

UNITED WAY IMPACT STORY



WE GIVE CAREGIVERS STRENGTH FOR ANOTHER DAY



“I never imagined 37 years ago when I uttered the vows ‘in sickness and in health’ that I might need to honor them...I never really understood what those words meant. But, I do now.”

— Frank, a caregiver



For Frank and his wife Marge, their world was upended when Marge was diagnosed with Early Onset Dementia at the age of 53. Their lives of busy careers, a thriving family, and a shared love of recreation, turned into one of consuming care, overwhelming sadness, and daily challenges.

Frank left the job he loved, retiring earlier than planned to provide full-time care. They moved from their beloved lake-side home to a more manageable condo in a retirement community. “There is no way to understand the depth of caregiving unless you are in it. And then it becomes totally consuming and isolating,” says Frank.

“There is a certain loneliness in caregiving for the woman you’ve loved for so long. She needs my help for everything,” he says. “I bathe her, dress her, put her jewelry and make-up on every day, color her hair, give her a manicure and pedicure and try to keep her as beautiful to others as she remains to me.”

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GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.

**United Way
of Northern New Jersey**

UnitedWayNNJ.org/Health



Living a Life of Care

As Frank reveals: “Being a caregiver is 24-7, which is overwhelming. I get a ton of support from my amazing family, but even if you are not providing physical care every moment, you are monitoring medications, managing paperwork, scheduling appointments, and always thinking about what that person needs.”

Frank says that discovering United Way changed their lives. “The first time I walked into a United Way *Caregivers Coalition* meeting I immediately knew I was in the right place at the right time,” he says. “I instantly felt as if I could see a glimpse of light toward the end of the tunnel, and it was the first time I felt like I wasn’t alone.”



Supporting Family Caregivers

United Way *Caregivers Coalition* ensures unpaid family caregivers have access to information, education, resources, and services – in the community and in the workplace. We also help caregivers sustain their own health (physical, emotional, financial) despite the challenges of caregiving.

“Many people don’t identify themselves as caregivers and don’t realize the support that can help them,” says Robin Ennis, a coordinator for United Way *Caregivers Coalition*. “Family caregivers are isolated and often can’t take time for themselves.”

In New Jersey there are an estimated 1.7 million unpaid family caregivers* shouldering the responsibility of caring for a loved one, often without preparation or education, while juggling their own lives.

65.7
million people in the
United States provide
care for a loved one.

Source: *Caregiving in the U.S., National Alliance for Caregiving in collaboration with AARP, 2009.*

“Thanks to United Way, I’ve had access to all sorts of important information and I’ve met some incredible people who inspire and support me to keep marching on, no matter what. So, that’s all I can do is march on. And I promise, I will,” says Frank.

“I know that tomorrow will be harder than today...and thankfully, United Way helps me face tomorrow.”

* AARP Public Policy Institute, 2009.

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United Way connected more than 1,000 family caregivers to information, education, resources, and services in the past year. Support United Way and help us improve the lives of family caregivers. Visit UnitedWayNJ.org/CaregiversCoalition for more.



We help children and youth
THRIVE



We help families become
FINANCIALLY STABLE



We **IMPROVE LIVES**
of family caregivers