

June 2018 Caregiver of the Month: Christopher Combs!



Through Sickness and Health

Fifteen years ago, Christopher Combs and his wife, Michaila, vowed to care for one another in sickness and in health. Eight years later, Michaila's foot surgery went wrong and she lost the ability to bend her foot in the middle, thereby limiting her mobility. The very next year, Michaila was in a car accident and was rear-ended by another vehicle on the highway. Her knees and shoulders were smashed into the dashboard. The accident left

Michaila with osteoarthritis in her knee and a "frozen" shoulder both of which limit her range of motion. As a result of Michaila's physical limitations, Christopher has stepped up his duties as a husband and now doubles as Michaila's caregiver. A typical day for Christopher starts with getting himself dressed before getting Michaila dressed; then they head off to work. Christopher works full time at Lowe's while Michaila works part time for the Missouri Department of Mental Health. When Christopher returns home from work, he prepares dinner for the two of them. In addition, Christopher helps Michaila with personal care such as bathing and toileting. At the end of each day, Christopher helps Michaila get into her night clothes before bed and administers her medication.

Christopher does not receive any outside help with his caregiving role. "I do what I do because I feel it is part of my duty as her husband, to stick with each other in good times and bad," says Christopher.

When asked what advice he has for other caregivers, Christopher reveals, "You must keep a positive attitude and remember, no matter what you have to do, the person you are helping cannot do these things, themselves. It helps the person you are caring for stay positive as well."

Michaila continues to express her gratitude daily for everything Christopher does for her. "He really goes out of his way to help me. I don't know of anyone else who would do something like that for me. When I tell him that I wish I could do more, he reassures me that it's ok."