

To Whom It May Concern:

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My name is Vilma Rivas, and I would like to share my testimony on how the Arc of Montgomery Respite Program has helped my family.

We first started looking for community resources many years ago when my brother, Eduardo Rivas, was diagnosed with Early Onset dementia in 2016. We didn't know what to do and/or where to start and somehow, we found the MOCO Arc of Montgomery Respite Program.

Right from the beginning the staff at the Arc of Montgomery provided me with all the necessary information on how to apply for respite services. They made the process of the application go very smoothly, easy and not complicated.

On those days, we were blessed to have my brother able to receive 40 hours weekly! That was a blessing! Then, I was still full-time employee, and I could not be there for our mother who was helping my brother and very quickly she became his primary caregiver.

Throughout those years (almost 8 years) my brother lived with us, we had the most caring, professional and knowable caregivers to take care of my brother's needs. They were kind people that became part of our family; we trusted them in our house and mostly with my brother and, consequently, mom was able to take advantage of respite hours to take care of herself and relax knowing that my brother was in good hands! Those caregivers loved my brother and ended up being part of our family.

Two years ago, our family had to make the difficult decision to place my brother in a long-term care facility after suffering an epileptic attack. We could not care for him at home, this was hard to do but we knew it was best for him. He is doing well and I am getting the services that his illness required.

Now, we, mom and I, find ourselves in a similar situation with 95 years old father. A little over a year ago, he was also diagnosed with Alzheimer's. and quickly progressing.

We are so happy and grateful to have a wonderful caregiver to come and help my father once a week for 4 hours and at least while she is here, we know that my father is not completely alone and we can go take care of my brother at the nursing home.

We are grateful to have these four hours, but we know my father needs more help, especially since he stays by himself during the evening while we are away visiting my brother.

My father needs help with his basic activities of daily living (ADLs) such as maintaining his personal hygiene, toileting and grooming, and housekeeping as my mother cannot help as much due to her age of 91 years old and her own health issues.

The Arc of Montgomery Respite Program provides a very crucial services for the disable, elderly, families and community. This program helps maintain families together, it provides the much necessary help for family members to take a break and do something meaningful even if it is for few hours to recharge and continue caring for their family members. We are going through critical times and as caregiver mom and I, we need all the help we can get.

The Arc of Montgomery Respite Program provides very important and crucial services for the frail elderly community and their families' primary caregivers.

My family is grateful to have the Arc of Montgomery, Respite Program and the county on our side and helping everyone in our community.

Sincerely,

Vilma Rivas on behalf of my family, Hugo and Emma Rivas