

May Caregiver of the Month: Laura Davis!



Laura Davis Pays it Forward

Last October, Robert Lee, 86, thought he had to go to a nursing home. He had dementia and neuropathy, a numbness in his feet that often causes him to fall. His daughter-in-law, 63-year-old Verna Lee, was doing her best to care for him in the Springfield, Missouri, home they shared, but she had her own health issues. Diabetes incapacitates her on some days; and, every six weeks she has to get shots to control the eye bleeding the disease prompts.

Then Robert's granddaughter stepped in and offered an alternative. "Grandpa, would you and Mom consider moving to Webb City to live near me?" Laura Davis asked. "You know how important family is to me, and I want to help."

Robert and Verna agreed to move. With Laura's help, they soon began looking for a house in Webb City, about 73 miles west from Springfield. They finally chose a brown one-story about 3 miles from Laura's home, one she shares with her husband, Rep. Charlie Davis, and their 11-year-old son.

"Charlie built a ramp in the garage so Grandpa wouldn't have to maneuver steps," says Laura, 45. "He also put in window screens, and carbon monoxide and smoke detectors. And my 11-year-old cuts their grass. Like I said, I believe in taking care of family."

Laura, the oldest of four siblings, checks on her grandfather and mother every morning, after she drops her son off at school. She checks their medicines and ensures each has taken them. She peeks in the refrigerator to make sure there's enough food; if not, she does grocery shopping. She also takes each one to doctor's appointments and checks to make sure her grandfather has not fallen.

Then she makes the rounds again, in the afternoon or evening, after her part-time job as a certified nursing assistant for ComForCare in Carthage, and after making meals for an elderly woman who also loves to be driven to a nearby park.

How does Laura have the time and energy to do all this caregiving?

“It’s my heart’s desire to care for people,” she says. “I ask myself one question every morning when I wake up: ‘How can I make someone smile today’? I also know that one day I’m going to need help, and I’m hoping to *Pay it Forward*.”