

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE

Agency: VINE Faith in Action

Program: Volunteer
Caregiving & the Summit Center

Service: Assist older adults and people with disabilities, long-term health needs or difficult life situations by providing volunteer help with transportation, chores, caregiver support services and friendly visits

Need: On a given day, VINE staff members respond to nearly 200 phone calls from community members in need of help, from chores to transportation to caregiver issues. The Volunteer Caregiver program expects to serve 3,200 individuals in the Greater Mankato Area this year

Impact: 85% of seniors identified as “at risk” for nursing home placement will remain living in their home in the coming year because their family caregivers receive professional and volunteer support through VINE

This is one woman’s personal story as a daughter, caring for her mother with dementia, who is able to keep her living independently in her Mankato home with support from VINE services thanks to funding support from United Way.

I knew about VINE’s social respite program but never felt that it was appropriate for my mother. But when I went on vacation, I asked VINE if they would be able to provide visiting services for my mother and whether they could match a volunteer to accompany her to the opera, as she had season tickets. When I arrived back from my trip, I was pleasantly surprised to find my mother very alert and articulate and talking more than she had in a long time.

I called VINE, because I was convinced that the regular socialization had been very beneficial for her. After speaking with a caregiver coach, I agreed to have my mother attend the Some Time Away program at the Summit Center [*The program is designed specifically for seniors with mild to moderate memory loss, whose family caregivers can leave their loved ones in VINE’s care for four hours each week, giving them time to attend to errands, go out for lunch, and enjoy a well deserved break from the daily routine*].

I now bring my mother to the respite program each week while I spend time cleaning and attending to her home. I’m so happy that my mother enjoys participating in planned activities with her new friends and VINE volunteers.

Now when I go on vacation, VINE provides transportation to and from the respite program. She also receives daily Hot Meals on Wheels and a caring visitor several times per month. This winter both of us participated in VINE’s snowshoeing class through the Summit Center. My mother, who is 93 years young and had never been on snowshoes before, had a great time.



Greater Mankato Area United Way’s funding of these programs is used primarily to support staffing to recruit and train the hundreds of volunteers who provide services to older adults and people with disabilities, as well as to provide a safe and friendly place where older adults can go for structured activities, events and socializing.