

Financial Impact

Still Here: A caregiver series

LEANN: The other thing that people just don't really talk about enough is the cost of caring for your loved one.

JACQUELYN: We aren't in a society that is built to support caregivers and the people that they care for.

BAILEY: I've had to make a few sacrifices to take care of my parents, to be a caregiver, one of them being a full-time job.

JESSICA: I'm not saying I'm giving up my career, but I've had to pause and not follow some of the things that, you know, my peers would follow—like, have done because I said no because she deserves to be prioritized.

JACQUELYN: What do you put on your resumé for the amount of time that you weren't working?

RACHAEL: There's so much self-defeat and all the while you're losing the person who you counted on the most. You want to ask them, like, what would you do in this situation? How would you handle it?

CARLOS: It feels like it's crushing, and it's just the beginning.

MARIA: And some people live with this disease for decades.

JACQUELYN: When I looked for help, the only people that I could find were people who were, you know, at least 25 to 30 years my senior, pulling from their retirement or things like that. And I was just sort of like retirement? 401? Equity? You know, just kind of like what, ok.

TY: And so you do this whole live the American dream and, you know, make sure that you save and have your 401(k) and, you know, do all of these things. And Mommy was set. Like she has her Social Security, she has her pension, and it's still not enough.

RACHAEL: So, you have to find the hoops to jump through and care is not cheap. So, the easiest thing for a lot of people is to keep their loved one at home. There's no step-by-step guidebook. You're, like, hanging on for dear life.

JACQUELYN: And it all makes you feel like a failure, wanting to hire someone and not having the funds, you know, all of that makes you feel like you just aren't showing up in a way that you should.

CARLOS: I feel like we are one major house repair away from devastation, or one medical emergency that could throw a wrench into our financial cushion.

JESSICA: Thinking about managing the time, thinking about managing finances and money, thinking about how to get the biggest bang for my visits home, like there was never any like rest. It was always "What's the next thing I can create to make this better?" And that's exhausting. Exhausting.

RACHAEL: Getting my dad from his care home to a neurologist, I have to pay for [sic] a ambulance to take him, I have to pay for somebody to bring the wheelchair up.

LEANN: Pull-ups and gloves and trash bags and all of those things. Those are definitely the type of expenses that you don't think of that really add up.

JESSICA: They're sacrifices that I would do again, right? Because you only get one mom.

CARLOS: When he thanks me for taking care of him, when he entrusts me with his end-of-life wishes, and I can look him back in the eye confidently and say, I got you.

MARIA: Caregivers are the most resilient human beings on this planet.