



Fulfilling the Promise

A PSW's Story

It's a crisp January morning and Kingston Ontario has been in a two-week deep freeze. Lee Anni Renaud is awake long before the sun comes up, sipping a coffee and checking her email for any changes to her schedule. She's out the door and warming up her car to be on the road by 6:30.

As a PSW, her first stop is at 7 am, with her last appointment keeping her in the field until as late as 7 at night.

She begins at a local retirement home, helping to get six different seniors out of bed, showered and dressed. It's a process that requires patience and an awareness of each person's limitations and abilities.

One of her clients is a woman with dementia. Even getting her out of bed can be a difficult challenge that requires some creativity. Lee Anni points to the woman's husband, who the woman doesn't recognize any more. "See that handsome guy over there? You've got a breakfast date with him, so we'd better get you ready."



We call on all levels of government to fulfill the promise of home care. Sign the petition [here](#).

It's a caring resourcefulness Lee Anni has learned over many years. She knows cheerfulness and encouragement are essential for helping seniors to stay positive and motivated.

While most of the town is still waking up and getting ready for work, Lee Anni is preparing her first clients for their day. By 9 am she's on the road again, heading off to care for eight more seniors around the community who live by themselves in their own homes.

Officially it's her job to help people with day-to-day tasks like cooking a meal, doing some cleaning or laundry, or assisting with medications. But in



reality Lee Anni provides something far more valuable. For many of her clients she is a lifeline in a world that seems to have forgotten about them. Playing a game of Scrabble can be just as important as changing the bedding. Sitting with a man and letting him vent about a son who never visits reassures him that someone still cares and is willing to listen.

It takes a bit of extra time to provide those little touches of care. Lee Anni isn't paid for that time, but she does it anyway. Because she knows in her heart it's the right thing to do.

Lee Anni drives from client to client, often eating her lunch in her car between appointments. Winter roads are tough, and even though her clients look forward to her visits all week, they worry



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when the roads get icy. “Stay home and be safe,” they tell her. But for Lee Anni, not showing up is rarely an option.

Her long days can sometimes stretch for two weeks straight without a day off. She is mindful of not burning herself out and has learned to say “no” when she is asked to squeeze in yet another appointment. But many of her colleagues say “yes” to their employers because they need the hours to make ends meet. Ironically, many PSWs are desperate for more work in a system that is barely meeting client demands.

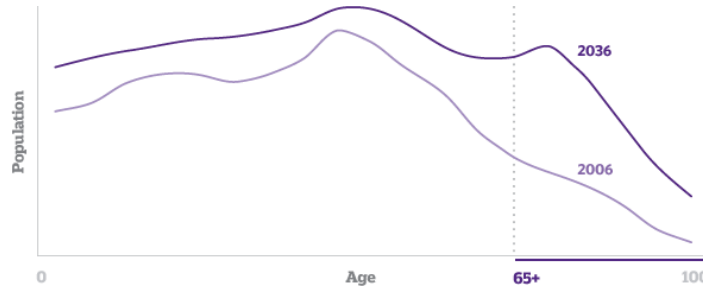
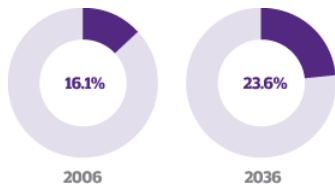
Lee Anni’s dedication is fuelled by her down-to-earth character, positive attitude and genuine empathy and love for people.

“This is my life’s work, my calling I guess you’d say.” she says, “PSWs put all their heart into their work, which may be why we’re taken for granted. Both the government and employers seem to think that we PSWs care so much, that we’ll always be here no matter what.”

“This work isn’t for everybody but there’s sure going to be a lot of it in years to come. Who’s going to do it all?” she wonders. A question worth pondering.

Homecare: A Growing Concern

Between 2006 and 2036, the percentage of seniors in Canada will grow from 16.1% (1.6 million) to 23.6% (4.2 million) seniors.



Time to fulfill the promise of homecare.

By 2036, nearly one in four people in Ontario will be a senior. A quarter of our population will need more hospital beds, more medications, and more attention. Our government acknowledges that much of the problem can be answered by homecare. They have promised to meet the challenge by funding and investing in homecare. So far, there’s a lot more talk than action.

Now it’s time to fulfill the promise of homecare.

We need a homecare action plan that meets the needs of an aging population, costs less than institutional care, allows people to remain independent and active in their community, and sustains Canada’s public healthcare system for the next generation. All levels of government must work together to fulfill the promise of homecare by:

- Cutting waiting lists for homecare
- Providing relief to family caregivers
- Guaranteeing security and peace of mind for families by ensuring that every home care health professional is trained and qualified
- Investing in the frontline of public healthcare, not the bottom line of healthcare CEOs
- Demanding transparency and accountability in the delivery of homecare services
- Ensuring fairness for frontline Personal Support Workers (PSWs)

