

SENIOR LIFESTYLES

Eldersource lends a hand to Rochester couple

ROCHESTER — Edwin Logan, 84, enjoys doing Bible word searches, circling names, places and people from Scripture hidden amidst a jumble of letters.

As he breathes oxygen from a mobile tank that's always with him, the emphysema-stricken Logan can talk your ear off about U.S. and English history. If you want to know just exactly how the current British royal family came to be, give Logan a call. He can tell you all about its members, including King George III. The king, Logan explained, sorely underestimated the American revolutionaries who bested his Hessian mercenaries on Christmas Day, 1776, in Trenton, N.J.

It's doubtful many U.S. citizens know as much about their own country as Logan, whose depth of knowledge is all the more remarkable because he wasn't born here. An apparently gentle, articulate and intense Jamaican native, Logan and his Jamaican wife, Rose, live on the first-floor apartment in a home her son Lenny Lodge owns. The couple attend Church of Christ on Lawson Road in Greece.

In his native land where he spent most of his life, Logan was a court clerk and a farmer raising goats, cows and pigs as well as crops of yams, potatoes and sweet potatoes. He moved to the United States in 1990, working for three years in Rochester before retiring due to health reasons in 1993. Married for the past decade, both Edwin and Rose, who moved to the United States in 1987, came to this country to be closer to their immigrant children, and are now U.S. citizens.

"The United States is a very good, nice country," says Logan, who nonetheless acknowledged that the cold winters here sometime get to him given that he grew up in a hotter climate.

You wouldn't know it by looking around their neat, nicely decorated apartment,



Andrea Dixon/Staff photographer

but the Logans have had their financial struggles as seniors living on the fixed income Social Security provides. Yet the Logans are living examples of how intelligent navigation of the country's social service system can keep elderly people living a life of dignity even when subsisting on fixed incomes that don't allow much room for financial error. Of course, it helps to have someone help you navigate the system like Marcia Kusse, geriatric care manager with Eldersource, a collaborative program of Catholic Family Center of Rochester and

LIFESPAN, a Rochester-based not-for-profit agency.

Kusse met the Logans through a senior community center and has worked with them for more than four years. She has helped the couple deal with immigration issues, Medicare and utilities bills. "When we can't understand something, she comes and fixes it for us," Logan said. He noted, for example, that Kusse helped him and his wife set up a budget plan with the local utility company.

Eldersource is designed to help seniors

find the kind of help they might need at any given time. By calling the agency at 716/325-2800, a senior can hook up with a specialist who provides consultation and assistance over the phone. If more help is needed, seniors can get an in-home assessment of their needs, an individualized care plan, and an ongoing monitoring of services.

Kusse said Eldersource can do everything from helping seniors figure out how to pay their heating bill to finding food baskets. She added that she has also helped seniors rectify credit problems after they chalked up too much debt on their credit cards.

This year in particular, many seniors are struggling both with rising utilities bills and increases in health insurance premiums, Kusse said. Eldersource is set up to refer seniors to various agencies throughout Monroe County that can help with these and other problems, she said. (Related stories are on facing page.)

Kusse urged seniors to seek out assistance, even when they might

think they are not eligible. For example, she said, many seniors don't realize that they are eligible for food stamps, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's program to help people on low incomes pay for food.

Whatever a senior's question about available services, an answer can probably be found through Eldersource employees like Kusse who received this ringing endorsement from Logan.

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