

"When you get to a support group you find out you're not isolated. Many others are wearing those shoes. And that's crucial."

Lynn

Illinois Family Caregiver

*\*Caring for her mother and husband*

"When the respite program started, that took such a great load off me because... I have to take care of the house and take care of my wife."

Dale

Illinois Family Caregiver

*\*Caring for his 85-year-old wife who has dementia*



**Vote YES on HB 2551 & SB 2545**



“The primary benefit of a support group is when you hear your story coming out of somebody else’s mouth...”

George  
Illinois Family Caregiver  
*\*Caring for his mother in suburban Cook County*



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The unexpected change required Gail to “be creative with my finances.” She got herself on Medicaid and was connected to a support group which is “very friendly, very safe and comforting. Not only am I not alone, but there are a lot of commonalities that are very helpful to hear.”

Gail

Illinois Family Caregiver

***\*Caring for her 76-year-old mother with dementia***

Mona is grateful to the leader of the “Faithful Caregiving” class who she says, “changed my life, within the first 15 minutes I started talking and I cried, and I cried – I was able to get so much out.”

Mona

Illinois Family Caregiver

***\*Caring for her 97-year-old mother with dementia***

“The things I learned from the senior services social worker were very helpful to me to calm down situations.”

Sarah

Illinois Family Caregiver

*\*Caring for her husband in Suburban Cook County*



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“The resources that they supply... it’s made taking care of my mom easier. It’s like they are equipping us with the tools that you never knew you needed.”

Michele

Illinois Family Caregiver

***\*Caring for her 78-year-old Mother with Dementia***



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Cathy said it was especially difficult, “to make every decision for someone else.. I haven’t had a day off in almost 11 years.. I can’t tell you how wonderful it was to know that they [respite care] would be flexible for me...It was very relieving to me..”

Cathy

Illinois Family Caregiver

***\*Caring for her 100-year-old Mother***



"Caregiving is not easy...I work as hard now as I did when I was holding down a couple of jobs." Joan feels that there should be more respite care funding because "people [caregivers] need help out there. It is a labor of love, but it is labor."

*Joan and Husband*

*Illinois Caregivers*

***\*Caring for her 98-year-old Mother  
& 35-year-old granddaughter***

Diane says the services provide an opportunity to “know other people in my situation.....talk with others about how they handle similar situations.”

Diane  
Illinois Family Caregiver  
***\*Caring for her 78-year-old husband with  
Alzheimer's disease.***

Jim is worried that “we are getting to a dangerous part” where his wife will need more care. “She’s my sweetheart. I can’t see putting her in a nursing home... maybe I can’t handle it but I’m going to try my darn best!”

Jim

Illinois Family Caregiver

***\*Caring for his 77-year-old wife with dementia***

Jane explained that after getting respite, “I don’t feel so stressed.. like having to do everything. I feel like he is in safe hands when I leave...It just kind of took a load off of me and money-wise too.”

Jane

Illinois Family Caregiver

***\*Caring for her 85-year-old husband who had a stroke***

“The person who is ill doesn't necessarily need to be in a full-time place.. but the person who is taking care of them does need resources and assistance.”

Pam

Illinois Family Caregiver

*\*Caring for her husband with Parkinson's disease*

They did an assessment “to see if you are under stress and help find resources. Having an independent social worker do an assessment for stress helped make it real. Connecting with them grounded everything because without that I was just floating on my own. I’m not on my own anymore.”

Scott

Illinois Family Caregiver

***\*Caring for his sister in DuPage County***



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Beth was assessed through TCARE, which she described as “a really great experience. They explained everything to us.” She was connected to services including counseling, meals and in-home help.

Beth

Illinois Family Caregiver

*\*Caring for her husband in the suburbs of Chicago*

“There are people out there that abuse the system but it's people like me, my mom and dad, my siblings, my husband, we've paid money into all these systems and it's *so hard*. And it shouldn't be!”

