

***“My children thought I should move to a nursing home
but I didn’t want to go.”***

CLARA'S STORY

Clara (Newman) Wiedl is a witty, content, fun loving, and engaging 91-year-old woman. She lives an independent life in her own apartment in Raymie Johnson Estates. If you ask her, she believes her well being is due to never smoking, rarely drinking alcohol, and someone ‘up there’ looking out for her. If you ask her daughter, Darlene, she believes it is due to her attitude of always having ‘more things to do and more places to go.’ Clara's success of living independently is largely due to her ‘team’ – from her large caring family, to her many friends, to her caregivers from Raymie Johnson and HSI, Clara is connected to and supported by a large network of people. In turn, she continues to contribute to her family and community as she has done for her whole life. Most of Clara's life has been spent in the Stillwater area, where she has lived for over 65 years. For many years, Clara worked as a seamstress for Ringer St. Croix in Stillwater, and belonged to the Almagamated Union. During the Korean War, she made bullets in a factory located in New Brighton. After the war, Clara went back to being a seamstress at Butwins in St. Paul until she was 65. Clara was married twice, and has 90 direct descendents – 7 children (one deceased), 27 grandchildren, 51 great-grandchildren, and 5 great-great-grand-children. All in all, she will tell you that she has worked hard and had a lot of fun in her lifetime. She recently celebrated her 90 years of life at a gala birthday party that drew over 300 people.

This past year, Clara began to have falls when her ears gave her trouble and made her dizzy. Clara said, “My children thought I should move to a nursing home but I didn’t

want to go. My apartment here at Raymie Johnson has been my home for twenty-one years. Thankfully, in July, my daughter Darlene moved from California to live with me since I couldn't be alone. All of my other children were so glad, and it has been just great." Says Darlene Harris, daughter of Clara, "I got married when I was 16 years old and left home then – I felt like I never really got to know mom, and now, living with her is giving me another chance to get closer to her."

In addition to the care that Darlene provides, Clara receives services from HSI Resources for ElderCare. Daisi Martin, Care Management Supervisor of Resources for ElderCare says, "To help Clara remain independent we have used a variety of our services to meet her needs. She teaches all of us how to lead a full life!" States daughter Darlene, "My mother loves the security here, and all of the services have allowed her to keep her independence." Clara shares, "If I wasn't here, I'd be in a nursing home or hospital. The HSI people come here and ask me if I want anything, and whatever I need, they get it for me – it's wonderful. One person comes in and shampoos my hair and helps me take my shower, another cleans my apartment, buys my groceries, and does my laundry. A nurse sets up my medicine boxes each week, and gives me my vitamin B shot each month. The Transporter takes me wherever I want to go for only \$2.00 – the men who drive are all so concerned." HSI Transporters provided door through door services throughout Washington County.

With the support and various services, Clara continues to lead an active social life. She says, "I am lucky, I have family that comes to see me, and before my daughter moved in with me, I had a Senior Companion who would take me on drives to see

beautiful country. Somehow we would always end up at an ice-cream cone place. You don't know how much I enjoyed those drives!"

Recently, Clara joined Circle of Friends, HSI adult day program, one day per week. "Our program is truly what the name says – a circle of friends – we gather, we have fun, and we connect. I love watching the friendships develop," says Sharon Schilla, Circle of Friends LPN. "People gather here and reminisce about growing up, jobs they held, things they enjoyed doing, and raising their families, and they talk about their current family events such as new babies, weddings, celebrations, and holidays."

Continues Schilla, "Our services are as much for the family as they are for the participant. Usually families of our participants are relieved to know their loved one is safe, is having fun, and is comfortable." Clara's daughter agrees, "Circle of Friends is a real place for mom to meet other people. It also gives me a break from taking care of her."

About her life and team of helpers now, Clara says, "I have this feeling – I am going to try to get well. I'm going to do everything they tell me. I walk the halls for exercise. The cook at Raymie Johnson won't let me have my meals delivered to my apartment – she knows I can walk." Darlene laughs and says, "The cook's on my team!"

Clara, Darlene, the rest of their family, and the HSI staff *are* a team – each member working together towards the common goal of maintaining Clara's independence and well-being which allows her to stay in her own home and community. For more information about any of the services described here or additional services, please call HSI Resources for ElderCare services at **651-275-5810**. By calling just one number,

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HSI's qualified, caring staff will work carefully with you to determine the best options for you and your situation.

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