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CLARK BONGAARDT

In July 2002, after more than 20 years practicing law in Media, Pennsylvania, Clark with the assistance of his wife Sallie and daughter Britton, opened the Springfield office of Comfort Keepers. Comfort Keepers provides in-the-home assistance to the elderly and disabled residents of Delaware and Montgomery Counties. Studies by Metlife and others have confirmed that people live happier, healthier and longer if they can live out their lives in the comfort of their homes. Many elderly residents need only a couple hours of assistance each week to be able to remain independent at home. In many cases the additional help is provided by family members – sons, daughters, sons-in-law and daughters-in-law -- who may also be working full time and raising their own children. Alternatively, seniors who have little or no local support find themselves forced into nursing homes which can cost more than \$7,000 a month in Pennsylvania. Comfort Keepers can lend the support needed by an elderly individual providing service from 2 hours a day to 24 hours a day thus helping the senior to stay home while at the same time taking stress of family members.

Comfort Keepers will come out and meet with any prospective client and their family member(s) to establish a care plan based upon the individual client's needs and their family's needs. Everything from meal preparation, washing dishes, dusting, vacuuming, organizing the bills, running errands and helping with doctor visits or loading, washing and folding laundry can be set up. Comfort Keepers can also provide assistance with personal care services which can include bathing, grooming, dressing, toileting, incontinence care, and medication reminders. It works very closely with family members to ensure that the needs of the client are met providing peace of mind that the elderly relative is safe and happy at home.

In the last 5 years alone, Springfield Comfort Keepers has provided assistance to over 1200 elderly and disabled clients. The Springfield Comfort Keepers office has been recognized in the Northeast Region and nationally as one of the Premier offices. Each year since 2004, it has been recognized with the dis-

tinguished President's Club Award presented to offices that are in the top 10 percent of their performance of companies worldwide. In 2006, Clark was elected as one of two Northeast Region representatives on the Comfort Keepers National Advisory Council. In 2007 he served as the Vice Chairman of the Council and in 2008 he was elected and served as the Council's Chairman.

"Certainly, to receive recognition in this industry is a great honor," said Clark Bongaardt. "Ask any elderly individual, and they will tell you that they prefer to stay in their own home. I am thrilled to own a business that can make this happen. However, our most coveted awards at Comfort Keepers have been earned by our Comfort Keepers, the exceptionally dedicated women and men who share their time and lives compassionately with our clients. These are the caring individuals without whom we would not be successful."

Comfort Keepers employs the most qualified and dedicated individuals with local and national awards being given to several Springfield caregivers. Jackie Albert who now works in the office coordinating client care was recognized as the Northeast Region's Comfort Keeper of the Year for 2006 and the 2006 National Comfort Keeper of the Year. In 2007 she was recognized by COSA (the County Office of Services for the Aging) with the second annual John F. Bauer Direct Care Worker Award. Comfort Keeper Rose Ritz received the first annual John F. Bauer Award in 2006; and Direct Care Worker Awards from COSA were received by Comfort Keeper caregivers in 2008 and 2010.

Both Comfort Keepers' Offices – Springfield and King of Prussia – are licensed by the Pennsylvania De-



partment of Health. Both are Medicaid Aging Waiver providers for their respective Offices of Aging and both are approved providers for the Veterans Administration. The Springfield Office is also an Office of Aging Options' provider.

Clark and Sallie are lifelong Delaware County residents and residents of Springfield since 1984. They have 3 children, Ian, Britton and Kylie. Ian and Britton are graduates of Springfield High School and Kylie will be graduating with the Class of 2013. "The Bongaardt family has strong ties to a community that has enriched their lives for many years," Clark stated. "Through Comfort Keepers, we are grateful for the opportunity to be able to give back to a community that has been so giving to us."



**Comfort
Keepers.**

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