

November 2018 Caregiver of the Month: Pearl Weaver!



Caregiving during Retirement: Home away from Home

Gary and Pearl Weaver have been married for 57 years. Pearl says that Gary jokes about her “robbing the cradle” because she is two months older than him. Both Gary and Pearl are retired. For the past 10 years, they have stayed active by working as campground hosts from April through October. They temporarily leave home during camping season and live out of a camper on the campground. As campground hosts, they greet people, answer questions and sign people into their camping sites. Pearl stated they meet a lot of interesting people doing this.

Over the past five years, Gary’s health started to decline. He suffers from heart problems which resulted in open heart surgery. As Gary’s wife, Pearl took on the caregiving duties. During camping season, they would wake up every morning and drive through the camp grounds checking to see if any campers arrived overnight. Pearl then cooks breakfast, checks Gary’s blood sugars, and administers his insulin and other medications. Pearl also helps Gary with bathing and grooming. She encourages Gary to be as independent as possible.

Since July of this year, Gary has been in and out of the hospital. His last admission was in September due to falling at the campground. He was dehydrated and very weak so the hospital released him to a skilled nursing facility where he has been for the last 30 days, receiving therapy. Pearl continued their host duties without Gary. She also continued to provide care for Gary by visiting him every night and wrapping his legs to treat his cellulitis.

Gary was released from the nursing facility on October 29th and he and Pearl headed back to their home- stead in Warrensburg until the next camping season. This is typically a time when life slows down, but not for the Weavers. With Pearl providing excellent care for Gary, they are still able to remain active. They follow the University of Central Missouri’s volleyball and basketball teams and plan to attend all of their home games. The Weavers are also active in their local senior center where they go twice a month for pot lucks and to play cards. They also frequently visit with their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Pearl feels the most important things for caregivers to know and remember include how to give love, be patient and give encouragement, so the person you are caring for doesn’t give up. “Caregiving takes a lot of time and patience, but you do what you have to do,” says Pearl.