

Last modified: Tuesday, December 14, 2010 9:22 AM CST

Home Helpers a nonmedical care company

Each week, the Daily News profiles a locally owned business.

Name of business: Home Helpers of South Central Kentucky

Location: 107 Nellums Ave., Bowling Green. Currently sharing with B&J Gallery

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www.HomeHelpers.cc/bowlinggreen58534

Type of business: Professional home health services providing nonmedical personal and companionship care for our seniors, recuperative care, new moms and working families, continuing care, and Direct Link Medical Alert Systems

When did it open? Earlier this month

Owner: Michael Gentry

Number of employees: 10

Specialty: We are a professional nonmedical care company. As everyday life becomes more challenging, a little help can go a long way. We provide one-on-one care and companionship to those in need of a helping hand. We are committed to providing quality care to our seniors who wish to remain independent in their homes and communities. We can be your primary caregiver or supplement care from family for patients recovering from surgery, illness or injury. For new moms and working families, when bringing home a new baby or attending to a sick child, things can be hectic, we have experienced caregivers who can lend a hand. We provide 24-7 or live-in care for loved ones with special needs. Our caregivers are extensively trained and receive ongoing education, and many have experience with specialty care, including Alzheimer's, dementia, Parkinson's and hospice care.

We have also partnered with a company called Direct Link. Direct Link is a personal emergency response system that enables clients to feel safer and live more independently in the comfort of their own home. At a push of a button Direct Link can have a neighbor check in on you, notify a family member of your situation and dispatch an ambulance if needed. We also provide our clients with an automated medication dispenser, which is a reliable solution to managing multiple medications. The Direct Link PERS and automated medication dispenser is monitored by The Care Center, a CSAA-5 Diamond Certified Central Station. This certification recognizes that we meet strict Central Station Alarm Association requirements.

How did the business get started? I had always wanted to start and run my own company. I had been working in the medical industry for the last 11 years. In January of this year the company I worked for merged with another company. Due to the merger, many, including myself, were let go. I became aware of the need for home care several years ago when my mother-in-law was battling cancer. She survived two bouts with the disease but it came back a third time and attacked her brain. She began having memory issues and it became unsafe for her to be home alone or drive so the family had to find someone to help. This situation and many others inspired me to research the industry. With the number of seniors in the United States expected to reach 76 million by 2030,

more and more families are facing the overwhelming responsibility of caring for aging loved ones. This growing need, along with my own desire to make a difference in the lives of those around me, has inspired me to open a Home Helpers office to serve southcentral Kentucky.

What is your background? I am a Bowling Green native having attended Bowling Green High School and a graduate of Western Kentucky University. I spent 11 years in the pharmaceutical and medical equipment industry as a district manager, respiratory specialist, and DME specialist.

I am married 19 years to my wife, Robin Huff Gentry, who is the owner of B&J Gallery located here in Bowling Green. We have two children: Tyler, 15, and Ashton, 14.

What are your biggest challenges as a business? Letting others know of the quality care we provide for their loved ones. We will treat their loved ones like we want our family to be treated. Of course there are always challenges starting your own business: Cash flow, capital, controlling expenses. Determining the most effective way to market and advertise your business. Our business plan will always be evolving to meet our employees' and clients' needs. We must become a trusted home care provider for our community and that will be through well-trained office staff and caregivers.

What's your business philosophy? Hire exceptional employees with the compassion and desire to serve others. Rest assured you and your loved ones will receive excellent care and companionship with Home Helpers. Our caregivers are carefully chosen to meet you specific needs. Home Helpers caregivers are thoroughly screened, bonded and licensed. We believe in caring for our clients as if they were members of our own family.

What issues are affecting your industry? Our company and industry have been growing even though our national economy has been struggling. Choosing the right care option for your loved one can be a major decision. It requires a clear understanding of your loved one's needs and careful evaluation of your options to determine the best fit. Many families are looking at in-home care services to meet the unique needs, budget and scheduling. It allows their loved one to be independent and safe in their own home with qualified caregivers.

What are the factors that make your business successful? We are members of the communities in which we work. Our caregivers will be compassionate, caring people and will treat you and your family members with the utmost respect. We will deliver the same quality of care we would expect for ourselves and our family. Personal service is very important. We will always strive to have fun each and every day and enable your loved ones to enjoy life.

How do you handle competition? We are committed to exceeding our clients' expectations. Our office staff will always be courteous, professional, attentive and helpful at all times.

Our caregivers will be respectful, on time, and attentive to our clients' needs. We will do everything possible to help your loved one remain independent and live a full life.

What is your advice to someone thinking about opening a business? Have the confidence, desire and passion so no matter what obstacles are placed in front of you, you know you will succeed. Do what you love!

Surround yourself with great employees you trust, and do not be afraid to delegate to them. If you do not have the experience in a particular area of your business, outsource it. This will enable you to focus more on the strategic part of your business. Take care of your employees and clients and your business will grow.