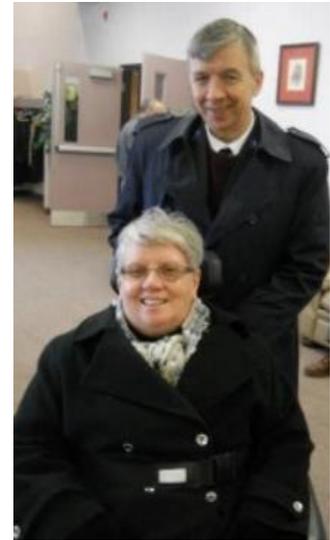# Caregiver Spotlight: Helping other caregivers navigate through MS

Len Burleigh of Hamilton has been caring for his wife Sharon since she was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis nearly 30 years ago at the age of 38. Len assists with just about everything including bathing, dressing and eating.

While Sharon receives assistance regularly from her personal support workers, Len provides most of her care.

Len believes that if his own story can help other families who may be experiencing a similar caregiving journey, he'll tell his story as often as he needs.

The 68-year old Hamilton resident retired from his job in 2012 to focus on providing Sharon with full-time care. Until about seven years ago, Sharon remained independent and could drive a van equipped with hand controls. Now that her illness has progressed, Sharon spends much of her time at home.

Together Len and Sharon have adapted with special equipment and a phone system designed to allow Len to keep in touch with his wife when he's out of the house. The Chedoke IT access group has also provided a computer keyboard so Sharon can stay updated on her Facebook account.

In 2013, Len was honoured by the MS Society of Canada's National Caregiver awards program in the Ontario & Nunavut Division, received the National Opal Award for Caregivers and this past year was honoured as an HNHB CCAC *Hero in the Home.*

Len was the lead organizer of a caregiver support group at his church in Hamilton to help others. "MS can be pretty scary," Len said. "When we first heard about MS we didn't know what it was and it threw us for a loop. We had to learn about it step by step." Once Len had enough information, he was eager to give back and share it with other people.

Although Sharon needs help with most things, Len says she is still sharp mentally. In fact, she speaks up when Len has missed a step with the lift or whatever he may be helping with. "Sharon's as quick as a cat," said Len.

Check out Len and Sharon's story on the **MS Community blog**>>