

## Heroes in the Home Caregiver Recognition Award 2018

### Marianne Dipietro



Marianne cared for her dear husband Gaetano lovingly throughout his lengthy illness over a 10-year period, shouldering all of Gaetano's care and support needs, never considering it to be a burden in any way. She was devoted, wholeheartedly, to caring for her husband without complaint.

When Gaetano's initial cancer diagnosis became known in 2010, neither Marianne nor her husband could have imagined just how many treatments he would have to endure and how lengthy his palliative stage at home would be. Thanks to Marianne's expert care, Gaetano was able to remain at home, even when he needed around the clock care and through a number of setbacks during which he had to go to the hospital.

While the couple did not have their own children, Marianne was considered to be "Mom" to many people. In addition to caring for her husband, she also provided support to her 90-year old mother and took care of her nephew when her sister's husband passed away, helping him with homework and computer challenges, taking him to and from school, making meals and even caring for his dog.

From the early stages taking Gaetano to his medical appointments, to taking care of his personal care needs, Marianne did everything possible to make her beloved husband safe and comfortable. She set things up for Gaetano in the family room, where she could watch over him from the kitchen as she prepared his favourite meals. Marianne went to great lengths to provide everything her husband needed including an electric lift chair and a hospital bed. She also learned how to administer medications, how to operate medical equipment such as pumps, oxygen and PICC lines, and knew to watch for diabetes complications and swallowing challenges. As an advocate for Gaetano, Marianne was able to update the doctor during home visits, providing all of the necessary details associated with a complex care setting.

During this journey, Marianne struggled with her own health issues including kidney problems, Meniere's disease, headaches, back pain and hospitalizations. Even when the option of hospice care was suggested to her by the care team, Marianne refused because wanted to grant Gaetano his wish to live his final days in the comfort of home. In October 2017, Gaetano passed away peacefully at home where he wanted to be, thanks to the perseverance and dedication of his loving wife who provided 24/7 care and support. We are pleased to recognize Marianne as a Hero in the Home – thank you for providing such wonderful care and devotion.



**Nominated by Nora Bridges – Alicja Mencil – Debra Shirrepa**