arrange for with Cheryl. Pearl continues to provide care coordination services to ensure a positive environment and proper medical and psychological treatment in her new home.