

Yelm-Based Heart 2 Heart Homecare Is a Labor of Love

New Homecare Business Hopes to Grow Through Empathy, Professionalism and Resolve

BY PAUL DUNN
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Churrell Maguire couldn't have found a better job.

It was 2013, and the then Olympia resident had just earned her certified nursing assistant (CNA) license when she began caring for a Tumwater couple who would forever hold a special place in her heart.

"I love them, and they love me," Maguire said last week from the cozy office she and her husband of two years Chris Maguire erected in August adjacent their rural Yelm home.

Stenciled on the office wall behind Maguire's desk is her professional *raison d'être*: It reads "Heart 2 Heart Homecare," the caregiving business she inaugurated in January.

Maguire, 31, who co-owns Heart 2 Heart with her grandfather and is the business's president and primary administrator, has worked in health care for the past 16 years, much of it as a CNA private contractor. That independent role allowed her to be her own boss, so to speak, and fit perfectly with her vision for the future.

She'd begun her career working as a CNA with Catholic Community Services, but after about a year, she yearned to spread her wings and fly solo.

"Right away after I received my CNA I decided I wanted to open my own health care business," said Maguire, who graduated in 2010 from Nation High School, an online institution that offers high school diploma programs, and then received her CNA license from Simmons & Holliday in Olympia.

Her first clients were Ed and Rosemary, a longtime married Tumwater couple who had lived together for 56 years as though any other existence would simply have been unheard of. The couple suffered from Alzheimer's disease and required daily 24-hour care.

Ed would die about a year after Maguire assumed their care, but Rosemary — now in her late 80s — is still very much alive. So, too, are perhaps her most distinguishing characteristics: a radiant smile and an

operatic voice that often breaks into arias whenever it darn well feels like it.

But though Maguire — who worked as Ed and Rosemary's lead caregiver — adored the octogenarians, their care would eventually take its toll.

Maguire attended to the couple's needs for four years, routinely working 24-hour shifts three-to-seven days a week. Her responsibilities included attending to their "ADLs," or activities of daily living, which could routinely include providing meals, bathing, dressing, brushing teeth, helping maintain bladder and bowel control and more.

She also monitored the couple's vitals, took them on daily "adventures," such as to the Olympia Senior Center, and assisted with daily range-of-motion exercises, among other responsibilities. And since she didn't formally live with the couple, she also trained other caregivers to fill in for her when she needed time off.

It was a wonderful four years, a span of her life she'll never forget, but it eventually wore her out.

"I sacrificed my personal life, because she (Rosemary) needed me and I loved her," Maguire said.

The job, ironically, became more difficult after Ed died.

"She (Rosemary) couldn't stop asking, 'where's Ed?', and that was the hardest part taking care of her after Ed died."

It didn't help that the youngest of Maguire's two daughters — Aubree, now 4 — began suffering in late 2016 from serious fevers that progressed for seven months. It was more than Maguire could take, so in 2017 she was forced to make a necessary but heart-wrenching decision — she would have to leave Rosemary.

"After that time with the Tumwater couple, 24-hour shifts were really hard for me," she said. "I decided that I had to find another client I could care for during the day, so I could take care of my sick child at night."

After that, Maguire cared for a woman suffering multiple sclerosis who required daily medical assistance and help with a variety of ADLs.

To date since 2013, Maguire has cared for 10 different clients for periods of three months to a year at a time.

"I've stayed working all the time," she said.

Maguire, born in Orange



Paul Dunn/Nisqually Valley News

Churrell Maguire, president of Heart 2 Heart Homecare in Yelm, christened her business in January 2020 just before COVID-19 staggered Washington. She's seen here at her rural Yelm office on Wednesday, Jan. 27.

County, California, actually began her caregiving career much earlier — though she was yet to be professionally trained.

At age 16, she moved from Orange County to Shelton where her mother and grandparents were living, and her caregiving instincts quickly kicked in once she arrived.

"My motivation for caregiving was to take care of my

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grandmother and grandfather," she said. "And I've been caregiving ever since."

Tumwater resident Jorjana Pedersen, 61 — Ed and Rosemary's daughter — has watched over the years as Maguire edged toward opening Heart 2 Heart and has marveled at the caregiver's empathy, professionalism, and resolve.

"Churrell provided care to my mom and dad as if they were her own parents," Pedersen wrote last week via email. "... She has a unique sense of the emotional and psychological needs of others and skillfully used encouragement and positive strategies to ensure my parents' daily routines and needs were met. Every aspect of her care was done with the utmost respect to my parents."

Those sympathetic qualities — the same ones she'll insist her Heart 2 Heart caregivers embrace — will work hand-in-hand with Maguire's business acumen to ensure Heart 2 Heart thrives, Pedersen believes.

