

# A CARING *heart*

“I guess I was just destined to be a caregiver,” says Cassandra Augustus of Pittsburgh. “I like people.”

Step back through her 74 years, and that is the central theme of her life. People were drawn to her, and she to them, because of her caring nature.

She grew up in Pittsburgh, but much of her adult life was spent away from her hometown. It started when she joined the Army and was stationed in Oklahoma. She met her husband in the service.

After they got married and left the military, they started their own family in Texas. When their oldest daughter Gloria was born, Sandy, as her friends call her, wanted more children. So they adopted two more, Reginald and Sunni. It was an early reflection of Sandy’s nurturing personality.

## A REAL PEOPLE PERSON

When the children were old enough for school, Sandy worked in hospitals around Galveston. It’s seemed like a good fit given her desire to help others, and it drew on her military training as a medical specialist. A job years later in Washington, DC, saw her again helping others—this time as a popular receptionist at an influential law firm.

Once she retired, she returned to Pittsburgh, where her family needed her. Her cousin Robin, who was like a sister to her, was debilitated by a stroke. Robin moved to a nursing home for care, but, for more than eight years, Sandy stayed by her side—attending every doctor’s appointment and visiting her every day. As a caregiver, it was Sandy’s natural role.

Today, Sandy has more time for herself and fewer responsibilities. But she’s still surrounded by friends and family, and still helping out whenever she can.

“I’m the family matriarch now. So I’m getting in all their business,” she laughs.

## CARING FOR THE CAREGIVER

On her own and living on a fixed income, Sandy started looking for a more affordable apartment two years ago.

“I said I need to find a place that costs less, but yet it has to be where I like. I want to feel safe.”

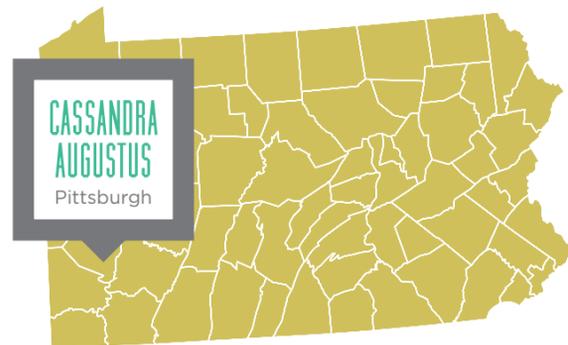
She knew she found her new home when she visited the Penn Mathilda Apartments in Pittsburgh’s Bloomfield neighborhood, just eight blocks from where she grew up. Constructed and managed by ACTION-Housing, the Penn Mathilda has 39 affordable units, half of which are reserved for veterans, like Sandy. It was constructed, in part, with tax credits provided by PHFA.

“I liked where it was,” Sandy explains her choice. “I feel safe because it’s a secure building, and it’s quiet. I have the perfect apartment. It’s perfect for me.”

Plus, considering Sandy’s personable nature, there are also all her friendly neighbors who she checks on regularly.

“A lot of my neighbors, when I come back from being away, say, ‘Where were you? You haven’t come and knocked on my door.’ There’re really good people here. They care about other people.”

Just like Sandy.



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—Cassandra Augustus