

End of life care at home

A BURNIE woman is encouraging the state's palliative carers to not be afraid to seek help, after being blessed by a massive amount of support while she and her husband faced the most challenging years of their lives.

Teresita Lipsius didn't think twice about taking on the role of carer for her husband John 10 years ago, following a massive stroke that left his left side paralysed.

John's condition was stable for the first three to four years, and he was still able to go about most day-to-day activities. However, when his health began to deteriorate, the situation soon became "very intense".

"It was very tough. I didn't want my husband to be out in a home, I wanted to take care of him, but it was hard," Teresita said. The situation worsened again in 2019 when John was diagnosed with terminal prostate cancer.

"It was a challenging time. I stopped doing anything, I disconnected from everyone, I stopped working," Teresita said.

She said things became overwhelming and she



Teresita Lipsius Picture: Supplied

didn't know what to do or where she could go for help.

However, she was thankful that several organisations soon got in touch to help guide her through the process of seeking assistance,

including introducing her to the Carer Gateway and Care2Serve.

Care2Serve is Tasmania's Carer Gateway service provider, with staff able to point carers in the right direction

for seeking assistance with accessing things like respite care, counselling, short courses and advice.

She "felt blessed" to have received a massive amount of support during the chal-

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Care2Serve CEO David Brennan

lenging period, from short-term respite to in-home care.

Though the rest of John's care then fell to Teresita, with the knowledge she was being supported, she said she didn't mind as long as he was still with her. John passed away next to his wife at home in November 2020, aged 99.

Teresita wanted people in her situation to know that they're not alone and urged carers to not hesitate in reaching out to the Carer Gateway for support.

"If you're not going to ask, how will they know that you need help? In my own experience, things were really tough and difficult for me. But if you know why you're doing it and you're focussed, I think that helps," she said.

Care2Serve CEO David Brennan said he was well-

versed in the challenges that came with taking on a carer role.

"It is a huge shock to get the news someone you love is dying and suddenly you find yourself wearing the carer's hat too. I know this first hand [from] when my mum was diagnosed with cancer," he said.

"Accessing support as early as possible in the journey helps to navigate the maze of health and financial supports, and to build resilience and maintain wellbeing.

"The Carer Gateway is the best starting point. There you can access information and advice, counselling, connection with other carers and much-needed respite and in-home support." Find help at carergateway.gov.au or call 1800 422 737 (Press one)

When your heart is full of grief there's not a lot of room in your head for the demands of being a carer.



We're here to support you.

When caring for someone there is much to think about and do. A carer often looks after everything for a loved one such as personal care, medications, finances and appointments, as well as dealing with the normal demands of everyday life. It can be overwhelming.

But you're not alone and there is assistance available to help you manage.

Find out how we can support you.

carergateway.gov.au Phone 1800 422 737 (press 1)

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