"Churrell is a forward thinker who is very effective at creating systems and procedures to accomplish her plans," Pedersen wrote. "Setting up a homecare business has been a goal of hers since 2013 when she started caring for my parents. Since that time, I have watched her work diligently, step by step, to accomplish it."

Maguire's goal for Heart 2 Heart is simple, but illuminating.

"I want to reach more people in our community by holding our caregivers to a higher standard," she said. "I am a caregiver, too, and I understand the rawness of people's real struggles. As a caregiver you become very close to your clients and many times become the most important person in their world."

Heart 2 Heart offers two levels of non-medical services: companion care and home health aides (HHA). Companion caregivers provide a variety of services, such as taking clients to appointments, running errands, preparing meals, housekeeping and more, but don't provide hands-on care. That's left to the home health aides, who are trained and licensed through the state Department of Health. They provide skilled services such as bathing, shaving, medication assistance, toileting assistance and other personal care. Some caregivers may also have CNA licenses. They have been more rigorously trained than HHAs and are able to offer clients even more skilled care.

So far, Heart 2 Heart has seven caregivers on file, but only two clients — one in Yelm, the other in Puyallup. COVID-19 has put a temporary crimp on the company's initial fortunes.

"I just think that a lot of people are scared, and rightly so, of having people in their homes because of COVID-19," Maguire said.

Ideally, she wants Heart 2 Heart to routinely service at least 100 clients, but even though she's extensively advertising the business's services, getting the company's name out there in the middle of a pandemic has proven challenging.

"Because of COVID-19 it's hard due to the restrictions," she said. "We can't get to the part of the community we want to, and it's harder to be recognized as a local agency when nobody knows who you are, yet, and you launched your business during a pandemic."

That said, however, a current Heart 2 Heart client's family lauds the company's service. The client, a 65-year-old woman in unincorporated Pierce County who lives with her husband, receives care from a Heart 2 Heart staff member from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. five days a week.

She suffers from intermittent spontaneous intracranial hypotension (SIH), a condition in which the fluid pressure inside the skull is lower than normal. SIH can cause severe headaches and other symptoms such as nausea, vertigo and tinnitus.

The woman's husband, Bruce Hutfless, 67, a senior software engineer who works full time from home, hired Heart 2 Heart to care for his wife during the day because his work didn't allow him to give her the attention she needed.

"I have been extremely pleased with the quality of care my wife has received from Heart 2 Heart," he said by phone last week. "They were able to find someone on short notice, and the person they sent hit it off with my wife, and having that personal connection with your caregiver helps."

Shelton resident Katrina Hasch, the woman's daughter — who was previously a CNA — has known Maguire for many years and trusted her new company to properly care for her mother. Her faith has been rewarded.

"Heart 2 Heart has been far above and beyond my expectations," she said last week. "The care that has been given to my mother is better than anything I have heard about or witnessed in the past."

Maguire is confident that with a little help from above Heart 2 Heart will eventually thrive and continue to offer the quality of care Hasch describes.

"I have faith in God and his plan," she concluded. "I know that if I stay consistent with my dreams and passions He will answer my prayers and provide."

Thurston EDC Announces New Board President and Members

By Nisqually Valley News Staff

The Thurston Economic Development Council (EDC) welcomed four new members to its board of directors, along with new officers, according to a Friday press release.

The Thurston EDC is the lead economic development agency for Thurston County, "cultivating a dynamic, diverse, resilient and sustainable economy by expanding opportunity, attracting investment and retaining talent," according to the release.

The Thurston EDC and its board of directors are a mix of leaders from the private and public sectors in urban and ru-

ral Thurston County. The investors of the EDC elect board members. This year the EDC added to the board:

- Marc Daily, executive director of the Thurston Regional Planning Council
- Wayne Fournier, mayor, city of Tenino
- Gary Edwards, Thurston County commissioner
- Yen Huynh, Olympia city council member

Members who were re-elected and are returning to the board for another term are:

- Dr. Roy Heynderickx, president, Saint Martin's University
- Dan Jones, president, North America Talk
- Ed Kunkel, council mem-

ber, city of Lacey

- Bill McGregor, commissioner, Port of Olympia
- Evan Parker, Sr. VP, Kidder Mathews Real Estate
- Charlie Schneider, Tumwater city council member
- Mark Steepy, principal, KPFF Consulting Engineers
- Mark Turner, CEO, Capital Medical Center
- Joe DePinto, council member, city of Tenino

Additionally, Heather Burgess, an attorney with Phillips Burgess PLLC, is installed as the president for 2021 and 2022. Mark Steepy was voted as president-elect, with the term of president commencing on Jan. 1, 2023.

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