Carol Ann has been a caregiver for her mother, Diane, since 2005 when her father suddenly passed away. During National Family Caregivers Month, we salute her dedication and compassion. Carol Ann has been able to take advantage of the Family Caregiver Support Program to assist her in her caregiving duties. The program, administered by the Alzheimer’s Association Wisconsin Chapter, helps Milwaukee County family caregivers who are helping their loved ones with Alzheimer’s disease, dementia or any chronic health condition live safely in their own home.

Working Caregivers
Carol Ann represents a growing population of full-time working individuals who are also full-time caregivers. She works two jobs in the senior care industry to help support her mom. While her mother lives at home, Carol Ann and her husband John fully support her – cooking, cleaning, medication management and doctor’s appointments. “Without the services we receive from the Family Caregiver Support Program, I’d be completely burned out,” Carol Ann shared.

Her mother has heart disease, suffering a heart attack and having congestive heart failure and atrial fibrillation. “Because of my mother’s heart condition, I wanted to focus on a healthy diet, avoiding processed foods,” Carol Ann said. “I was making all her meals from scratch seven days a week and it was a lot.” When Carol Ann was working with the Family Caregiver Support Program she discovered that there were financial resources to help her supplement healthy meals for her mother. “I’m able to get four meals a week for my mom and that makes a huge difference for me.”

Her mother also has debilitating arthritis and is in constant pain. She couldn't tolerate the pain medications and the only thing that gave her relief was acupuncture. Through the Family Caregiver Support Program she receives financial support to receive this treatment.

It’s OK to Ask for Help
“My biggest advice to other caregivers is to do your research and take advantage of services that are available,” Carol Ann shared. “I didn’t even know some services were out there until I started talking with the Family Caregiver Support Program. It’s OK to say I’m a little stressed out and ask for help. I’m blessed to have my faith and my wonderful husband to help me on my caregiving journey.”

(left/right: Carol Ann, her mother Diane and her husband John)