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LOCAL STORIES JANUARY 18, 2023

Inspiring Conversations with Eric Kaye of Connections In Home Care



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Today we'd like to introduce you to Eric Kaye.

Hi Eric, we'd love for you to start by introducing yourself.

Eric Kaye was no stranger to the healthcare field when Jewish Family & Children's Service asked him to start Jewish Family Home Care of Arizona in 2010. "It started with my own grandmother, Emily Koen, who was a Holocaust survivor living in Scottsdale," says Eric. "My grandfather was gone and she needed help."

She trusted JFCS and inquired if there was a program to assist her. The care she needed wasn't available at that time, so Eric and his mother became her caregivers. Being in the healthcare field, he had had a connection with JFCS for many years through hospice and hospitals. Then JFCS recruited him to start its home care program. He ran Jewish Family Home Care of Arizona from its inception until he decided to branch out on his own and started Connections In Home Care in 2014.

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At that point, JFCS ended its home care program and started referring clients to Eric. Connections In Home Care was asked to continue the existing contract with the claims conference, which provides financial assistance to needy Holocaust survivors. With Eric's grandmother a survivor, the claims conference and its beneficiaries hit close to home. Today, Connections In Home Care currently has 19 clients who receive assistance through the claims conference.

Eric says that the care offered to both claims conference and private duty clients can be broken down into two main categories: Companion Care and Personal Care. Companion Care includes light housekeeping, laundry, making beds or changing linens, doing dishes, vacuuming, transportation, medication reminders, meal planning and preparation, fall prevention, various projects (clearing clutter, getting organized) and basic companionship.

"Personal care is where we tailor the service to individuals based on their needs," says Eric. Personal care includes everything on the companion side, as well as help in the shower, help with transferring and ambulation, incontinent care, dressing, personal hygiene and more. We can accommodate anyone regardless of their level of care, including end of life care.

"We often work with clients afflicted with various types of dementia, Parkinson's or other neurological challenges," says Eric. "We train on working with that population ... successfully, managing education and behaviors." Respite care is also available if a client's family members, spouse or primary caregiver need some time to themselves.

"Our services are anywhere from a daily four-hour shift to 24 hours a day," says Eric. "We are on call 24/7. You will speak to one of us [Eric or Denise] or Alyson, our administrator."

Connections In Home Care currently has over 100 caregivers servicing Maricopa County. Caregivers go through a rigorous process that includes phone screening, background and Motor Vehicle Department checks, drug screening, and in-service training and orientation.

"Finding solid, caring, reliable caregivers is the number-one obstacle that we face," says Eric. But when they do find those special people, they accommodate and take care of them. "We respect and nurture our caregivers; and we have high expectations for them because it is our name and reputation – they are representing us," says Denise. "We have had clients who have had the same caregiver for years and they really love

each other. It's this beautiful bond. That's the joy of doing this kind of work."

Denise's mission is to educate people (she was a former middle school teacher before earning her MBA and working with Eric) and get them to think about having a proactive plan in place for the future. "I talk to estate planners, financial planners, elder attorneys – because 85% of our calls are emergencies," says Denise. "People will call and say, 'My mom is in the hospital. She is going to rehab. They are going to discharge her. I don't know what to do.' If you have something in place way before that happens, you can be more proactive than reactive."

She recommends that people begin planning as early as in their 50s. "You have to talk about it – and it's difficult – but people want to honor your wishes and make it so that they are doing what you want. Make these decisions while you can," recommends Denise.

Eric and Denise offer more than just care for their clients. They also have connections to many valuable resources – whether it's a handyman to install grab bars for safety or an attorney for estate planning, mobile doctors to visit homebound patients, or a physical or occupational therapist to make home visits under Medicare. If clients decide it's time to move to an assisted living community, they are also Placement Agents and can help find the best senior living environment to fit their needs.

"This is our 'third baby,'" says Denise. (The couple have two teenage children.) "We nurture each case and client and take really good care of them," adds Eric. "We want to be there for someone to be as independent as possible, for as long as possible, in their own home. That's why they hire us." Eric and Denise personally ensure that each client is getting the appropriate level of care.

"Our fundamental value is acts of loving kindness – and that's what we like to portray out there in the community," says Eric. "That is what we explain to our caregivers during training. That's our main, fundamental, shared value and that is what I think our clients in the community see..."

"I love our tagline 'connecting hearts to homes,'" adds Denise. "I feel like it's a certain kind of person who does this. They have such big hearts and they care so much for the clients, and we do it well. I love to visit the clients and just listen to them. They have insight and wisdom. They have such stories to tell."

Contact Eric and Denise Kaye at 602-708-8626 or visit

Connections In Home Care at
www.connectionsinhomecare.com

I'm sure you wouldn't say it's been obstacle free, but so far would you say the journey have been a fairly smooth road?

Finding caregiver talent is an ongoing struggle, but we concentrate efforts on finding the best caregivers available and providing top wages and benefits, and once they see what we are all about, many of them stay with us for the long-term.

If we knew you growing up, how would we have described you?

I was always an outgoing person, very interested in music. I took many years of piano lessons, and taught myself how to play guitar starting at age 14. I have played guitar and sang at many events over the years. At a young age I felt an affinity towards older adults and always knew I would work with seniors within my career that stemmed from hospice to hospital to skilled nursing to now homecare for the past over 12 years.

Contact Info:

- Website: www.connectionsinhomecare.com
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CIHCLLC>
- Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeCi6jaucBPPpmQWQUOrPRw>
- Yelp: <https://www.yelp.com/biz/connections-in-home-care-phoenix-2>







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