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GLOW

NEWSLETTER

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ELDER LAW

VOLUME 3, NO. 1



Small Steps Help Independence Blossom

As the polar vortex settled over the Twin Cities this past winter, Mary Larsen was able to thoroughly enjoy being with her grandchildren when school was canceled. That would not have been the case just six months earlier when Mary was worrying about her mom, Marynetta Hartung.

At age 91, Marynetta is a tenant at Oak Meadows in Oakdale where Lifesprk is their in-house home care partner.

Last summer, the Oak Meadows and Lifesprk staff began to notice some changes in Marynetta – she seemed more forgetful, confused, and unsteady on her feet. She would rearrange the furniture in the Oak Meadows lobby. She had fallen, and was supposed to use a walker to help her recuperate but didn't like using it so she became increasingly socially isolated.

Mary and her family were worried. "It was hard for me to sort this out. I don't have any siblings anymore to help deal with the situation, and I'd never faced this before," Mary explains.

She turned to her Lifesprk Life Care Manager (LCM). Lifesprk started with small steps. Initially, Marynetta refused their suggestions, but the team remained persistent, adding a little support to help keep her safe. The team also put Marynetta's name on the waiting list for the Woods Memory Care apartments at Oak Meadows so she could move when needed.



Marynetta Hartung (right) with daughter Mary Larsen and son-in-law Bruce



Marynetta working on a craft

Memory care actually ended up being a less expensive option with greater and more appropriate support than paying for the added services in assisted living. Marynetta quickly began to thrive in Memory

Care. She is very independent still and the move created a safe environment where she felt less restricted and could exercise her independence more fully. There were more appropriate activities along with additional supervision and more structure.

The goal, according to Marynetta's Life Care Manager, is always to help Lifesprk clients be as independent as possible. As happened with Marynetta, finding the right setting where she could be most independent was important.

"Our LCM spends a lot of time explaining and talking things over with me. She just understands what the situation is. She listens and gives me feedback. I know she'll call me when I need to be called. It is nice to know that I don't have to worry about my Mom being in the right place – she is in the right place – Oak Meadows Memory Care," stresses Larsen.

What is a Life Care Manager?

Nurses who serve as proactive guides working side-by-side with the client and family to help them not only identify and build the best path toward their goals, but also to be on the lookout to help prevent issues that may derail their efforts. The Life Care Manager role makes it easier for people to access the right resources at the right time to spark lives.

WHEN CHANGE HAPPENS:

The Power of a Family Conference



Change happens. It is often inevitable as we grow older, especially in situations where a loved one has some dementia which can be progressive. For people in the second half of life and their families, it may be the first time they've ever encountered health challenges and all they see is uncertainty and fear of those changes. But it doesn't have to be a frightening road that you walk alone.

With Lifesprk and your Life Care Manager (LCM), a highly experienced registered nurse, involved, even small changes are great opportunities to tap into the power of a family conference.

According to Naomi Fluck, RN, Lifesprk's Director of Life Care at Oak Meadows in Oakdale, a family conference is an informal meeting that involves the client, client's family, the Lifesprk Life Care Manager and, as appropriate, anyone else involved in the client's care. "It helps to get as many decision-makers involved as possible to build alignment – that really streamlines the decision-making. Every family and client situation is different though and so we tailor the meeting and the plan to the individual," she adds.

"As their LCMs, we're their partners – we want them to check with us. We know how challenging these changes and transitions are. We can make the path easier to travel for everyone," Fluck states.

Though these meetings are often called by the Lifesprk team, they can be initiated by anyone. As Fluck stresses,

a major aspect of the Lifesprk Experience™ is proactive guidance that helps clients, and everyone surrounding them, live a sparked life. Family conferences tap into the collective thinking and expertise of everyone surrounding a client to create a plan that helps her achieve what is most important to her - typically the client's independence, which is top on the list of goals.

