

A Photographer's Story



"Central Park, Spring" photo by Mr. R

When Caitlin McAfee (LMSW) decided to make a personal home visit to see Mr. R, now 81, it was clear that he needed more care than he'd been reporting. She saw mounds of bills, a cluttered apartment, and he appeared sad, disheveled, and anxious. They spoke and decided to work together on a plan. As he and Caitlin worked step-by-step, Mr. R started to make inroads. Caitlin invited Vicky—a Financial Navigator in our Money Matters program—to help with bill-payment, document organization, and debt-reduction.

As he opened up, Mr. R called Caitlin several times per week, and continued to voice his stresses. She listened and provided supportive counseling to him and, as he achieved each goal, his sadness and anxiety eased.

A great addition to Mr. R's support team is our volunteer who visits him in his home. Mr. R has been a photographer and printmaker for most of his life, and yearned to talk photography with someone. Now, he has engaging conversations with his friendly visitor, Jane, who also shares a love of the art-form.

Caitlin and Vicky see a difference: Mr. R's apartment is organized, he's up-to-date

with bills, out of debt, and is able to voice his wants and needs. Not long ago, Mr. R told Caitlin that he has a group of friends who pick him up for occasional lunches in Brooklyn. "For the first time," Mr. R said proudly and with a big smile, "I could pay my own tab." Working with Search and Care, Mr. R was able to retain his independence, and reports feeling more secure, in a better mood, and enjoying a renewed quality of life.

Applause for Taffy



Ms. L, 73 years old, lost her beloved dog four years ago and found it difficult to live without a pet. A while back, a neighbor introduced Taffy to her—a dog whose owner died. Ms. L was immediately smitten! Months later, our friendly visitor reported that Ms. L seemed sullen and no longer talkative. Elizabeth Parlakian (LMSW) decided to pay Ms. L a visit. That's when she noticed Ms. L looked unkempt and had lost interest in her daily routine. Ms. L said what bothered her most was her difficulty caring for Taffy, who had matted fur. "Taffy is my family," she said looking at the ground. "It breaks my heart

that I can't afford to take better care of her." Ms. L's income was limited, and expenses high. Working with Elizabeth, Ms. L was able to reduce her expenses and, together with a modest foundation stipend, is better able to care for Taffy.

Yet, that wasn't the only challenge. Taffy was a fearful pooch, and afraid of the steps in Ms. L's apartment—making it impossible for Ms. L to bring Taffy to a vet or groomer. The ASPCA, a sponsor of our "Pets and Elders Together" program, coordinated a visit—resulting in a free vet check-up and behavioral support.

Reduced expenses, increased disposable income, care of a cherished pet, and supportive counseling—it's what our team did to help Ms. L care for and keep her new pet. Today, she is overjoyed that she can provide for Taffy. "Just look at her," Ms. L said, her face glowing, "she's so happy. And so am I."

Rapping About Health

Our "Medical Rap" group—facilitated by Care Manager, Esther Henderson, and RN, Joan Dietrich—brings clients together to talk about health issues, and much more. "It's a chance for them to share stories," Esther said. One participant, Ms. S, spoke passionately about caring for her mother before she passed. "I had power of attorney, and knew I had to be a strong advocate for her in the hospital." Group members were engrossed as Ms. S spoke. "We have to

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2014, Search and Care served 816 vulnerable older people — at an agency cost of just \$1,258 per client for the year. Care that's always free-of-charge with no waiting lists.



Joan Dietrich, RN & Esther Henderson, CM

be advocates for ourselves, too, and not afraid to let people know what we need."

"We get to know each other," Mr. G said, "and talk about medications, movies, where to get good affordable meals. I look forward to talking with my new friends."

Esther elaborated, "It's about relationships. Like Ms. E. She's 96 and, her first time in the group, she opened up a lot." Not a week later, Esther saw Ms. E sitting on the sidewalk, shaking, having just fallen. Esther said, "Ms. E, let me help you." Ms. E looked at her. "You're from that group," she said. "Will you wait with me for the ambulance?" Ms. E asked—more at ease, comforted, and no longer shaking. Now, Ms. E is doing well and is back to her regular activities.

