

# THE CINCINNATI ENQUIRER

SUNDAY, AUGUST 8, 2010

## OFFERING INDEPENDENCE

# Home-care help business tends to growing demand



The Enquirer/Gary Landers

**Nurse assistant** Megan Schulkers (left) of Homewatch CareGivers helps Marion Fanning water her plants in Fanning's Delhi Township home.

## Aging America

■ Caregiving is predicted to be the fastest-growing health-care field over the next decade.

■ Nationally, the personal and home-care industry is projected to provide 1.4 million jobs in 2018, a 50 percent increase over 2008.

■ 79 million baby boomers live in the U.S.

■ 90 percent of aging parents are not willing to leave their homes for care.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, AARP

## Home Helpers plans to expand from 650 locations

By Jeff McKinney

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**MONTGOMERY** – Emma Dickison's mission for helping others is personal.

She's been involved with caregiving since high school in 1980, caring for her grandmother in Kentucky and both of her parents in Florida before they died.

Now, as president of Montgomery-based Home Helpers, Dickison runs one of the nation's largest providers of non-medical care, mainly to senior citizens.

The firm's employees run errands, prepare meals, do light housekeeping and provide personal care assistance to people who often can't perform those duties themselves. Such care nationally and locally runs around \$18 to \$22 per hour, depending on the type of service, Dickison says.

It's a long way from her experiences growing up, she says. Then, "there was no place to turn to get help for your sick elderly family."

Dickison, 47, is preparing for the

coming crush in demand for in-home care. She counts more than 650 Home Helpers locations in the U.S. and Canada, all independently owned by franchisees. Seventy-eight locations opened last year; Dickison expects an equal number to open this year.

Locally, Home Helpers hopes to open two franchises, in Delhi Township on Cincinnati's West Side and Hamilton in Butler County, by year's end. They would join Home Helpers franchises in Fairfax and Lebanon.

"We still have some territory available and could probably add another three offices in this region," Dickison says.

Demand for in-home care is growing as the population of Americans age 65 and over is projected to double to more than 70 million by 2030, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Every day 12,000 people turn 65, attracting newcomers to the home-care business.

In Northern Kentucky, Mark and Ann McClure of Union plan to open a Homewatch CareGivers franchise this fall to serve mainly senior resi-

dents in Boone, Kenton and Campbell counties.

Mark McClure, 52, says he likes the Homewatch business model because it allows the couple to run their own company.

The ability to live independently was among reasons Molly Prues of Anderson Township suggested her mom, Marion Fanning, 80, of Delhi Township, seek help from the Homewatch CareGivers Cincinnati Metro franchise.

"Knowing my mom has someone with her gives me peace of mind to tend to my own responsibilities," says Prues, 43, a business owner and mother of two young children.

Lauri and Nick Sachs run the Cincinnati Metro franchise, which has seen its revenue double in the first half of this year compared to the same time last year.

Lauri Sachs, 44, says the business also more than doubled its number of caregivers and staff to 31 during the same period. It could open more offices by 2012 if demand remains high.

"We are planning for an ambitious growth model," she says.