

Press Release & Photos –L to R Ruth Callaway, Home Health Aide, Darlene Gottschalk, Volunteer, Cindy Romine, Daughter & Caregiver, Amy Kellar, Medical Social Worker, Kathy MacDonald, Home Care Nurse and Yvonne Beller, Hospice Nurse.

Caring for Mom & Dad --Through the Eyes of the Caregiver

Cindy's memories of both her parents include lots of laughter, tears, struggles, and knowing she was there every day to care for them. Cindy moved back home with her parents after her mother was diagnosed with ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) in 2007. Shirley Kolesiak was dearly loved by her children, grandchildren & husband Ernie. ALS progressed slowly and left Shirley unable to speak, care for herself, and breathe without a ventilator. For 6 years her husband and daughter, with the support of family and friends cared for Shirley in her home. Kosciusko Home Care nurses & aides assisted with medical care and bathing. Cindy appreciated aides, Margo, Ruth, & Kathy who lifted her Mom's spirits when they visited and always treated her mom with respect. "They never treated my mom like she was just a sick patient," said Cindy.

Home Care nurse Kathy was wonderful and available when they needed her support and medical care. Cindy shared, "Kathy spent a lot of time at our house during my mother and father's last days. Shirley lived 6 years with ALS; her doctors gave her 18 months to live. She passed away one week after celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary.

Cindy's father Ernie was diagnosed with skin & lung cancer in 2009. Cindy knew she would need additional support caring for both her parents. Ernie continued his fight with cancer until 2015 when there was no hope for a cure and he wanted his last days to be about quality of life. Ernie and his family received the support of Kosciusko Hospice during his last few months. "His hospice nurse Yvonne was a great match for him because she got his sense of humor," shared Cindy. Ernie had a bucket list of things he hoped to see before his death –a niece's graduation, to visit his sister in Arizona, and ride in a Viper. With the help of family and friends, he got to check these off his bucket list. The additional support from the home care/hospice aides and homemakers made it possible for Cindy to keep both parents in their home until the end of their lives.

"The support I continue to receive after the loss of both my parents helps me get through the hurt. I met Amy, medical social worker when my mother had ALS and she continued to support my family during my father's death and afterwards. Amy calls me often to check on how I am doing and listens with understanding," shared Cindy.

Kosciusko Home Care & Hospice staff is privileged to have the opportunity to assist people in our community as they face difficult health issues which affect them and their love ones.