

Care For the Caregivers Relief Program

CFTC -Grant Recipient

Diagnosis of loved one - FTD

Age at diagnosis:40's



Meet Mark and Lisa

“Gonna Fly Now”



A real life love story.

Mark knew he wanted to marry Lisa before he even met her.

Mark shares that “(Lisa reminds him of) the little girl in the portrait by Carl Owens. I saw the picture when I was in 8th grade and said I was going to marry me a woman that looked like that picture.” And he did.

They have been living their love story until she received her dementia diagnosis at 48.

She started showing signs in 2015, but became more pronounced in 2016 and Mark has been her caregiver for “6 years and counting.” Mark still involves Lisa in cooking when appropriate and they recently got an Amazon music subscription to listen to jazz together.

Mark is a former school counselor and has always been an active member of the community. His positive impact in the community is apparent as former students even come by to support him in caring for his wife.

Since Lisa’s young dementia diagnosis: frontotemporal dementia (FTD), **Mark has become an advocate for her care.**

He has reached out to many organizations and secured resources from across the country. To further his own understanding of caregiving, he attended a caregiving training and is interested in continuing to gain resources for “solutions to problems that arise.” He has also become active in many support groups, even wanting to share what he has learned with other caregivers specifically male caregivers since they are often less represented in the caregiving community. In our short conversation, For Their Thoughts Foundation members Betsy and Patti learned new resources and learned of his deep love for his wife.

As her dementia continues to progress, Mark has maintained a positive attitude despite it all. He said **it’s important to “make peace with your reality.”** Mark shared that when he gets discouraged, he likes to “think about how we met and how our life was before dementia. When I am down and I really need to get going, I listen to the theme song from Rocky.”

Mark is INSPIRATIONAL. His desire to keep going, love Lisa, and advocate for other caregivers is admirable.

The world is a better place because of your willingness to share your story and we are honored to have crossed paths with you.

