



Double duty

Winter visitors find help coordinating home caregiving

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DAILY NEWS-SUN

Mary Rosenfelder didn't know what was wrong as she struggled to walk off the golf course following a round near her home in Geneva, Ill.

She soon learned the answer. It would change her life forever.

"I was a bowler and golfer," said Rosenfelder, a Sun City West winter resident. "I had always been very active. But that day on the golf course, my legs didn't want to work."

Rosenfelder visited her doctor, who referred her to a

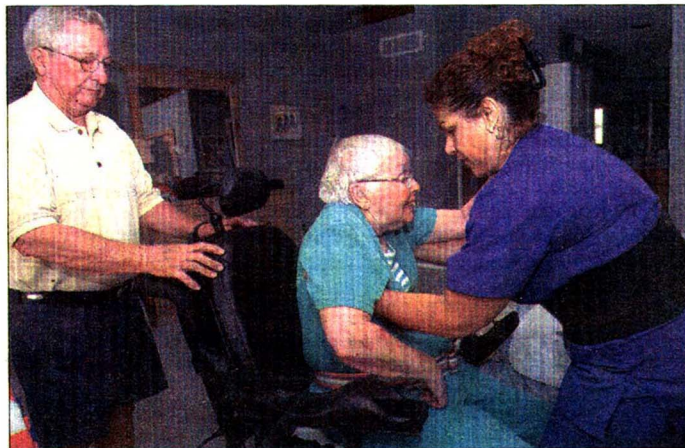
neurologist.

That started a chain of events that eventually led to a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis, the auto-immune disease which has now left her bound to a wheelchair.

The diagnosis occurred 15 years ago when she was 59 years old.

While Rosenfelder can no longer bowl or golf, she and her husband, Bill, decided they wanted to keep a lifestyle as close as possible to the one they maintained prior to her diagnosis.

That meant maintaining two homes — one in Illinois and another in Sun City



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Bill Rosenfelder, left, and caregiver, Maria Kuku help Bill's wife, Mary, from her chair onto the bed. The Rosenfelders are winter visitors from Chicago and they employ a caregiver for Mary in both their homes.

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acre of land and we used to grow sweet corn."

The Rosenfelders purchased a specially equipped van, which allows Mary access to her wheelchair during their travels. Last month, they took four days to make the trip from Illinois to Sun City West.

The other challenge for the Rosenfelders occurred in selecting a caregiver for each of their homes.

That led them to Candice Brainard and Steve Evans, BrightStar owners in the Northwest Valley. BrightStar is a nationwide firm that specializes in pediatric, newborn and elderly home care.

Brainard and Evans coordinated communication between the company's Illinois offices and the Northwest Valley operation.

"The idea is to make the transition as seamless as possible from one place to the other," Brainard said. "We even set up conference calls between the two caregivers so they could share information."

Like a good student, Brainard said persons should do their homework before selecting what type of caregiver suits their needs.

West.

"Mary can't handle the hot weather and I can't stand the winter," said Bill Rosenfelder, a retired fire chief and former

hardware store owner.

"We also love our home back in Illinois. We have an

That includes working with a budget and finding what type of care fits your needs, from live-in help to assisted-living facilities.

One bit of information gleaned from a conference call revealed that Mary Rosenfelder is an avid reader. Unfortunately, the disease makes it difficult for her to do it by herself.

When she arrived in Sun City West, Rosenfelder's caregiver, Maria Kuku, was prepared for her reading assignments.

"I like romance novels," Rosenfelder said.

Bill Rosenfelder said his confidence in his BrightStar caregiver gives him a chance to pursue some of his interests. The Rosenfelders pay approximately \$20 an hour for their caregiver service.

"I couldn't be happier," said Bill Rosenfelder, who volunteers at Banner Del E. Webb Hospital. "I can take a break and do some things I want to do.

"And I know my wife is safe."