

Premia family

A family restored and reunited

“We were so afraid we would drop her,” says Helen Premia. Carrying their seven-year old daughter Angelina up and down the stairs of their Surrey, BC home was becoming physically impossible for Helen Premia and her husband, Augustine. “We are both small built,” says Helen, who, like her daughter has dark curly hair and a luminous smile. “I’m 4’11” and Augustine is 5’4”, and Angelina was just getting too heavy for us.” “We were also afraid one of us would fall while carrying her. My husband had a hairline crack in his spine, and it wasn’t healing because he’s constantly doing things for Angelina. I had tendonitis; my hand was in a cast. The doctor said I had to stop doing things with my hand.

But if I didn’t do things for Angelina, who would do them? She can’t do anything for herself,” the tiny woman says, looking drained and distressed as she recalls the situation. Angelina has a condition that means she is in a wheelchair and totally dependant on others. Early on, Helen had quit her job to devote herself to Angelina’s care. But after years of taking care of Angelina, Helen and Augustine were becoming ground down, physically and mentally, and Angelina was becoming a virtual prisoner in their home. “It got to the point where we were only taking her out for medical appointments, because it was just too hard to get her in and out of the car,” says Helen.

So getting the wheelchair accessible van and the residential lift through Giving in Action was a godsend for the family. Not only can they now take Angelina out with relative ease, they can also function as a family. “Before, we couldn’t all fit in the car together, so someone always had to stay with Angelina. Her sisters sacrificed doing a lot of things, because they didn’t want to leave her behind. Now we can go to the pool, we can go to the park; we can even go shopping together. Angelina really likes getting out, being around people, being stimulated.

She’s just so much more alive now, and we’re getting better too.” “We are just so grateful for the work Giving in Action does; we don’t know how to thank you enough,” Helen finishes, teary eyed.