

"Who Will Care for Mom?"

"Our clients and our caregivers are neighbors."

Seasons of Care is one of the only locally owned home health care providers dedicated to assisting families of the Southwest Suburbs. The Medicare-certified company was founded 12 years ago by Strongsville resident Tricia Schaum.

by Mimi Vanderhaven

When life requires that the child become the parent, this switching of roles can be stressful for everyone involved. Aging parents often find it difficult to recognize or admit that they need help, and their adult children struggle with guilt and frustration as they wonder whether they are doing the right thing.

Tricia Schaum struggled with these same emotions as she worked to care for her own mother, who had been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. But finding qualified, affordable home health care for her mother was so exasperating that in 2003 she abandoned an executive position with a national communications firm to launch her own local home health care company, *Seasons of Care*.

A dozen years later, her company is one of the few locally owned home health care agencies in the region—and one of the most respected.

"Most of our elderly loved ones feel safe and secure in their own homes and that's the best place to be," Tricia says. "And while you may *feel* that it is your personal responsibility, you are not alone. There are many resources available to help you care for a loved one—and keep them at home."

Securing home health care is typically a better alternative to moving in with your parent or guiding them into assisted living or a nursing home.

These are most common reasons a loved one may need in-home assistance:

- lives alone and can no longer handle daily tasks safely;

- had surgery or an accident and needs 12-24 hours care while they recuperate;
- won't accept your help—but needs it. (No one likes to admit they need help bathing or using the bathroom.)

Determining Your Level of Care

According to Tricia, there are several levels of in-home care—from cooking, cleaning, and running errands to bathing, dressing, toileting, and transportation, all the way up to skilled nursing services.

Although many companies now charge a fee to assess your specific needs, Seasons of Care offers that service at no charge.

"We come to your home and conduct a free in-home assessment," Tricia assures. "We learn about *your* situation and *your* needs so we can suggest options that will allow you or your loved one to remain safe and well at home. Sometimes, just a little assistance is all that is needed to help people live independently."

Most important, Tricia answers your specific questions one-on-one so you can make the best decision for your loved one.

Is It Time?

How do you know when it's time to secure quality home care help for your loved one? Here are several questions to help you determine the answer:

Personal Hygiene: Do they bathe on a regular basis? Do they put on clean clothes regularly? Do they maintain their personal appearance like they did a few years ago?

Meals: Can they buy groceries, keep fresh and healthy foods on hand, and cook on a regular basis?



Tricia Schaum

Home Environment:

Do they keep their home clean, free from clutter and hazards?

Mobility: Can they walk indoors and outdoors safely without help, including navigating steps and getting in and out of bed, bathtubs, showers, and chairs?

Memory: Can they remember names? Do they remember to take medications, turn off the stove, lock doors, use the microwave correctly?

Medical: Can they take their medications correctly without supervision?

Interactions: Do they see or talk to friends on a regular basis? Do they participate in social events?

Dedicated to Local Care

Unlike franchises and national home care companies, Seasons of Care is located right here on Sprague Road and is dedicated to families of the Southwest Suburbs. Their staff spends less time on the road and more time in your home.

"Our clients and our caregivers are neighbors," she says. "Our caregivers are carefully screened prior to employment and must satisfactorily complete our rigid orientation process, including having their caregiving skills tested by a Registered Nurse. We also do ongoing 360-degree feedback evaluations."

Most home care companies provide either skilled services *or* they care for clients who pay privately for home health aide assistance.

Seasons of Care is one of the few companies that provides both. Plus, they are Medicare Certified, which means their care must meet the highest levels of quality.

"Our only focus is the care and service we provide for our clients each day," Tricia says. "We work every day to meet your needs—not ours. And we appreciate the confidence our clients have given us for the past 12 years."

Seasons of Care is located at 16500 West Sprague Rd. For more information or to schedule a Free In-Home Assessment with Tricia, call 440-274-4000. The website is Seasonsofcare.com.

Avoid Hidden Fees

Seasons of Care helps home health care clients save money and avoid frustration by not charging the extra fees often tacked on by other home health care companies:

- No charge for an In-Home Assessment
- No "care management fee"
- No mandatory minimum number of hours per month or week
- No deposit against the first month of services
- No higher hourly rate for home health aides vs. home companions
- No additional charge for weekends and evenings