



# In Good Company

Summer 2008

## To The Editor

By Julianne Roth

Recently an article was published in the West Hartford News that described how a caregiver had stolen \$4500 from her client. We responded to the article with this letter to the editor published on 4/29/08. Below is an abbreviated version to that article.

To the editor:

Home healthcare is a wonderful alternative to assisted living or nursing home care and should not be feared. Many people can and do stay in their own home and flourish there at a lower cost than going to live elsewhere. Most home healthcare workers are hard-working loyal individuals who care deeply for their clients. They have one of the hardest jobs possible. Those of us who have been caregivers for family members can relate to what I am saying. Unfortunately however, there are some caregivers who are not in the business for the right reasons. It is these individuals who we must be very careful about when we are hiring homecare providers.

First, the article described the importance of doing a background check on a caregiver. I can not stress enough the importance of this step. In fact, while your writer described checking with the local or state police, in my opinion this does not go far enough to ensure an appropriate level of awareness regarding someone's background. Town police will only give you background check results for the town of West Hartford. State police background checks will only give you results for the State of Connecticut. I know that if I was hiring someone to care for my parents I would want to know if they had been arrested anywhere in the United States. Fur-



thermore, I have found that there are even many agencies that exclusively perform state background checks. I encourage your readership that if they are going to use an agency (which should ALWAYS be performing background checks on their employees in accordance with specified practices by the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection), they ask the question about state vs. national background checks.

Second, I urge your readers consider using a homecare agency to find a good caregiver. This allows the individual and their family peace of mind in many areas. The best agencies not only perform national background checks, they also do professional reference checks, ensure the caregiver is qualified to handle the responsibilities that are required, train the caregiver, deduct employment taxes and Social Security from the caregiver's paycheck, and insure and bond their employees to protect the clients hiring them (which would have helped to replace the \$4,500 stolen from the victim described in the article). Equally important, an agency takes the management of the caregiver out of the hands of the family. This includes finding a back-up in the case that the caregiver gets sick or takes time off. Yes, an agency may cost more, but isn't it worth it?

Finally, as the article stated, one should lock up valuables, and have a family member or trusted friend handle the individuals finances if that is required. At Companions for Living, we have a strict policy in place to limit caregiver exposure to client finances. In fact, caregivers are not allowed to write checks or use credit card belonging to clients, and can only handle up to \$50 in cash for shopping or other errands. To find out more, please visit our website at [www.companionsforliving.com](http://www.companionsforliving.com).

## Caregiver Spotlight

### Caregiver Excellence Quarterly Award Winner

Valerie Durant is a CNA who has been with CFL since September, 2006. Val provides wonderful care to her clients. One client requested Val for over 40 hours per week and even wanted to pay overtime so that Val could provide almost all of her care. Another client recently described how she looks forward to Val's visits because she always brightens up the room! Val is also a team player. She is willing to fill-in when she is needed is always flexible when she is asked to make changes in her weekly work schedule. Val is the kind of caregiver who takes her personal time to visit her clients when they are in the nursing home or hospital. Congratulations Val and great job!!



Valerie Durant

# Caregiver Promoted to Management Team

We are pleased to announce that Colleen McCarthy has joined our team as Office Manager. Colleen was promoted to this position from her role with us as a caregiver. Colleen has always added so much to her job! She has been a wonderful caregiver and has terrific organizational skills. She has previously owned her own company, and brings solid business skills to the management team. Please help us in welcoming Colleen to her new role.



Colleen McCarthy

## Announcement

Julianne Roth will be interviewed by Brad Davis on Monday June 9th between 9:40 and 10:10 am. If you have a chance, please tune in to WDRC 102.9 FM to listen.

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