Make the Most of a Family Conference

Here are some tips shared by Lifesprk's Life Care Managers to help you make the most of a family conference:

- *Be proactive. Ask for a conference – the earlier the better. It allows time for planning versus the need to just react.*
- *Come with an open mind.*
- *Write down and bring your questions. You're more likely to remember to ask the questions that you write down.*
- *Make it an opportunity to learn. Ask questions about your loved one's condition or disease and its progression, to better understand what is happening now and plan for what's ahead.*
- *Bring the decision-makers. Every family is different, so be sure that those who need to be involved in decisions are there – for alignment as well as moving forward as soon as possible. LCMs can be creative in getting everyone together – using video-conferencing such as skype or conference calls.*
- *Bring a notebook. Take notes so you can refer back and keep track of decisions and any action steps you need to take.*
- *Consider scheduling a physician appointment in the days either before or after the meeting. This is especially helpful if there are medication issues.*
- *Plan to re-connect. Identify scheduled times for the team to re-connect about and revise the plan.*

DID YOU KNOW. . . many people who fall, even if they are not injured, develop a fear of falling, and this fear causes them to limit their activities, which leads to reduced mobility and loss of physical fitness, and in turn increases their actual risk of falling.

BOB'S STORY

REAL PEOPLE. REAL RESULTS

Bob Enright had a leaky pipe in his bathroom. To have it repaired, Bob needed to temporarily relocate to a different apartment. Sounds simple. But it can be the little things that derail our independence.

Enright, age 94 has been blind for about 15 years due to macular degeneration. A resident at Brightondale in New Brighton, he is very independent and needs little support. He's learned his way around, mastered the layout of his apartment by heart, and easily makes it to each meal in the dining room. He works closely with his Lifesprk Life Care Manager (LCM), Gladys K., RN.



Bob Enright with his great-grandson Soren

"Our goal at Lifesprk, and why SilverCrest partnered with us at Brightondale is to spark lives, and that means working to keep Bob as independent as possible," explained Gladys.

Bob faced a challenge that threatened his independence, and that made him anxious. To make the transition successful, he needed confidence and support.

Swanson noted that testing the call button system was critical. Bob was worried that the Lifesprk team wouldn't respond to a call from what they thought was an empty apartment – his temporary home. So they tested it. Bob and his daughter were impressed – two Lifesprk aides quickly responded to the room where Bob was going to move. He needed a lifeline – and the reassurance of the Lifesprk team at the other end of the button gave him that.

According to his daughter Cindy, the entire Brightondale campus pitched in. The dining room staff assisted by pointing him in the right direction after every meal and the facilities staff exceeded expectations with the level of support they provided – moving his TV and recliner to be just right.

The move was a big success, and as it turned out, the call button did play an important role. One night, while in the new apartment, Bob got up and accidentally went into the bedroom which was being used as a spare room. He became confused when he encountered a walker that wasn't his. So he hit the call button, and the Lifesprk team responded. They helped orient him, letting him know he was in the spare room and that the walker had been being used by his daughter to help carry laundry.

"My dad had some fear and anxiety about this move – it was a trauma for him. Yet my dad brings the most wonderful attitude every day. Throughout the move the Lifesprk team was very kind – they were always asking if my dad needed help. In particular, Homa has just been a dear. Right now we don't need any other services, but it is nice to know they're there when we need them," added Cindy.



Cindy Swanson, Bob Enright and Gladys K. at the Sarah Brightman concert

BOB'S WISH – A Musical Spark

As Bob Enright's Life Care Manager (LCM), Gladys K., RN, explains that she uses an ongoing process of discovery – called the Lifesprk Experience™ – to help Bob live as sparked a life as possible. "He kept telling me he was doing fine, he was great, and he was," says Gladys. Yet she was persistent in working to help Bob identify and prioritize his goals.

A conversation with Cindy Swanson, Bob's daughter, revealed Bob's love of music, especially his love of Sarah Brightman.

Gladys had an idea: get tickets for Cindy and Bob to attend Sarah's concert when she came to the Twin Cities as a Lifesprk Wish. Bob added a caveat – he wanted Gladys to come too!

"Just watching his face during the concert," said Swanson, "you could see all the excitement. It was very emotional. The concert gave him something to look forward to, and something to think about long afterward."

