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A publication of

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THE GOOD LIFE

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How the Adult Family Care and Companion Programs Can Fit into Your Life

By Charity Day, Associate Director of Client Services, LifePath



Charity Day

Are you taking care of someone in your home? Are you interested in providing care for someone in your home?

LifePath has been providing Adult Family Care (AFC)

services to caregivers and members since 1985. This program helps older adults and individuals with disabilities live in the community while getting the support they need. LifePath provides Adult Family Care throughout Franklin, North Quabbin, Hampshire, and Hampden counties. LifePath is accredited by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).

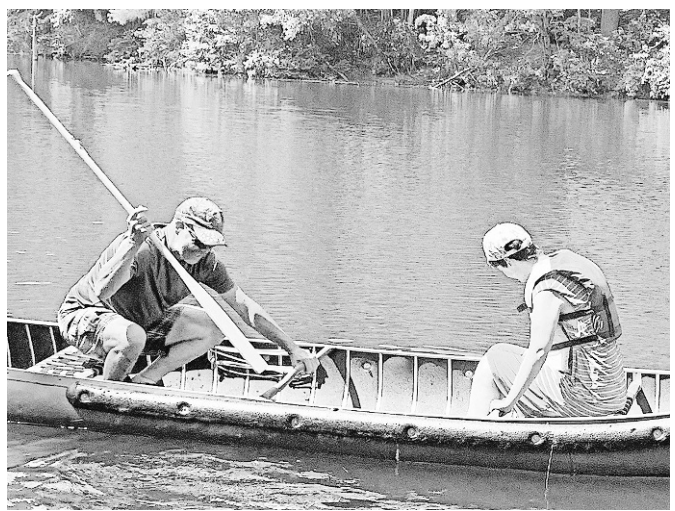


AFC Member Corey Mizula visiting the Sunderland Fire Station.

Many of our caregivers are already taking care of someone in their home when they learn about Adult Family Care. It may be a son or daughter caring for a parent or a parent caring for an adult son or daughter, a family member caring for another family member, or someone who has already taken on a caregiving role for someone outside of their family.

LifePath is also an Aging Services Access Point and has relationships with the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and other community organizations. Many of the people we serve receive services from more than one agency. We are able to help coordinate services with other agencies and make sure everyone is working together for the benefit of the member and the caregiver.

If you have an extra room in your house and are willing to open your home to someone who needs support, the Adult Family Care program is here for you. If you are not sure you are ready to be a full-time caregiver, you could be an Alternative Caregiver. This gives you a chance to see if it's a good fit for you. As an



AFC Member Mia Stebbins enjoying time on the water.

Having LifePath in our life is a lot like having the air around me freed up and allows me to breathe easier. It makes life easier to live and enjoy my son.

Adult Family Care is available to eligible MassHealth Standard, CommonHealth, Senior Care Options (SCO), and One Care members age 16 and older who need help with at least one activity of daily living. This can include things like bathing, dressing, toileting, eating, and mobility. Some people need hands-on help or cueing and supervision throughout the activity.

The caregiver lives in the same home as the member and provides the day-to-day support they need. LifePath staff then work with both the caregiver and the member to make sure things are going well. The caregiver is provided with a tax-exempt daily stipend, paid monthly. They are also provided with initial training and ongoing monthly training.

A member of our staff makes a home visit every month and are always available to members and caregivers who have questions or concerns in between visits. Caregiving can be rewarding, but it isn't easy. Having support from LifePath and receiving a daily stipend can make it easier.

One mother has been caring for her son who has a disability through LifePath's Adult Family Care program since 2009. When asked what having the program in her life has meant to her, she replied, "Having LifePath in our life is a lot like having the air around me freed up and allows me to breathe easier. It makes life easier to live and enjoy my son."



AFC Member Anna O'Brien soaking up the sun.



AFC Member Derik Abelson loves playing baseball.

Alternative Caregiver, you provide care to a member in your home for up to 14 days when the Primary Caregiver is not available.

LifePath also has opportunities through our Companion Program for people who would like to be a companion to individuals who receive services through DDS. Companions spend a few hours a week with an individual doing activities they both enjoy. This could mean doing arts and crafts, taking nature walks, going shopping, going to fairs, or just getting out into the community. The Companion Program is a great way to make a positive difference in the quality of life of another community member. All caregivers and companions must be at least 18 years old and complete required background checks.

If you are already caring for someone in your home, have an extra room and are interested in becoming a caregiver, or have a few hours a week to spend as a companion, we would love to hear from you. To learn more, contact LifePath's Information and Caregiver Resource Center at 413-773-5555 or info@lifepathma.org.