

Linda Laudato-Intake Coordinator

As the year draws to a close, many of us look back and reflect upon the events that took place in our lives. For me, this was a year of change. The most recent occurred this month when I joined the staff of Community Caregivers as Intake Coordinator. As is the case with any new job, everyone wants to know about the “new kid on the block.” So here’s the scoop.

I grew up in Guilderland back when it was a sleepy bedroom community. My parents Dot and Ed Lange raised the six of us in the wide-open spaces of Westmere when Route Twenty was still a two-lane road! I remember Sunday afternoon rides to Dutcher’s or Tollgate for ice cream treats. After college, my husband Paul and I returned to the area to raise our children Emily and Matt. We continued the tradition of Sunday car rides throughout the countryside to enjoy the scenery and the taste of homemade ice cream.

I still enjoy driving around this beautiful community and as I navigated the roundabout in Voorheesville recently, I realized that my life has come full circle. Most of my working career centered around community health nursing where I traveled the roads of Albany County visiting people in their homes. About ten years ago I reached an intersection in my life and decided to explore the field of fine arts and interior design. I still visited people in their homes, only this time it was to spruce up their nest!

Last year I took another journey, down a difficult path with my mom, who was seriously ill. My family and I were drawn with her back into the world of medicine. There we encountered so many wonderful, caring people. Many of them were volunteers who appeared like angels just when we need them the most. They supported us through her illness and death and they left an indelible impression on our hearts. The experience made me realize that we have a limited time on this planet and that it was time to “give back” to the community. I had reached another crossroad in my life and took a new road which led me to Community Caregivers’ door. They welcomed me in and after a very short time; I knew I was in the right place.

Helen Keller once said, “The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart.” While I agree with her, I found that if you look around at Community Caregivers, you can actually see caring and concern. You can see it in the compassion on the faces of the volunteers as they buzz about the community on their missions of mercy. You can see it in the smile of the Caregivers’ staff and hear it in their voices when they converse on the phone. You can see it in the focused vision of the board members who spend countless hours making sure the mission gets accomplished and the doors stay open. And you can definitely see it in the faces of our neighbors in need who express their gratitude and sometimes surprise that there are so many people who care about them.

So when you or a loved one calls to request service, I’ll be traveling the roads again to meet you. We’ll chat about what type of assistance you need and the Caregivers’ staff will start the process of finding a neighbor to lend a helping hand. I’ll also be on the lookout for volunteers. Neighbors helping neighbors is what we are all about. So if any of you have made a New Year’s resolution that includes helping others, give us a call at 218-1167 .All of us at Community Caregivers wish you and yours a very happy and healthy New Year.