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by Elizabeth Hoppe (<http://jwcdaily.com/hinsdalelivingmagazine/author/elizabeth-hope/>)
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Adult children need to make a lot of decisions when it comes to caring for aging parents—and often those decisions don't have to do with medical care. Instead, a senior might need help driving to appointments, cleaning their homes, or other various household tasks that become more difficult as they get older. For more than 20 years, Always Best Care has been providing many types of services to seniors and their families, as well as veterans.

"We're trying to keep people at home with their preferred surroundings," says Matt Friscia, owner and director of client care for Always Best Care Chicagoland. In addition to non-medical in-home care, Always Best Care also helps families with free assisted living placement when the time comes that home is no longer an option. His staff has also provided extra care for seniors in independent and assisted living communities.



Always Best Care Chicagoland provides much-needed non-medical care for seniors to help families keep their loved ones at home while being an all-around senior services provider. PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOEL LERNER

Frischia worked for many years with large organizations like Walt Disney Company/ESPN before he started his own business and established Always Best Care in the Chicagoland market two years ago. This new business is family owned. His mom, Cindy Friscia, works with the company as well as a care coordinator. She's a Licensed Practical Nurse, Certified Dementia Practitioner, and has more than 30 years of experience in the healthcare industry.

Frischia's business partner and executive director, Dave Pawelek, also worked at the Walt Disney Company. That experience taught them both the importance of customer service and employee retention.

"When you're working with us, you're always talking to an owner. We answer the phone Monday to Sunday, 24/7. We're very quick in our response time as we know the person on the other end of the phone usually is requiring help. That's the one big thing that sets us apart, owners who answer the phone who can provide help," Friscia says.

If a family is interested in Always Best Care's services, their staff conducts an assessment about the type of care needed.

"Usually families call us because they have noticed a decline in a loved one's health, and that family member requires additional care. We provide a sit-down assessment with the adult children and the person we're taking care of, and those assessments are 100 percent free. Then we create a customized care plan," Friscia explains, and a caregiver is matched with the family.

Always Best Care has no minimum time requirements for services. They can be assigned to help a senior for one hour a week, or for 24-hour, non-medical live-in care. They service DuPage county and a majority of the southern suburbs. Friscia is a resident of Lemont, but the office is located in Lombard across from the Yorktown Center.

"Sometimes we're just providing companionship and keeping loved ones safe while family members go to work, but then sometimes it's 24/7 care depending on what is needed and requested," Friscia says.

All of the company's caregivers and employees are licensed, insured, and bonded, and meet the Illinois Department of Public Health state requirements. Some have specialized training for dementia or other specializations tied to the caregiving field.

"We try to match people as best we can. We do a 24-hour check-in, a 7-day check-in, and a 30-day check-in," Friscia explains. They're always working to place the right caregiver with the right client, and if someone isn't comfortable with a caregiver for any reason, they adjust as needed.

If possible, the goal is often to get a senior back on their feet so a caregiver is not needed—such as when a patient is recovering from an injury of some sort. In other cases, Always Best Care is helping at the start of what may be long-term care. The overall goal is try to help seniors remain as independent as possible for as long as possible while aging with dignity.

"With seniors, most of the time a family member becomes the default caregiver. It's not that they don't love them; it's just stressful. We can help relieve some of the stress and help the family get some of their normal life back, knowing their loved ones are being cared for," Friscia says.

Always Best Care Chicagoland is located at 477 E. Butterfield Road, Suite LLO05 in Lombard, 630-426-1099, abcchicagoland.com (<http://abcchicagoland.com>). Call ahead to make an appointment.

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