

Children of aging parents face tough care choices

By **RAY WEISS**
STAFF WRITER

ORMOND BEACH — Carmine DeSantolo headed outside with his aide for a walk down a wooded road after spending much of the day reading, resting and watching TV inside his family's Timber Creek home.

On the other side of the county, Charlie Corica sat among 20 other people his age playing board games and dancing inside an Orange City adult day care center.

In failing health, both older men no longer can handle the day-to-day responsibilities of life and must depend on outside care and supervision while family members are away at work.

Janet Harris wanted her 88-year-old widower father, Charlie, to be in a social setting. So she drops him off four days a week at Stay for the Day from early morning until late afternoon.

"I talked to a lot of people who had parents living with them who had dementia, and I decided on this after I checked around at three places," she said. "He likes people and activities. He was always very social and on the go. I don't have to worry here if he falls, and he's happy."

Cara Dodson preferred that her 82-year-old dad and ailing

SEE CARE, PAGE 7A

ray.weiss@news-jrn1.com



News-Journal/PETER BAUER

Charlie Corica gets a kiss from daughter Janet Harris as she drops him off at Stay For The Day adult care in Orange City.

MORE ONLINE

Familiarize yourself with the types of care available.

news-journal.com

CARE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

mother stay in familiar surroundings, hiring a companion from Home Instead Senior Care who's not a nurse.

The woman prepares meals, does light housekeeping and provides personal assistance during four-hour shifts, four days a week.

"It's a luxury, but we're doing it for dire reasons," she said. "Your sanity is at stake."

Caught between raising children and caring for older parents, it is a decision Dodson, Harris and thousands of other members of the "sandwich generation" face every day. The emotional and financial pressures can be great.

Both Dodson, 41, and Harris, 57, decided against putting their fathers in an assisted living facility or nursing home, at least for now. So as working adult children, the two options were home care or adult day care.

"He's really attached to the woman who comes to the house," Dodson said of her father, a gruff World War II veteran who has early-stage Alzheimer's disease. "He's gained five pounds and is not as ornery."



News-Journal/PETER BAUER

Charlie Corica, center in dark shirt, hits the dance floor as Melissa Long, left, keeps time during the Snowflake Ball at Stay For The Day adult day health care recently in Orange City. The two-hour dance keeps the clients active and mobile during part of the day and is just one of the many daily routines offered at the facility.



News-Journal/RAY WEISS

Carmine DeSantolo 82, Timber Creek, takes his afternoon walk assisted by home health care aide Gail Gordon.

Advice for discussing options with parents

By RAY WEISS
STAFF WRITER

America is getting older.

More and more adult children are finding themselves suddenly sorting through the maze of options that exist in caring for an older parent, often being left with little time to research adult day care, assisted living, home care or nursing homes.

And by 2030, nearly one in five Americans, 71 million, will be age 65 or older.

Experts say it is never too early to come up with a plan with an older loved one, before an emergency occurs. Do they want to stay at home? How can an adult child best handle the expense and emotional demands? The subject often is avoided by parents who view their children as just that, children, even when they are adults.

Home Instead Senior Care re-

The subject often is avoided by parents who view their children as just that, children, even when they are adults.

cently started the "40-70 rule," which offers advice for adult children on how to begin discussing the subject while an older parent or relative is still well.

"We encourage conversation," said Susan Miller, owner of the Daytona Beach Home Instead office. "There are going to be more and more baby boomers in the coming years."

The program recommends that adult children:

■ **Get started.** If you're 40 or your parents are 70, it's time to start

observing and gathering information. Don't reach a conclusion from a single observation and decide unilaterally on the best solution until you have gathered information with an open mind and talked with your parents.

■ **Talk it out.** Approach your parents. Discuss what you've observed and ask your parents what they think. If your parents acknowledge a problem, ask what they think would be good solutions. If your parents don't recognize a problem, use concrete examples to support your case.

■ **Sooner is best.** Talk sooner rather than after a crisis has occurred. If you know your loved one has poor eyesight or has trouble driving at night, begin to address it before a problem arises.

■ **Forget the baby talk.** Remember you are talking to an adult, not a

child. Put yourself in your parent's shoes and think how you would want to be addressed in the situation.

■ **Maximize independence.** Look for answers that optimize strengths and compensate for problems.

■ **Stay tuned in.** If your dad dies and, soon afterward, your mom's house seems to be in disarray, it's probably not because she suddenly became ill. It's much more likely to stem from a lack of social support and the loss of a life-long relationship.

■ **Ask for help.** Many of the issues of aging can be solved by providing parents with the support they need to continue to maintain their independence. Resources such as an agency like the Council on Aging of Volusia County, 386-253-4700, or a local senior center can help provide assistance.

Miller said no one type of care

works for all. Many factors must be weighed, including an older person's physical and mental health, personality, finances and ability to live alone or with family members.

At Stay for the Day, an Orange City adult day care center, co-owner Vivienne Beauvais, a registered nurse, said her type of service offers increased socialization, a welcome change in routine that at first can be scary for a client, but soon can help lessen the depression from feeling isolated, ill and old.

"But we're not just here for the client. We're also here for the caregiver," she said. "Taking care of a parent is stressful for the caregiver. They often die before the loved one, because they don't take the time to take care of themselves."

ray.weiss@news-jrnl.com