

Assisting the Greatest Generation to be safe at home

Paul Napolitano has lived a very full active life, happily-married to his wife of 66 years, serving his country and working with children throughout his career. That came to a halt when the beloved 97-year-old great-grandfather to five, educator and World War II veteran was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease and dementia. Caring for him became a challenge for his family.

His wife Mary cared for him, but became physically unable as his needs increased with the progression of the diseases. Through the VA, the family was introduced to Assisting Hands® Home Care four years ago.

“Dad served in the Navy in the South Pacific during World War II where he piloted a landing craft, ferrying troops to various beaches from his ship, the USS Beckham,” says Debra Napolitano, his middle daughter. “He was still in the South Pacific when the war ended and he left the service to pursue his education.”

Paul focused on learning and earned his degree at Spring Hill College, a small Jesuit college in Mobile, Ala., where

he then taught for 11 years. While teaching at Spring Hill, he spent summers earning a Master's Degree in psychology from Temple University in Philadelphia and then headed up the guidance department at Lenape High School for more than 30 years before he retired.

“On top of that, many remember him as the tennis pro at the Trenton Country Club for more than 20 years, where he even played Bobby Riggs,” says his daughter.

After the Parkinson's diagnosis, the couples' lifestyle began to change with Paul requiring more care to meet his daily needs. As the disease progressed it left him unable to dress or bathe himself. It was at this point that Mary found that she was no longer able to care for her husband.

Wanting to keep Paul and Mary in the home they shared for more than 46 years, the family began to explore their options.

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Paul during WWII



Paul & Mary on their wedding day 66 years ago

“We are grateful to Paulette for the level of assistance she provides that is always with care and respect for our dad. Paulette is very sweet to him – in his current state of dementia, he can be very agitated, needy, paranoid, and sometimes combative. Paulette is very patient and sweet, and therefore, he gets along with her despite his dementia.”

– Deb Napolitano, daughter



Paul and his caregiver Paulette

“His care became a big burden on my mom, so it was not difficult to get my parents to agree to outside help,” says Deb Napolitano. “When his disease progressed further, his mobility became an issue and a safety concern and he eventually developed Parkinson’s related dementia. The assistance we receive is made possible because my dad is a veteran and the VA chose Assisting Hands® for us.”

Paulette, a caregiver from Assisting Hands® Home Care, works with the family four times a week to help bathe, dress, and feed Paul. Eventually, the family moved Paul and his wife to an assisted living facility, and Paulette continues to care for Paul there.

“She is a big help for our mom as well, giving her a break from the constant attention he requires because he is so dependent on her,” says Deb Napolitano. “In addition to

our dad’s personal care, she looks for things to do to help around their assisted living apartment, such as laundry and light housekeeping. Paulette goes out of her way to assist – knowing our parents are shut-ins, she even occasionally picks up things for our parents when she’s out shopping.

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Paul is one of more than 19 million Americans over the age of 85 and one of the remaining--and dwindling--members of the Greatest Generation who fought in WWII. With more than 56 million Baby Boomers reaching the age of 65 and older, members of the generations that follow have their hands full, often caught between balancing care for children and parents. By the end of the decade, 20 percent of the total population will be over 65.

Approximately 70 percent of adults over the age of 65 will need some assistance of some kind at some point, according to research conducted by the Home Care Association of America and Global Coalition on Aging. Moreover, 40 percent of adults in this age group already need some sort of daily assistance.

Traditionally, caregiving was done by family members. More than 34.2 million Americans, mostly spouses and children, serve as family caregivers, spending an average of 24.4 hours per week providing care.

The majority of home care recipients are seniors with an average age of 69. Three-in-five care recipients (59%)

have long-term physical conditions and a quarter (26%) have memory problems, according to the study. Many care recipients (37%) have more than one ongoing health problem.

“I live in Florida and knowing that he is being taken care of by someone he trusts and we trust makes the world of difference. Knowing how much it helps my mom also gives me peace of mind.”

– Teri Banks, daughter

“To see him decline is so hard since he was always our rock,” said Teri Banks, another one of the couple’s children, who recalls her dad being a softy at heart despite his stern demeanor. “I live in Florida and knowing that he is being taken care of by someone he trusts and we trust makes the world of difference. Knowing how much it helps my mom also gives me peace of mind.”

Paul and Mary Napolitano with their entire family



Client Summary

Situation

The family of a 97-year-old man with Parkinson's and dementia needed support in caring for him. He lived in an independent home with his wife and both recently moved to an assisted living facility due to his declining health. His needs, such as personal care and dressing, became overwhelming for his wife and children. They were looking for professional help to ensure he could remain safe at the assisted living facility with his wife.

Benefits

- Patient can remain safely at home where he is most comfortable in surroundings he knows.
- Having a caregiver come to the home several times a week gives the patients wife some much needed time to herself for her own self-care.
- Caregivers help patients with bathing, dressing, meal preparation, feeding assistance and light housekeeping to ensure cleanliness.
- A caregiver allows patients—whatever the age—to remain safe at home as they recoup from an illness, surgery or simply age in place rather than move to an assisted living facility or nursing home.
- Caregivers provide one-on-one care for patients that is focused on safety at home, activities of daily living and quality of life.
- Approximately 70 percent of adults over the age of 65 will need some assistance of some kind at some point, according to research conducted by the Home Care Association of America and Global Coalition on Aging. Moreover, 40 percent of adults in this age group already need some sort of daily assistance.
- Professional caregivers are employed by agencies that take care of scheduling, additional background checks, training and human resources of employing someone.

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