Care Management: Our compassionate, comprehensive, fee-free care management—provided by five Master’s level, NYS Certified Social Workers help secure benefits/entitlements, provide mental health support (e.g. counseling), advocate in housing issues (e.g. with landlords regarding rent arrears), arrange for homecare, assist with legal matters (e.g. accompanying clients to court), facilitate transportation, and help with needs as they arise.

Money Matters and Budget Assistance Program: Currently, 50 clients receive financial assistance with bill-paying, budgeting, debt control/reduction, and avoiding risk/exploitation. Offered in clients’ homes, these services are overseen by our Care Managers, Controller, Financial Care Specialist, and three Field Financial Navigators.

Mental Health Supports: Two agency LMSWs and two clinical Columbia University graduate interns help with supportive counseling, professional referrals, crisis intervention, and host a caregiver group. They assist with such needs as bereavement/loss, depression/anxiety, hoarding/cluttering, and substance abuse.

Nursing Assistance Program: Search and Care’s RN and RN interns from Helene Fuld College of Nursing assist 25 clients with telephonic and in-home health education, follow-up/discharge care, medication safety, health and wellness tips, and emotional support.

Telephonic Monitoring: Two part-time “Telephonic Monitors” (one of whom is bilingual) work closely with our Care Managers to provide regular, in-depth check-ins with older people who may not yet receive agency services (or have in the past). Providing a caring voice, they gently guide seniors to welcome our assistance.

Homecare Worker: A part-time Homecare Worker helps vulnerable older clients with activities of daily living, escorting to/from medical appointments or home from hospitals/rehab stays, laundering clothes, performing urgent errands, safeguarding cluttered apartments, and helping with proper nutrition and healthy habits.

Occupational Therapy: Two Columbia University OT interns visit clients in their homes to ensure home safety, prevent falls, organize ADLs/IADLs, and engage clients in nutritional groups, including “Meal in a Mug.”

Volunteerism: Two agency Volunteer Coordinators (one of whom is bilingual) conduct outreach to cultivate, train, and retain intergenerational/multicultural neighborhood volunteers. These 165 volunteers provide companionship, socialization, grocery shopping/prescription pickups, chaperoned strolls, technology tutorials, etc. Carefully vetted travel companions also accompany clients to/from vital medical appointments.

Pet Upkeep and Visiting: Pet care volunteers (currently 20) help 85 clients maintain their beloved pets, and deliver a signature “Holiday Pet Stocking” filled with goodies that clients could never afford. Bradford Swett Foundation, ASPCA and Banfield Charitable Trust collaborations help with volunteer cultivation and emergency veterinary care.

iChoose: Our East Harlem mentoring program, *iChoose*, continues to connect 46 inner-city teens from HS155 (Madison Ave/East 106th St.) with dynamic older adults for lunchtime discussions. Our clients report feeling valued again in their community, while impressionable teens relish their sage wisdom and life experiences.

Emergency Safety Closet: Our closet of essential items helps at-risk clients transition safely from a hospital or rehab facility back home. Supplies include Depends, Ensure, shower safety treads, raised toilet seats, no-slip socks, etc.

Community Outreach/Sentinel Team Development: Search and Care’s 120 Sentinels are the “eyes and ears” in our neighborhoods, banding together to help make their communities more age-friendly.

SEARCH AND CARE HAS SERVED 10,000+ VULNERABLE OLDER MEN AND WOMEN SINCE OUR FOUNDING IN 1972. OUR UNDUPLICATED, COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES HELP CLIENTS MAINTAIN THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE AND CHERISHED INDEPENDENCE FOR AS LONG AS IS SAFELY FEASIBLE. ALMOST 90% OF OUR SUPPORT IS GENERATED FROM PRIVATE DONATIONS, WHICH ALLOWS US TO MAINTAIN OUR PERSON-CENTERED, FEE-FREE CARE MANAGEMENT.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.