

George Demetriou



Canterbury-based care-at-home service *Seniors Helping Seniors*® expanded into the London Borough of Harrow and Northwood in London on its third birthday.

The owner of the new Harrow office, George Demetriou, is a keen Rotarian in his early 70s who has over three decades of experience building self-owned businesses. George was drawn to Seniors Helping Seniors through a desire to finish his career “doing something really worthwhile, making a genuine and positive difference to people’s lives.” He says: “The concept is simple and, to me, compelling. Matching fit and able seniors with time on their hands and experienced carers who want to work flexibly, with seniors needing help to enable them to remain in their own homes for as long as possible was, I thought, a brilliant idea and a thoroughly rewarding venture to be involved with.”

George’s experiences since launch have given him great cause for optimism about the business’s prospects: “I haven’t met anyone who hasn’t thought that the concept of Seniors Helping Seniors is a great idea and something that is much needed in today’s society. I have been delighted at the interest shown by everyone who has heard about it and the support, both moral and practical, I have received from many. I am therefore absolutely confident that the Seniors Helping Seniors franchise has the potential to thrive throughout the UK.”

George affirms that the passion of Seniors Helping Seniors UK owners Christian and Sally Wilse for the business’s offering was a determining factor in his decision to launch the new franchise. “I wasn’t actively looking for another business opportunity, but an advert looking for ‘good-hearted entrepreneurs’ caught my eye, and I subsequently met with Christian and Sally. I was struck by their total belief in, and commitment to, the Seniors Helping Seniors ideal and by the sense of satisfaction and fulfilment they had already achieved through the business. My decision to become a franchisee was directly as a result of my meetings with them.”

George praises the support he has received from the Wilses, which includes two 3-day training sessions at which he had the opportunity to meet with carers and understand the practicalities of running the business; the manual has included all the answers to my questions but I can chat things through anytime. I have appreciated the practical support of provision of print and online support materials; templates for the Harrow franchise’s own website and marketing materials; guidance on social media; news items and leads as well as referrals and recommendations that I could use in my own community. The ‘grass roots marketing’ programme is very thorough.

Seniors Helping Seniors has earned positive media and stakeholder attention since its UK launch in 2013. It is a transferrable operation that has been singled out for recognition by leading figures such as Sir Muir Gray, the former NHS Chief of Knowledge; it earned an award for focus on individual requirements and flexibility in the sector; it was the focus of a BBC special news report on alternative care provision in light of concerns from the CQC about increasing care home closures, we have won an award for being in the Top Ten most recommended care agencies in the UK and a customer services award.

Local content and the business's personal approach is very important. "In this area in particular, Christian and Sally have been very open to collaboration, and we're really enjoying the two-way nature of the relationship," George continues. "It's great that they are receptive to, and encouraging of, our ideas."

Working with the Wilses has, George says, been a really enjoyable experience: "Christian and I have a similar outlook on life and share a sense of humour. We are both totally committed to the cause, but it has also been really fun working with him and Sally."

Christian adds: "In George we have found a kindred spirit, and we look forward to ensuring success in the Harrow community and beyond as more franchisees join us."