

Helpers creating local bridges of care

By Don Grigas, dgrigas@mysuburbanlife.com

Hinsdale Suburban Life

Posted Dec 14, 2009 @ 01:04 PM

Last update Dec 14, 2009 @ 01:36 PM

Hinsdale, IL — Four years after starting their own business, Mary and Mike Doepke say they have gained a satisfaction that comes from being their own bosses as well as helping others.

“It was a perfect fit,” said Mike, who manages the business side of the company. Home Helpers, based in Hinsdale, provides a wide variety of non-medical services to seniors, those recuperating from illness and injuries and mothers in need of personal assistance.

The idea for starting the business came after Mary tended to her father after he suffered a stroke in February 2005. Shortly afterward, Mary helped her sister, who underwent treatment for cancer.

“It is a very personal business, and we never want to lose the personal touch,” said Mary, a registered nurse who matches client needs and personalities with the caregivers assigned. “We work very hard at listening very well to clients. We will not take clients whose needs are outside of what we can provide.”

Mary oversees the hiring and training of a staff of more than 50 employees who tend to clients in their homes. For seniors in particular, the service bridges the gap for individuals who are in need of assistance for everyday tasks and the type of care in a nursing home or assisted care living center.

Caregivers often are called on to do light housekeeping chores, do laundry, prepare meals and provide companionship. The service does not provide medical services.

“We really try and match up our caregivers to clients based on both skills and personality. Then we meet with family before we do anything,” Mary said.

Notable

The business recently was named “Franchisee of the Year” by Home Helpers, which has about 400 offices throughout the country.

Not just home care

Mike says 20 percent of the business is for clients living in facilities who require personal attention.



Office manager Cathy Rohner (left) talks with Mary L. Doepke, RN about scheduling for clients. Doepke and her husband, Michael, own Home Helpers, which provides personalized, non-medical care in the western suburbs. Photo by Bill Ackerman

Growing market

“People are living longer, and there is a large number of aging baby boomers,” said Mike.

Baby boomers

- Generally listed as those born from 1946 through 1964.
- By 2001, the percentage of baby boomers visiting doctors rose from 42 percent to 53 percent, according to the Centers for Disease Control.