Stephanie

Illinois Family Caregiver

***\*Caring for her son who has a developmental disability***



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“Who’s going to take care of the caretaker when the caretaker can’t take care anymore?” Opal believes people should know caregivers “handle a lot more than what they see on the outside.”

Opal  
Illinois Family Caregiver  
***\*Caring for her father who has Parkinson’s,  
dementia and other chronic conditions***

Because he connected with resources, Theon says “The glass is half full for me...the stars aligned - people have been there, the resources have appeared ...it hasn't been as horrible as it probably could have been and that's because... the resources I came across.”

Theon

Illinois Family Caregiver

***\*Caring for his sister who has early onset dementia***

“Caregivers need to have greater recognition of the toll it takes on them and everything in their world, their income, their mental health, their physical health, their independence.” She noted caregiving “affects every part of you.”

Deb

Illinois Family Caregiver

***\*Caring for her mother who has Alzheimer’s disease***

"It isn't until you go through something like this that you understand... exactly what it takes to care of elderly person... Society needs to understand that this is real. The services need to improve."

Russell

Illinois Family Caregiver

***\*Along with his husband, is caring for his mother who has Dementia***



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Elizabeth says respite care “really *relieves* me a lot... She is there for 4 ½ hours, which is long enough that I can really sit here and relax.” Elizabeth was grateful the VA supplied them with a hospital bed when her husband was bedridden for three months, because otherwise she wouldn’t have been able to take care of him.

Elizabeth  
Illinois Family Caregiver  
***\*Caring for her 82 year-old husband***

“Caregivers are very important.....maybe they are not...working in a factory and producing but they are still just as important because they are out there providing care for another human, another life and they are doing it out the goodness of heart...”

**Patricia**

**Illinois Family Caregiver**

*\*Caring for her 66 year-old mother who is a double amputee, uses oxygen and a defibrillator*

“The caregiver is an important part of this process [of care]— they, we, need to be healthy as well.” She feels that policy makers and government officials need to “figure out a better way of marketing and promoting support for caregivers.”

**Donna**

**Illinois Family Caregiver**

***\*Caring for her 85 year-old mother***

"Caregiving is hard work... I am humble. I don't like to complain. There is always somebody in a worse situation, so I am grateful for what I have."

Mario feels caregivers could benefit from more staff to check on them "to make sure the caregiver and person they are caring for are ok."

**Mario**

**Illinois Family Caregiver**

***\*Caring for his father who has Parkinson's disease***



“Family caregivers need the funds to be able to afford respite care to give us at least a couple of days of rest... Caregivers can burn out pretty quickly.”

**Lois**

**Illinois Family Caregiver**

*\*Caring for her 82 year-old husband who has dementia*

Deb says policymakers can help caregivers by “passing laws that sensitize employers to the holistic needs of family members caring for elders (such as family leave).”

Deb

Illinois Family Caregiver

***\*Caring for her mother who has Alzheimer's disease***

Deb says policymakers can help caregivers by “Acknowledging the pull caregiving has on every aspect of a person’s life and the societal impact it has (physical/mental health setbacks, sub-par work performance) *and* supporting programs that lessen these impacts.”

Deb

Illinois Family Caregiver

***\*Caring for her mother who has Alzheimer’s disease***

Deb says policymakers can help caregivers by “Providing easily accessible resources for caregivers *and* supporting the financing of marketing outreach to make caregivers aware of the availability of the resources.”

Deb

Illinois Family Caregiver

***\*Caring for her mother who has Alzheimer's disease***

Deb says policymakers can help caregivers by “Providing more funding for government agencies and/or non-profits for programs that help caregivers and send help directly to the elderly.”

Deb

Illinois Family Caregiver

***\*Caring for her mother who has Alzheimer's disease***



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Deb says policymakers can help caregivers by “*Acknowledging* the differences of and needs of both unpaid caregivers *and* paid caregivers and supporting the needs of each.”

Deb

Illinois Family Caregiver

***\*Caring for her mother who has Alzheimer’s disease***