

Dear Friends of Grace Center,

November 2019

The Holiday Season is here! Homes will soon be filled with family gatherings and many families will have two, three, or even four generations at the dinner table. **For some homes though, it does not take the holidays to bring together multiple generations.**

Many families in our community have on-going, multi-generational homes where adult children care for their parents or grandparents full-time while also caring for children under the age of 18. **These adults are called the “Sandwich Generation” and have busy lives balancing the care needs of their multiple care receivers,** while also trying to find time to care for themselves. Often these individuals also work full-time jobs.

It is these very families whom Grace Center serves. **We provide respite to family caregivers so they can continue to balance their lives and responsibilities in a *sustainable* way.** Grace Center recently had the honor of serving such a family and, with their permission, we would like to share their story with you.



Meet Mary, Robert, Scott, and twin brothers Theo and Elliott. Robert, who works full-time for OSU’s College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences, became the primary caregiver for his grandmother, Mary, after she developed dementia. He decided to enroll Mary to receive day services at Grace Center in 2011 when Mary was 101 years old.

A few years into Mary’s time at Grace Center, Robert and his wife, Andrea, were blessed with the birth of their twin sons, Theo and Elliott. Meanwhile, his father, Mary’s son Scott, started to decline in his health and cognition, and in early 2015, Robert also enrolled his father at Grace Center to receive day services alongside Mary. **Robert now found himself in the “Sandwich Generation” as a new dad of TWO babies *and* the primary caregiver of *both* his grandmother and his father, all while working full-time.**

*Caregiving is very **isolating** – it is one of those things that everyone respects and that respect and appreciation is nice but when you are that person, after a period of time, you start to feel isolated and you are just doing your best to figure things out. **You can lose your sense of self** and can start to neglect your own self-care. Caregivers are **so susceptible to guilt or frustration** which they will carry around with them but at Grace Center I never felt like I was being judged. Instead, they asked, **“How can we help?”** And that help was genuine.” – Robert*



This picture was framed and given to Scott as a gift from the Grace Center Staff and was a memento he cherished.

Mary and Scott thrived at Grace Center and, because of the respite he received, **Robert found that balance he needed to parent his sons and care for his loved ones.** Mary attended Grace Center for over four years and lived to be one week shy of 106. Scott, a Coast Guard veteran, eventually made a smooth transition from Grace Center to the Lebanon VA home and lived the last year of his life there before peacefully passing away on October 18th, 2019.

*For me, Grace Center played a lot of different roles at different times. That's what is unique about it. **With Grace Center, it was almost like having a co-pilot; I took great comfort in knowing that both my grandmother and my dad had another series of eyes that would help me identify issues but also identify solutions.***

*I was always impressed by the scope of things – all of Grace Center's different activities, exercises, outings, dental screenings, showers and the program timing. As a caregiver you want to be able to drop off your loved and know that they will feel good where you are taking them and I truly could leave both my Nannie and my dad at Grace Center knowing that they were happy and well cared for. **I found it reassuring because that's what we all want for our loved ones – meaningful engagements within the scope of their life.** - Robert*

There is another family we would like to highlight – **the family of Grace Center supporters.** Just as Mary, Scott, and little Theo and Elliott could not have thrived without Robert's care and support, **Grace Center cannot thrive without you.**

Would you be willing to make a donation this year to help support our efforts to provide low-cost, high quality respite services for **all the families in our community who need us?** Here is what your gift can do:

\$50 affords 30 participants 1 hour of an enriching activity such as art, music, gardening, etc.
\$100 provides a participant a weekly shower for 1 month
\$500 allows a family caregiver to attend a monthly support group/training for an entire year
\$1,000 offers 2 participants 6 months' of weekly, 1 hour exercise and therapeutic sessions
\$1,500 enables Grace Center to expand innovative memory care practices

Thank you for being a part of our family and helping keep your community intergenerational.

Sincerely,

Rene Knight
Rene Knight
Director of Operations

Tera Stegner
Tera Stegner
Director of Community Relations

Heidi Igarashi
Heidi Igarashi
Board President