Bob's spark continues every time he listens to the Sarah Brightman concert CD. Gladys added: "This is what we do at Lifesprk. More importantly, this is WHY I do what I do! To see this spark."

Q&A

WITH AN ELDER LAW ATTORNEY

Q: What is an elder law attorney, and why would I need one?

A: According to Mark Anderson, an attorney with Schmitz & Schmidt, P.A., an elder law attorney is a full practicing lawyer who focuses his work on issues and concerns that affect people as they grow older such as traditional estate planning, disability planning, probate, asset protection, and options for finance long-term care. While elder law attorneys can do everything that other lawyers do, they bring a keen understanding of the laws, regulations, and programs that impact elderly and disabled individuals.

Elder law attorneys most often work with people and their families for two primary reasons:

1. To plan ahead for any type of disability: Anderson explains that if someone becomes incapacitated in any way, the disability planning ensures that critical functions such as the ability to cash checks and pay bills can continue through a Power of Attorney and other documents. Too often, people are caught unaware in these situations, and while they deal with the health crisis, they then also face major roadblocks in their daily life.
2. To help people pay for long-term care: By working with an elder law attorney, people can begin to identify their health goals, and review available options and how to pay for care and services. Through a plan, they gain understanding of legal ramifications of different options and how each may impact the client as well as others in the family. Anderson frequently works with other professionals such as financial advisors and care providers such as Lifesprk to help people develop their individualized plan.

Q: So when should you turn to an elder law attorney?

A: Sooner rather than later is the easy answer. When people wait until a crisis occurs, they may not have as many options. "The earlier you start, the more options you have, but surprisingly, even in a crisis there are still steps you can take," Anderson adds. He notes that many of the people he encounters have not worked with a lawyer previously, and are surprised when they find out how cost-effective the planning can be.

Schmitz & Schmidt, P.A., offers free 30-minute initial consultations and is located at 400 Robert Street North, Suite 1840 in St. Paul. You can reach them at 651-291-2405, or at www.elderlaw123.com.

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Lifesprk Named First ALPA PILOT SITE IN COUNTRY

For three years, Jan Hively and her colleague Mary Radu have been working diligently on a curriculum to help more seniors gain the skills needed to age positively. And now they are bringing that curriculum to Minnesota. The Life Planning Network has named Lifesprk as their first pilot site in the country for their Advocacy Leadership for Positive Aging (ALPA) program.

According to Hively, Lifesprk was a natural choice. "Lifesprk believes passionately in sparking lives and that is completely in synch with our philosophy of positive aging. The world is changing, adding years to our lives," she explains. Hively is 81 years old herself with an extensive background in education. "Everyone needs to learn advocacy for themselves and how to be proactive in our life planning, especially with the average extra 20 years we are now living."

For more details about the ALPA Pilot and its goals, please visit the Lifesprk web site to read the blog: <http://www.lifesprk.com/change-on/elder-advocacy-lifesprk-named-first-alpa-pilot-site-in-minnesota>



Lifesprk Names JOHN FRASER Chief Technology Officer

John Fraser of Chaska, Minnesota has joined Lifesprk as the new Chief Technology Officer. In this newly launched role, Fraser will build and implement the technology vision and work plan to achieve Lifesprk's strategic business goals for growth and client service.

Technology is integral to the experience we create not only for our clients and families but also our staff and partners. With his broad range of capabilities, John will help create our long-term technology plan as well as enable us to develop new technologies and leverage existing ones to complement our work.

Most recently, Fraser was Vice President of Technology & Operations Services for US Bancorp in Minneapolis. Considered a leading authority on client user experience, customer data protection, and electronic consumer consent, he has spoken at conferences and meetings across the country on consumer trends, legal implications, and the balance of innovation and transaction integrity.

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Keep your life on track so you can focus on what's most important to you.

Lifesprk is changing the experience for people in the second half of life. What does that mean for you? It means a better experience, with more opportunities to shine the way you want. We'll help you discover your priorities and help you achieve your goals. More than shining, you'll GLOW.

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