

# BUSINESS

## Granny Nannies offers a helping hand

Home care service company is thriving in Hernando County.

By TONY HOLT  
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**SPRING HILL** — Ken and Cyndi Wilson knew what sort of business to run when both of their dads began suffering from the early signs of dementia.

They were so intent on running their own home health-care franchise they visited Phoenix to meet with a potential parent agency. They weren't as impressed as they had hoped to be.

Eventually, they realized everything they wanted was merely 80 miles away.

"We went all the way out there to look at one company," Cyndi Wilson said, referring to her fruitless trek to Southwest. "We had this here in our backyard the whole time."

Granny Nannies was founded by Robert D. Hodgson in 1990 and was franchised in 1997. Since then, the company has expanded across Florida and emerged in four other states — Georgia, Kentucky, Pennsylvania and Michigan. There are 21 offices total, 16 of which are located throughout Florida.

The Granny Nannies operated by the Wilsons is located at 10485 Heley St., off Mariner Boulevard. The couple obtained a registry license in June.

Hodgson was in attendance Friday when the office hosted a Greater Hernando County Chamber of Commerce ribbon-cutting ceremony. "More than likely, we'll be tripling in the next couple of years," said Hodgson, who praised Ken and Cyndi Wilson for "following the business model to a tee."

Hodgson said he and his family decided to do something when his grandfather, who lived in New England, was ailing and needed around-the-clock care.

Instead of shuttling back and forth from Florida to the Northeast, Hodgson decided to look for a better option.

His grandfather was in his 80s when he first started receiving better care through the fledgling Granny Nannies business. He lived to be 104. "We credit that with good at-home care," Hodgson said.

His goal is to offer a better and more economical option than a nursing home.

The Wilsons advertised for jobs in



Staff photo by BOB EAST III

**Ken and Cyndi Wilson have opened Granny Nannies, a nursing agency that specializes in in-home care for the elderly, couples or individuals with special needs.**

*Hernando Today* earlier this year and the first two professionals hired were Cathy Miller and Cathy Finamore. Miller is a home health nurse and Finamore is a certified nursing assistant.

"I thought this was the best agency to be with," Miller said of her early impression of the Wilsons and Granny Nannies. "I like the way they handle themselves. They're always above board and they're very good people."

It was Finamore who saw the ad and told her friend Miller to join her when it came time to fill an application.

"They're very organized here," Finamore said. "You're not taken from one job and moved to another job. We develop a bond with our patients."

Cyndi Wilson is determined to find the best people and keep them. That is why, in her words, they get paid

more for working at Granny Nannies.

She also wants to make sure patients and their families are satisfied, so she charges less for services. "We're not here to make millions," Wilson said, referring to the financial burden of paying more and charging less.

Ken Wilson said his office covers a territory that includes Sumter and Citrus counties, but for now, he is focused on Hernando County.

He believes at-home care is a better option than a nursing facility, mainly because any patient would prefer to stay home.

"They lose the reference of what they're used to," Wilson said of those who live in nursing homes. "They lose the will."

Both he and Hodgson were careful not to speak too negatively about nursing homes. There are pros and cons to every business and they only hope to provide an option that

enough people would consider better, they said.

The Wilsons currently live in Clermont, so the commute to Spring Hill adds a lot to the daily grind. But the most challenging aspect of the business is the late-night phone calls.

That is just fine with Cyndi Wilson.

"This is a 24-hour a day company," she said. "But that's perfectly OK. I want to know about everything."

Reporter Tony Holt can be contacted at 352-544-5283.

### BIZ AT A GLANCE

**Biz:** Granny Nannies  
**Owners:** Ken and Cyndi Wilson  
**Location:** 10485 Heley St.  
**What it is:** Affordable Home Care Service  
**Get in touch:** 352-684-8791.