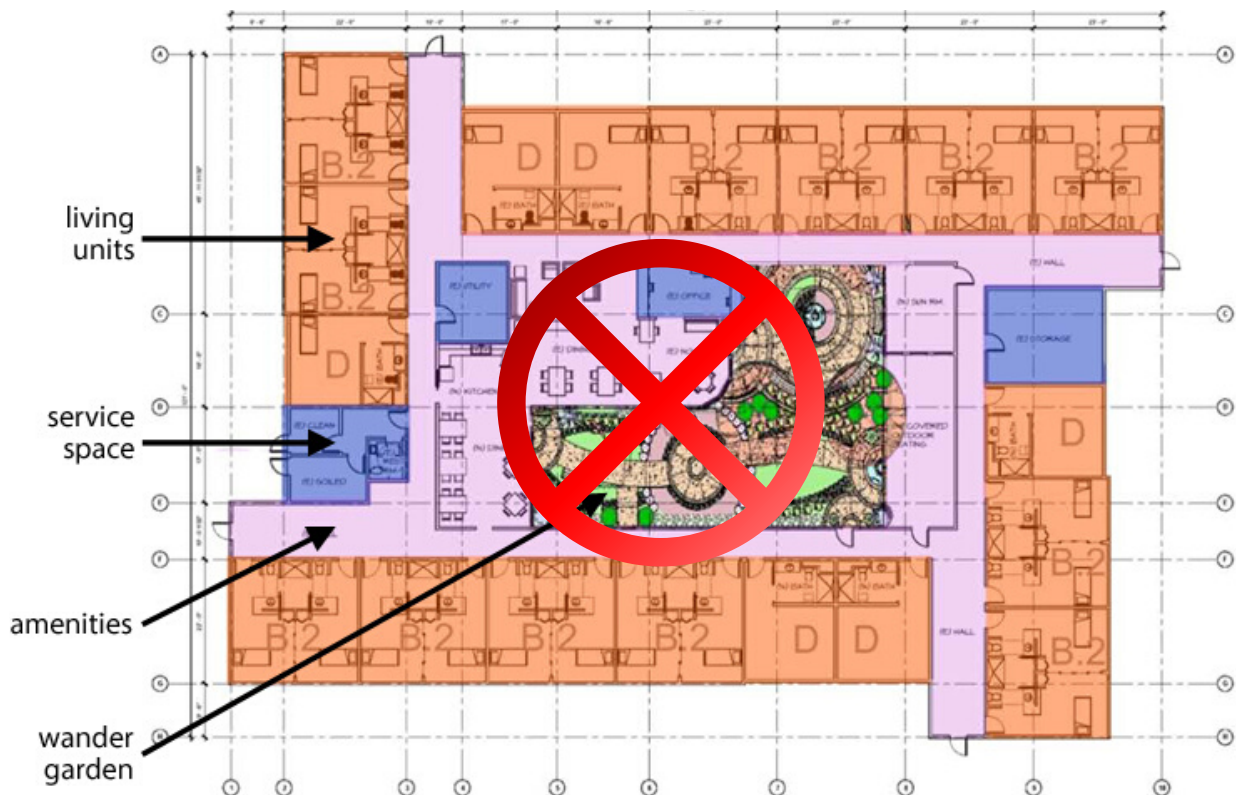


The Driscoll's Story

Real clients talking about their experience using Grandma Joan.



Amy Hughes interviews Robert Driscoll for a case study on choosing live-in care.

Nursing Home? No Way!

Robert Driscoll Finds a Solution with Grandma Joan.

The Clients

Robert Driscoll and his 76 year old wife, Margarita, live in Punta Gorda, Florida. They have three grown daughters and two sons who visit regularly and stay in touch with Mom and Dad. Mrs. Driscoll has suffered from Alzhiemer's for over five years. The Driscoll's are a bi-lingual [English and Spanish] couple who desperately wanted to stay living together in their home. Robert laments that, "Putting her [Margarita] in a nursing home would have killed her."

The Challenges

When Margarita was diagnosed with Alzheimer's his physicians told him that he had to do something to relieve the stress of caring for a loved one. Robert remembers telling himself the he had been in high stress jobs all of his life; at least this time he was not dealing with death threats or snipers." Robert was wrong; the stress of watching the person you love more than anything in the world slowly die before your eyes eats at your soul. After two years of caring for his wife, Robert nearly died from a stress related illness. "It was at that time that my children said, 'Dad we need to put Mom in a home.' "

Robert drove around Florida looking at different homes with Margarita at his side. Without doubt Margarita would have to go into a memory unit. Memory units presented two problems: he would not be living with his wife anymore and, worse, Margarita made it abundantly clear she hated memory units. Robert told his children, "I owe your Mom too much to ever put her in a memory unit. Just as important, I have been sleeping with her for over 40 years and have no intention of changing now." Robert's family physician confirmed his instincts by telling the children that the worse thing anybody can do to an Alzheimer's patient is change their environment.

At that point, Robert started using home care aides for part-time shifts, but it was not satisfactory. The aides would only come for 4 hours at a time and they had to be scheduled well in advance. Another issue was the lack of consistency in who was coming to the Driscoll's home. The aides could be different every time. Lastly, this kind of shift work proved to be very, very expensive.

Margarita was starting to lose the use of her legs. She still loved to go out to movies and baseball games and Robert Driscoll needed somebody who could do that with her. Just like before, Robert started to research alternatives to home-care agency aides and after about 2 weeks, he found Grandma Joan.



The Solution

Robert contacted Grandma Joan's agency in March of 2016. Dave was extremely helpful and within just a few days he found the Driscoll's live in aide, Gloria, who is a bi-lingual caregiver from Nicaragua, and a proud U. S. citizen, with over a decade of senior caregiving experience. Very quickly, Gloria became attached to Margarita. Gloria shared that she was not there when her own mother died, and so she was going to take care of Margarita like she was her own mother. And she has.

"It was at that time that my children said, 'Dad we need to put Mom in a home.'"

The adjustment to having a live-in caregiver was smooth but intense. Robert remembers thinking, "The object was to take care of my wife; everything else was secondary. We [the three of us] had to learn to live and work with each other." Within a few weeks, Gloria and Margarita were going out to the movies, for walks, to the store; she was filling all of the voids that came with shift aides.

Robert explains, "Gloria was easy because we both speak Spanish and she and I get along well. She [Gloria] tells me stories, and we have fun." Robert respects Gloria for the professional woman she is and vice versa. They have established a formal but friendly relationship. Robert explains, "Gloria is a hard working decent person who is a star member of her church and dotes on her children and grandchildren."

The Results

Four years later, Gloria is still taking care of Mrs. Driscoll in the Driscoll's family home. Gloria goes home most nights; but if 24 hour care is required, it is there. Margarita now sleeps 18 to 20 hours a day. Robert has been able to get relief from the stress he was under before. He volunteers as a Guardian ad Litem, someone who becomes an advocate for a child in need. It is a cause that is important to him and he says, "I can continue to volunteer for that cause because Gloria is here." Also, Robert's children have told him how grateful they are that he stuck up for their Mom and did not put her in a home even though that was what they originally recommended.

Robert concluded, "If you have a successful marriage, one of you will be taking care of the other someday, no matter what. You need to focus and plan. I put the planning off for much too long. Luckily I found Grandma Joan. And that is the reason why my wife is still alive today."



"Luckily I found Grandma Joan, and that is the reason why my wife is still alive today."

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