

Voice of the Family

Marisa Sergnese,

ExcellCare Family Member



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As a Canadian living in the United States and working as a Training & Professional Development Leader, Marisa Sergnese understands the value of communicating and collaborating to achieve a common goal. So, the choice to go with ExcellCare over other home care companies to care for her father during the COVID outbreak was a simple one.

Marisa’s parents have always been at the center of their tight-knit Italian family. When her mother was no longer able to care for her 89-year-old father Ennio, who has been living with Alzheimer’s, the family made the tough decision to place him in a residential care home. During his time there, the family were active members of his care team, helping to supplement the residential care with their own.

With COVID came visiting restrictions, which meant that it would no longer be possible for the family to

participate in his care, let alone visit, so Marisa and her family knew they had to find a new home care service to supplement the residential care that her father was receiving. Wanting to select the perfect home care provider, Marisa and her brothers decided to ask questions like, “When Mom can’t visit every day, how do we connect with Dad?”

These types of questions led the Sergnese family to Kelley Stewart, Director of Operations at ExcellCare. Kelley’s team at ExcellCare is devoted to ensuring that every family is provided with regular wellness updates and keeps an open line of communication with families by leveraging the SparxConnect staff and family engagement platform. ExcellCare’s commitment to providing personalized care experiences that are enhanced by open and collaborative communications with family members really is unique in the industry. Having a tool like SparxConnect where Marisa, her 81-year-old mother, and the entire family could

connect to get immediate feedback from caregivers, and send and receive loving messages and video recordings of moments of joy was the difference-maker for the family. When we asked Marisa how she feels about the family's choice to go with ExcellCare, she said "I know our family made the right choice when we were looking for those people that are really invested in having Dad as their #1, and this is validated through their use of the tool."

Marisa was so impressed that she reached out to ExcellCare to let them know that she would be happy to let the world know about how positive her experience has been. This is how the SparxConnect team had the good fortune to sit down with Marisa and hear more about the ways ExcellCare and SparxConnect enhanced the care experience. Here are some highlights:

Q: What makes SparxConnect special for your Dad?

A: "We play an Italian card game called Scopa with my Dad every day, and when we couldn't go visit anymore, I found an online version for him. The fact that we were able to upload that on to SparxConnect for him to play through the tool has been great. Knowing he is still socially connected, can still do the activities that he is accustomed to, and has caregivers who will engage with him is life-changing for us. My mom is able to regain some of her independence knowing that he is cognitively being motivated and challenged."

Q: What is your favourite part of the SparxConnect experience?

A: "You have no idea what this tool has done to make a difference not just in our lives managing someone who has Alzheimer's but also the difference that this makes in Dad's life. I can log into the tool at any time of the day or night and feel connected to my father. One of the caregivers sent me a video of my Dad having a snack – I really felt like I was sitting across the table from him. Having the ability to send a 30 second video to my Dad that I know will cognitively spark different things for him is so important. With the tool, I love that we are able to invite people into his care circle who we want to be involved with the day to day. By having everyone, literally everyone on the same page, provides us with peace of mind and keeps everyone organized. Entrusting one of your most prized people in your life to strangers is an incredibly hard thing to do, but the caregivers at ExcellCare are truly dedicated to what they do and it shows in the videos, photos, and messages sent through the tool."

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