



A Balanced Approach

TO HEALTHY, INDEPENDENT AGING

By **Lisa Floyd-Brown** Photos by **Vincent Gorman** & courtesy of **Home Care Assistance**

Scott Michaels' parents were devoted to each other. His father was a minister and for decades, they dedicated their lives to caring for others. As they reached older adulthood, though, Scott's father became ill and suffered from a debilitating tumor that left him reliant on Scott's mother, Mary. Naturally, Mary became her husband's caregiver and her life soon revolved around helping her husband with everyday activities.

"It was worrisome to see the toll that caring for my father took on my mother. Seeing the physical and emotional stress she endured over the years from being the primary caregiver made me think that there must be a better solution that would protect her health and his," says Scott.

With today's population living longer than ever, most people will find themselves in similar situations where parents or loved ones will need additional assistance to maintain their independence and continue

living at home — just like Scott's parents. Although Scott has lost both of his parents, he believes his decision to open Home Care Assistance will enable him to increase awareness around aging, health and wellness and quality of life in older adults. Home Care Assistance is a non-medical, in-home care company, and its mission is to change the way the world ages.

Since its inception in 2002, Home Care Assistance has taken a multifaceted approach to its mission: 1) it provides



LEFT Scott Michaels with Stevie Hatala, Client Care Manager **ABOVE** Scott Michaels, owner

highly qualified, thoroughly screened caregivers, who continually further their education in senior care and related topics through the company's proprietary online university; 2) it maintains a team of researchers who keep abreast of the latest studies on aging and wellness and incorporate their findings in specialized programs such as Home Care Assistance's Cognitive Therapeutics Method and the Balanced Care Method™ and 3) it actively educates the community through their Healthy Longevity Webinar Series and through their award-winning senior wellness book series.

The Balanced Care Method™ is based on studies of the extraordinarily long-lived elders in the Okinawa region of Japan. Life spans of over 100 years are not unusual in Okinawa. More important, people in their 70s, 80s and beyond enjoy incredible good

health and independence. Excellent physical health, mental awareness, and inner calm are common among the studied elders. These lifestyle choices have been synthesized into the Balanced Care Method, which Home Care Assistance trains its caregivers in to use with their clients to promote optimal health and wellbeing.

Complementary to the Balanced Care Method, the Cognitive Therapeutics Method rests on contemporary research that indicates a relationship between mental stimulation and slower cognitive decline. Home Care Assistance's caregivers take elderly clients through exercises of the mind's five most vital areas — memory, executive functioning (i.e., skills such as reasoning, problem solving, judgment and mental flexibility), attention, language, and visual-spatial perception — to help them maintain their mental capabilities as they age.

Scott's staff of caregivers is more than a group of in-home care professionals; they are compassionate, conscientious, loyal individuals, who are guided by a desire to help older adults and their families. "Their reward is the service they're providing," Scott says, candidly.

Home Care Assistance is located at 33790 Bainbridge Road in Solon. Visit HomeCareAssistanceCleveland.com for more information about the resources offered to clients, their families and the community. Email Scott or call him with any questions or to schedule a complimentary in-home consultation. ■

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