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Ministry of Health

Happy at home with Better at Home: Peggy's story

VICTORIA – From gradually losing sight in both eyes, to developing drastically life-altering vertigo that challenged her very mobility, to dealing with complications from both lupus and Crohn's disease, Kamloops citizen Peggy Szilagyi doesn't let these challenges stop her.

With help from Oncore Central Services, the organization that provides Better at Home programming in Kamloops, 66-year-old Peggy is given the gift that means so much to her: independence. "When I first started losing my sight, and then had such a hard time with the vertigo, they recommended I look into assisted living. I couldn't do it. I wanted, needed, to stay in my home."

It wasn't easy. "The doctors told me I couldn't live at home if I could barely stand. They told me I'll fall down. I said sure, I'll fall down- and then I'll get back up," Peggy recounts with a laugh.

Peggy has proud Gaelic roots and is a strong and independent woman. She is used to working through the tough times, experience hard-won as a nurse for approximately 25 years. "I laugh and say I'm better at being a nurse than I am at being a patient. I'm used to helping – not being helped. But I knew this time I needed support from the community that I supported." Once her husband was moved to assisted living, Peggy knew she still wanted to stay at home as long as she was able.

"From when I was a nurse, I remember seeing those who were very close to needing assisted living, and we saw them a lot, unfortunately. They were repeat customers. Others, who had community help or more family support, who stayed at home and weren't headed down that road, we saw much less of them. That stayed with me, and I always remembered we do better at home."

Peggy is able to stay active in her home in part by services provided by Better at Home, including yard work to maintain the lush, beautiful lawn and yard that Peggy enjoys, to light housework and grocery shopping services. "I can't get out at all, so the housework, yard work and grocery shopping is a life-saver," Peggy says. "I can't say how thankful I am. I would be lost without them."

Peggy, a long-time advocate for increased services for seniors, a volunteer at the SPCA and other organizations, finishes with this: "We are happiest at home. Give us a little bit of help, and the cost-savings, emotional and health benefits in the long-run are huge."

Learn More:

Better at Home is funded by the Province and managed by United Way of the Lower Mainland. For more information: <http://www.betterathome.ca/>

Oncore Central Services: <http://www.ocservices.ca/>

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