

Title:

Embracing Caregiving As A Career

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Summary:

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Article Body:

Experts say if you are a person who is caring and compassionate, a good conversationalist and enjoy helping others, you might consider a career as a caregiver.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates there are more than 700,000 professional companions or caregivers, making this one of the fastest-growing occupations in the nation. The Bureau projects more than a 27 percent growth in this career category over the next 10 years.

According to Home Instead Senior Care CEO and founder Paul Hogan, an aging population and longer life spans are indicators of an increasing demand for not only health care, but also in-home assistance. "The help and companionship afforded by a caregiver can keep seniors in their own homes longer and enhance their quality of life," says Hogan.

Seniors are not the only ones to benefit. For example, after relocating to a new city with her husband, a woman named Muriel Phelps decided she wanted to meet new people and take on new challenges. She had managed an office for 20 years and wasn't necessarily looking for a job when she discovered a hidden talent for caring for seniors. "In this day and age, people can have several careers," says Phelps of her newfound caregiving vocation. "It is one of the most fascinating periods of my life."

She has now been a professional caregiver for Home Instead Senior Care for three years and says the satisfaction of caregiving is being able to reach out and give other seniors the care they need. She and her seniors share many

interests-a love of gardening, music, food-and they even shop together.

"I have been so blessed in my life," she says. "If I can share and make someone's life more interesting and fun, right until their last breath, I've accomplished something and made my life worthwhile."