



VHA Voice

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Meet George—A 100-Years-Young VHA Client!

What better way to celebrate VHA Home HealthCare's 90th anniversary year, than to meet someone who actually predates our organization by 10 years? That's exactly what we did when we met up with our client George who was born on May 5, 1915, making him a remarkable 100 years old! George has been a VHA client for many years and his Personal Support Worker, 35-year VHA veteran Elizabeth Gordon, recommended that we interview him.



George on his front porch.



George with his late wife and three of their five children.

While his memory is a bit foggy these days—"How can I remember 100 years ago?" he rightfully asks—George tells us he came from the northern Greek area of Banitsa in 1949 with his five children. "Thank God I brought everyone here (Canada)," he says. "Those were bad days in Greece," his son Danny notes, explaining that the area was extremely poor and ravaged by civil war. Adding to the hardship was the fact that he was a widower—his wife died before moving to Canada when the children were mostly too young to remember her.

Fortunately, the children's grandparents were able to step in and care for the children while George worked as a baker at the Parkdale Bakery and then later at Diana Sweets. "I was very good as a baker," George says with pride.

Later on George owned the Six Points restaurant in the Bloor and Islington area of Toronto which he ran for about 20 years.

Though George has slowed down in recent years (he no longer gardens) for 100, he is still relatively spry, moving from chair to bed to the porch with relative ease. In fact, he seems a bit restless. This might be because he has spent most of his life walking. "He used to do so much walking," says his son Danny. "He planned on getting a car someday, but never bought one." Danny muses that this may be one of the keys to his long life. That and the fact that he "stayed single," and "ate lots of *bope*," a tomato-based stew made with lima beans.

Now George spends his days playing cards and visiting with his five children, ranging in age from 72 to 82, who make weekly trips to see him. "He says he likes me more than anybody else," laughs Danny. "And when my brother is here, he tells him the same thing. He's one of a kind."



Creating More Independence
www.vha.ca

Available in alternate formats
on request.

Loved our newsletter?

Thought we missed something?

Want to be profiled or contribute?

We're interested in hearing your ideas, stories and suggestions!

Email communications@vha.ca or call

416-489-2500 ext. 4344 toll free: 1-888-314-6622 ext. 4344.

We're All Ears!!



Did you know?

Most cancers are caused by lifestyle factors—not genes. A half hour of physical activity daily such as walking can reduce the risk of women getting breast cancer by 30 to 40 per cent. Exercise also plays a significant role in reducing the risk of colon cancer by 20 per cent. So what are you waiting for? **Get moving today!**



VHA Selected as Part of New Palliative Care Initiative

VHA is one of three organizations selected by the Central East CCAC to deliver a new combined palliative care model in Durham and Scarborough.

The goal is to increase communication and collaboration among health care providers to benefit clients and families and improve palliative clients' overall quality of life. The interdisciplinary teams will enhance the quality of care palliative clients receive, emphasizing effective symptom and pain management.

We are excited and proud to be part of this new venture!



Caring for a Loved One with Alzheimer's Disease or Dementia

September is World Alzheimer Awareness Month. Alzheimer's and Dementia are both diseases that involve memory loss and changes in behaviour and abilities that worsen over time. Caring for a parent or loved one with either

disease can be a challenge and seem overwhelming.

Here are some tips to help you on this challenging journey:

Plan ahead. Consider where your loved one is going to live and how they'll be cared for as the disease evolves. Although disease progression is different for everyone, learning about the stages and what you can expect can help inform future decision-making. For example, will you rely on long-term care or home care? Although it can be difficult to discuss what's going to happen as the disease progresses, it's important to know what your loved one wants and will need down the road.

Explore different care options. Connecting with different agencies within the community can help you navigate care and programming. Examples of available programs are **Help at Home** or **Adult Day Programs**, etc.

Seek out caregiver relief to avoid burnout. Did you know VHA offers a volunteer-supported caregiver relief program?

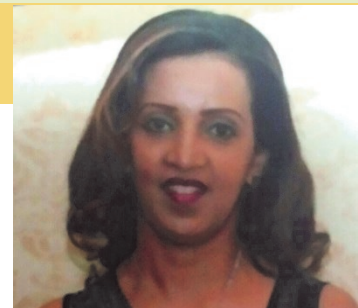
Stay consistent and provide structure. Develop and stick to a daily routine, especially if there are multiple caregivers. This can give a sense of security to the person being cared for.

Join a caregiver support group. It often helps to connect with others experiencing the same challenges. Joining a support group for those caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's and sharing experiences with them can be very reassuring and useful.

Spectacular PSW, Spectacular Client Care

"My husband Edwin is 85 years old and has Parkinson's. Salma came to us about three months ago and it didn't take us long to realize her capabilities—we couldn't be more delighted with her support. My husband has been in high spirits since she's been here. Salma is always cheerful, and caring comes to her naturally... it puts Edwin at ease. We are so thankful for her."

— June, wife of VHA client



Salma Mohamed



Share your voice! VHA is always looking to improve. Join the conversation as a Client and Family Partner and **share your ideas to make our services spectacular!**

Visit www.vha.ca or call Roseanna Wirt at 416-489-2500 ext. 4327, toll free at 1-888-314-6622 ext. 4327 for more information.