

## Blanche looks for a home helper, finds a new friend

**ADDNAIDE BROUGHT THESE TWO FORMER NURSES TOGETHER; COMPATIBILITY AND COMMON GOALS DID THE REST**

Thursday isn't just the day of the week when Blanche's charming home in Kennedy Heights gets a solid sprucing up. It's also when she gets to spend time with her trusted new friend, Bonita.

Both women look forward to it. And for Blanche, 89, it's an important factor in being able to remain in her home, where she has lived since 1963. After all, she jokes, "I raised two kids and a husband here."

During weekly visits, Bonita mops the floors, cleans the bathrooms and organizes. The tasks had become too much for Blanche to take care of on her own. But most importantly, Bonita said, she dusts and vacuums.

"Blanche has asthma, so that's important, because dust is one of her triggers," she said.

The housekeeping help was exactly what Blanche, a retired nurse, was looking for when she reached out to Bonita through AddnAide. The app allows hundreds of older adults across Southwestern Ohio who need help with household tasks such as laundry, errands and meal prep to match with people willing to provide that care.

As for the companionship and fast friendship formed since they matched on AddnAide? Well, those were unexpected bonuses, much to the delight of both women.

In the face of a regional and national shortage of traditional home care workers, Council on Aging (COA) and its subsidiary home52 decided to take an innovative approach to the problem, debuting the app in July 2022. Blanche learned of AddnAide after her COA case manager reached out to let her daughter, Linda, know about the new service.



Linda lives just a five-minute drive from her mother and is deeply involved in helping with her care; ensuring that Blanche has the home help she needs is an important part of that. Since having open-heart surgery in 2008, Blanche has received housekeeping help through COA, but with the shortage of people seeking work as home helpers, that assistance was sometimes difficult to maintain.

She and her daughter were excited about the app's potential to address the shortage by attracting caregivers — those with experience in the field and those with an interest and a heart for the work, but no experience. They have not been disappointed.

AddnAide is ideal for people seeking a flexible schedule, including stay-at-home parents, retirees, students, community-minded individuals and those with other employment.

## BLANCHE FINDS A HOME HELPER, FRIEND

To create an AddnAide account, you must be 18 years old, have transportation and complete a required background check.

For Bonita, the opportunity to supplement her income with flexible work was appealing, but what really motivated her to sign up as a caregiver through AddnAide was the promise of purpose-driven employment. Like Blanche, she worked for decades as a nurse, with a special focus on gerontology. She maintains her nursing license and has secured additional related certifications because it's important to her to be part of the solution to the care gap.

"It's a real crisis in Ohio," Bonita said. "I encourage so many people I know to sign up to be a caregiver through AddnAide."

She has found AddnAide to be user-friendly. After creating her account, Bonita received information from COA's third-party financial management firm, Palco Inc., on completing the background check. Once that was done, her profile became visible to older adults on AddnAide, who contact her to employ her to do housekeeping, run errands and provide companionship, among other services.

Blanche, meanwhile, worked with her daughter to create her AddnAide profile, and she relies on Linda to schedule appointments and approve Bonita's timecards through the app. Older adults (or their designees) serve as employers for caregivers, and all payroll and tax aspects are built into AddnAide.

When Blanche was searching for a potential caregiver on the app, she was attracted to the fact that Bonita shared her background as a nurse. Both women also appreciated the fact that the other's profile included a photo, which gave them an added sense of security. And there was another factor.



"We are both true born-again Christians," she said. "That attracted us to each other."

After Blanche reached out through AddnAide and she and Bonita chatted there, they exchanged phone numbers and talked. Next, they met at the library to get more comfortable with each other, before finally beginning their professional relationship.

The rest, as they say, is history. In their first year of their new working relationship, Blanche has been able to feel safe and happy in her home, and Bonita has enjoyed contributing to the solution for the caregiver shortage.

Blanche is an accomplished singer who has performed with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra/CSO Pops Classical Roots Community Choir. She still performs with the Loretta C. Mangram Chorale with Greater Liberty Baptist Church, and Bonita has even taken her granddaughter to some of Blanche's performances.

Maintaining an essential caregiving relationship while building a friendship – now that is a song that both Bonita and Blanche love to sing.

To learn more about AddnAide, visit [home52.org/addnaide](https://home52.org/addnaide)