



Ron Hylton checks the time as he and his wife, Mary-Ann, make supper together in their home at Emmanuel Residences. Because of arthritis in her knees, Mary-Ann spends most of her time in her armchair and will prepare food there, while her husband does the actual cooking or baking and cleaning.



Mary-Ann Hylton chops up some vegetables with a bit of help from her husband, Ron.

Stronger Together

Mary-Ann Hylton patiently waits inside the van while her husband, Ron, goes outside to scrape down the icy windows, starting with the side windows before finally going to the front. Settling into the driver's seat, Ron starts the van, turning out of the parking lot and on to the street. Unless the weather is much worse, going to the Zellers restaurant for the early bird special is a daily routine for the couple. It's not just Zellers that's the routine; it's how they get to a place that repeats itself.

Ron's job is to load and unload the wheelchair in and out of their vehicle, and for Mary-Ann, it's a painful and long process to get in and out of her chair. Having had arthritis in her knees since she was 40 years old, she started using the wheelchair around 10 years ago.

At home around suppertime, Mary-Ann is comfortably seated in a big armchair, her foot propped up on a stool close beside the chair. In front of her is a tall, stable tray, which eventually becomes covered in a cutting board and various vegetables. "Should I just cook the beets and potatoes together?" Ron asks, and is responded to with a curt, "No." His wife is still very much in control of which vegetables are cooked and for how long.

Once Mary-Ann finished with her chopping, Ron takes the food to do the various cooking and boiling chores and taking things in and out of the oven. "Ron does the preparing of the meals," Mary-Ann explains. "I can't cook around there, or I'll burn myself."

Married for 57 years, in the past few years, Mary-Ann has found herself depending on her husband for a lot more. "If anything happens to him, I guess we end up in a nursing home," Mary-Ann says quietly.

She is always very patient while she waits for him to grab things off of the shelf at the store, or while giving instructions on where she wants something placed or how she wants something cooked. Ron does everything he can for his wife without a second thought or complaint, quietly and lovingly. He never talks about it - he just does it. It seems as natural to him as breathing.

He can only lightheartedly laugh with Mary-Ann about how he takes care of her, "Yeah, the pay's not so good!"



Ron Hylton scrapes the window of his van in preparation to go to the Zellers Restaurant for breakfast.



Ron and Mary-Ann Hylton are served their breakfast at the Zellers Restaurant.



Ron Hylton selects a box of crackers for his wife, Mary-Ann, as she is unable to select grocery items from her wheelchair.