

**UNITED WAY OF THE OHIO VALLEY  
OWENSBORO-DAVISS COUNTY  
PARTNER AGENCY: SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAM**

Janice, an 84 year old Senior Companion volunteer in Daviess County, has been providing in-home care services to other senior citizens for six years. Janice decided to become a Senior Companion a few months after her husband passed away to help her occupy her time. She admits her volunteer service kept her going after she lost her husband and she continues to strive everyday to be the most active she can be so it not only helps her client but helps her, as well. Although in her past employment she typically worked with younger women, she found working with other seniors to be very rewarding as she shared many commonalities. For example, they love to share stories about their childhood, changes that have taken place in the world, the joys and fears that come along with aging, and the loneliness that often occurs with aging. Janice adamantly stated "The best thing you can give a senior is your time to LISTEN. So many people are too busy to listen to what they have to say or to think what they have to say is even important." She said, "I like to spend my time being a friend and listening". In addition to providing companionship, Janice has done even more for her clients by providing meal preparation, light housekeeping, and transportation. Over the course of six years of service, she has assisted seven clients with independent living skills in an effort to prevent their admittance into a long term care facility. Her current client is 91 years old and still lives in her home. Maggie has received Senior Companion services on and off since 2001 and has had six different volunteers throughout 15 years. She said all of them were wonderful to her. She stated "I truly believe if it were not for my senior companions, I would be dead or even worse, in a nursing home." Maggie claims she had to retire early at the age of 60 from General Electric because she had multiple strokes and began to have chronic health problems. Although her health was deteriorating, she did not feel like she needed to go into a nursing home. She said at one point she was even confined to a wheelchair, but her senior companions supported and encouraged her in her recuperation process by assisting her in her daily activities. Maggie no longer needs her wheelchair and is still able to remain in her home. Janice helps with light housekeeping and they cook together. Excitedly, Maggie said "I love when we try new foods or recipes we have not tried before. I do not like to cook for myself or eat alone and just having Janice here to do these things with me helps me to eat better. "Janice agrees with her client."I eat more vegetables.....like I should when I come to help Maggie because she likes vegetables." Both ladies chuckled and said laughing is the best medicine for their time together. Maggie explained, "Janice has this wonderful dry sense of humor and she makes me laugh every day. I am telling you, laughing with her helps me better than a whole bottle of pills. It's my medicine that works." She claims her mother and her aunts lived to be 100, a goal she has made for herself with Janice's help and "I plan to enjoy the journey along the way."

**WHAT DIFFERENCE WILL YOUR INVESTMENT MAKE?**

With your investment of \$100 the **Senior Companion Program** can:

- Pay a Senior Companion's stipend for 37 hours of one-on-one attention to a homebound, frail, elderly client that is at risk of institutionalization and/or their caregiver

