

Caregivers' Corner

Friendship blooms for long-time shopping team

By Jane Palmer

Each Friday morning, as two familiar figures pass through the supermarket doors, the manager says, "Hi Ladies, what can we do for you today?"

For nearly four years now, Billie Dye and Julianne VanPraag have shared their lives, as Julianne assists Billie with her weekly grocery shopping through Community Caregivers.

"She's my wheels and my eyes," says Billie, now aged 94.

They'll tell you how, once they became a shopping team, they quickly became fast friends because they have much in common. For instance, both have three sons, and both named their middle one Christopher.

Before they met, each found out about Community Caregivers through a friend. In addition to shopping with Billie, Julianne and her husband, Art, both drive Caregivers' clients to appointments.

Julianne enjoys helping in this way because, "I've met so many nice people, and they're all so appreciative. It just makes you feel good!"

According to Billie, what makes Community Caregivers so special is the warmth, the personal contact: "There's such a spirit of humanity," she says.

Much more than a service provider, Julianne has become a devoted friend. Billie particularly appreciated the support of this warm friendship earlier this winter when Julianne attended the memorial service for Ernest, Billie's husband of 71 years.

Billie says, "I want Julianne to get all the credit she deserves. She's an angel!"

"That would be nice, to have a halo and wings," laughs Julianne.

Billie sums it all up when she says, "I always look forward to Fridays!"

If you'd like to volunteer, too, please call Community Caregivers at 456-2898. Ongoing volunteer orientations are held both at our offices at 2113 Western Avenue in Guilderland, as well as other community locations. Also, visit our website, www.communitycaregivers.org, to learn more about how you can lend a neighbor a helping hand through Community Caregivers.



Friday shoppers: Julianne VanPragg, left, a volunteer with Community Caregivers, grocery shops every Friday with Billie Dye, who is 94. The two have become good friends.