

Cathy Hottinger



After graduating high school in Massachusetts, Cathy joined the United States Army and worked as Communication Operations Specialist decoding messages until her discharge in 1968. She loved being in the military but once she learned she was expecting her first child she was given an honorable discharge. At that time staying in the Army once you were with child was not an option.

Cathy came to Pendleton County to wait for her husband's return from Vietnam and in due course raised two sons.

Cathy's family caretaking career began in 1992...first for Cathy's father and stepmother in Massachusetts; then for her mother in Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. This took approximately fourteen years out of her normal life due to relocation and the severity of their illnesses.

After the death of her mother in 2007, Cathy remained in Canada working for the mentally challenged. Cathy had developed Diabetes and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease a few months before her mother passed and was very concerned about her health and moving back to be near her family seemed to be the logical answer. Her son Patrick, welcomed her to return to West Virginia and it also afforded Cathy the ability to get to know her grandchild, Colleen (7 years old) that she had not seen her since she was 9 months old.

In August of 2008, back to West Virginia she came, in a small U-haul, with two dogs and her possessions. After staying with her son for a few months, she moved out on her own so she rented an apartment in Franklin, but her income was barely enough to cover her housing expenses let alone other necessities. Cathy was under a great deal of stress and felt like she was reaching the breaking point.

Cathy was able to find better employment, but it required moving into an even more expensive apartment. She soon realized she could not pay \$600 a month for rent and utilities and continue to pay her creditors so Cathy moved into the home of one of her coworkers. This has enabled Cathy to get back on her feet and get on top things and catch up on the bills that had accumulated during her mother's illness in Canada.

Even so, again Cathy was without a home to call her own so she applied for a Habitat home. In March of 2010 Cathy was approved for one of the River Bend Garden units in Franklin, WV.

"Everyone there is very helpful in so many ways," Cathy said. "God was helping me in all areas!"

"Thank you Almost Heaven Habitat for restoring my dignity and helping this older, 63 year old bag- o- bones to have a wonderful, safe place to live."

***Cathy will move into her new townhouse at
River Bend Gardens in June 2010.***