



The In-Home Times

Newsletter of **HAND** a Division of

MEALS ON WHEELS™
CENTRAL TEXAS

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“If I’m Feeling Down, She Lifts Me Up”

When Mary J. St. Clair’s husband, Johnny, developed Alzheimer’s, she became his caregiver. That’s in spite of the fact that she was battling major heart problems at the time. Mr. St. Clair passed away in 2013; a year later, his wife found herself needing assistance in order to live independently.

Fortunately, HAND was there to help. These days, she doesn’t know what she’d do without her in-home attendant, Guillermina Durkin, who spends several hours helping her every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. “I don’t even want to think about it,” says Ms. St. Clair of

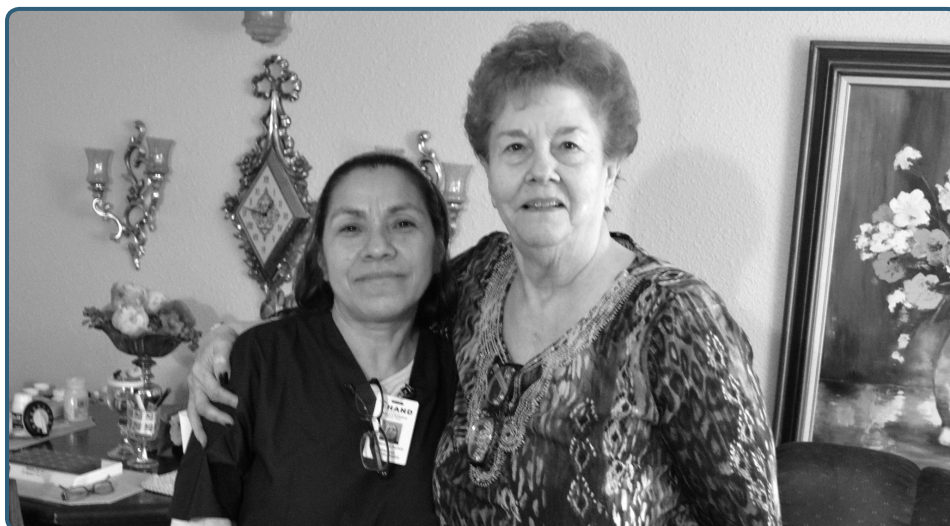
the woman she affectionately calls “Gigi”.

The two women bonded almost immediately and relish each other’s company. “She’s always happy and jolly and we laugh and have a good time together. If I’m feeling down, she lifts me up; we’re just good friends and I love her dearly,” Ms. St. Clair says. The feeling is mutual as far as Ms. Durkin is concerned – “I like working with her because she is always happy and always welcomes me at her door with a smile.”

Ms. St. Clair, who is 83, still suffers from heart problems. As

a result, she takes 22 prescription drugs each month, a complicated task for which she relies on help from Ms. Durkin. But that’s just the tip of the iceberg as far as the invaluable assistance her attendant provides. “I used to be an immaculate housekeeper but since my [health deteriorated], my home would get really, really messy and of course that upset me. Gigi comes in and cleans up. She straightens out my apartment, makes my bed, and washes my dirty clothes. She cooks for me – and by the way, she’s a wonderful cook,” says Ms. St. Clair. In fact, on the days Ms. Durkin isn’t helping her, Ms. St. Clair eats food prepared by Ms. Durkin on her most recent visit.

The attendant, who has worked for HAND since 2014, looks forward to her visits to the south Austin apartment Ms. St. Clair calls home. “This isn’t a job for me. I enjoy helping her,” she says. For that, Ms. St. Clair feels very grateful – “She waits on me all of the time. She has me so spoiled!”



Client Mary St. Clair (right) with HAND personal care attendant Guillermina Durkin

Give A Hand For Our Personal Care Attendants

HAND's personal care attendants play a vital role in our mission to help older adults maintain their independence.

To thank them for all they do, we held an Attendant Appreciation event in November. More than 80 attendants were there and each of them received free scrubs, ID badges, HEB gift



More than 80 people took part in HAND's Attendant Appreciation Event

cards, and other prizes. HEB also provided free flu shots and University Federal Credit Union graciously offered attendees \$30 to open a free checking account.

We thank our hard-working, dedicated attendants for the care they provide the homebound people we are honored to serve!

A Few Words From Dan Pruett, President/CEO Of Meals On Wheels Central Texas

As you may already know, there have been some exciting changes at HAND over the past several months! The biggest news is this vital non-profit is now part of the Meals on Wheels Central Texas (MOWCTX) family. It's a perfect fit because both agencies dedicate themselves to providing critical services to low-income,

homebound older adults and people with disabilities – services designed to keep the people we serve living independently AND save taxpayers money in the process.

I'm excited to introduce the new Executive Director of HAND, Marsha Wier. Marsha was

previously MOWCTX's V.P. of Human Resources and I have no doubt HAND will thrive under her thoughtful and compassionate leadership.



A Few Words From Marsha Wier, Executive Director Of Hand

We are so excited to be able to share the workplace culture and quality customer service we have established at MOWCTX with the team at HAND.

These first few months have been about getting to know the team members and clients and understanding their needs. One way we achieved this was through satisfaction surveys. We want-

ed to hear from you and we are so grateful for the feedback we received. A few areas in which we have made improvements include communications, staffing, training, and benefits for our attendants.

MOWCTX's vast array of life-sustaining services combined with HAND's in-home personal care provides "one-stop" shopping for low-income Central Texans

who need some assistance in maintaining their independence.

I'm honored to be a part of HAND and I am excited to work with the great team we have in place to help our neighbors in need.

