



OCCOA

OTSEGO COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING



Submitted by
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*We Help.
We Care*

120 Grandview Blvd., Gaylord, Michigan 49735

OCCOA empowers independent living!

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TEDDY KORONKA IS A LIFE-LONG GAYLORD RESIDENT

I haven't been able to go outside and walk around like I use to do. I'm usually in my wheelchair. When I do walk, I use a cane."

The fall has affected him in others ways. He reflected, "I rarely drive anymore. I also don't cook as much as I used to, and sometimes I don't eat when I should."

Despite his physical challenges, Teddy's disposition is cheerful. He observed, "I'm blessed that I'm able to stay in my home." He added, "This wouldn't be possible without the help I receive from the Otsego County Commission on Aging [OCCOA] and my neighbor across the street."

He shared that although living alone is hard at times, he is lucky because he also has several friends and family members who stop by and visit with him. Although he can't walk around the farm like he used to, when weather permits, he also enjoys sitting outside on his front porch in his easy chair. He smiled as he noted, "On those days, I sit there for three to four hours!"



TEDDY KORONKA WITH OCCOA SERVICE PROVIDER KATHY SCHELLIE

been receiving meals through the OCCOA's Home-Delivered Meal (HDM) Program for the past three years. Known by many as "Meals on Wheels," the program is expected to serve a total of 39,425 meals to 190 Otsego County homebound older adults this year. The HDM Program is made possible through a partnership the agency has with Gaylord Community Schools and the Otsego County Bus System. The meals are prepared at Gaylord High School and picked up and delivered by the Bus System to OCCOA clients.

Teddy Koronka has lived in Gaylord on the family farm all of his life. In my recent visit to his home, he shared with me that before he retired, he worked for Gaylord Feed and Grain. One of eight children and a bachelor all his life, at age 82 most of Teddy's immediate family have passed away. He has one sister who lives downstate.

Teddy loves his home and wants to remain there and be independent for as long possible. This became a challenge several years ago when he fell and hurt his hip. "I love being outdoors," he noted. "Since I hurt my hip,

Teddy shared that his meals are delivered three times a week. On each meal delivery day, he gets one hot meal. He also gets a frozen meal for each of the days he doesn't get a hot meal. With a twinkle in his eyes, he smiled as he noted, "I still do some cooking - I like to make my favorites."

Teddy said that now and then he receives hand-made greeting cards with his meals. "I enjoy receiving these and would like to say 'thank you' to whoever makes them," he said. I shared that the cards were made by OCCOA volunteers, the students in the COP Transitions Class at Gaylord High School.

Kathy noted that Teddy will soon be starting a grant-funded in-home exercise program that the OCCOA is able to offer to some older adults. Known as Healthy Moves, it is a proven, evidence-based exercise program that was established in 2002 by the Partners in Care Foundation. Kathy noted that the exercises that she will be helping Teddy with can be done from his wheelchair. She added, "These exercises will help improve his muscle tone and overall body strength so that he will be less likely to fall."

Teddy noted that his neighbor, Maryanne, from across the road, is also a big help to him, and another reason he is able to remain in his home. Kathy explained, "She does Teddy's laundry, and runs the vacuum for him." Teddy, added, "She also does a little shopping for me."

Teddy remarked, "The Commission on Aging has been very good to me. Pam Carlson [the agency's medical resources coordinator] was very helpful in getting me the services I receive." Squeezing Kathy's hand, Teddy smiled at her and noted, "And my service provider, Kathy, is a good gal. She helps me stay safe and I really enjoy my visits with her."

Kathy shared, "I've known Teddy all my life." Teddy explained, "Kathy's grandma was my dad's sister. Smiling at him, she noted, "Teddy and I are good friends. He's funny and has a good sense of humor." She concluded, "I'm glad I get to come help Teddy twice a week - he makes me smile!"

Teddy offered that he has also received help from the agency's Advocacy Department. "John Panci [the OCCOA advocacy assistant coordinator] even came to my home a couple of times to help me with my Medicare and Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Plan questions." He noted, "He's a very good gentleman!"

I asked Teddy how he deals with the emotional toll of his physical decline and limitations. He paused only briefly before firmly stating, "My faith gets me through." He smiled, looking at Kathy, as he added, "And, of course, I have the best support system!" "Teddy reflected, "I've been independent all my life. As I mentioned earlier, it would be hard to stay in my home without all the help I receive." He added, "The agency has been very good to me - 100%! Someday, I might need some additional services. If so, the OCCOA will be my first choice... they're 'number one!'"



THE HOME-DELIVERED MEALS THAT TEDDY RECEIVES FROM THE OCCOA HELP HIM TO REMAIN IN HIS HOME

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