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GETTING BY WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MYBESTHELPER



“Necessity... the mother of invention.” – Plato

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Beyond death and taxes the world holds few absolute truths. Yet, it's fair to say no two families are alike and good help can be very hard to find.

For Dr. Alexandra Greenhill, juggling being the mother of three girls (aged three, nine and 11), being a family physician and serving the community (including roles with the Canadian Society of Physician Executives and the Canadian Institute for Child Health), she wanted good help. But, she discovered how hard it really is to find.

It's this life experience that lead Greenhill to take on founding Vancouver's [myBestHelper](https://www.mybesthelper.com/), an online platform that connects families with help around the home.

It's also more than just a childcare issue though: our shifting age demographics is contributing to more pressures on the “Sandwich Generation.”

StatsCan estimates that more two million Canadians are “sandwiched” between caring for their young children and aging parents at the same time. Furthermore the figures show this is an issue for all caregivers, representing about 28 per cent of Canadians age 15 years and older.

(<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/130910/dq130910a-eng.htm>)



(<http://www.betakit.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Screen-Shot-2014-07-02-at-1.19.01-PM.png>)

“We looked at the overall space and said a more modern solution is required,” Greenhill told BetaKit. “The same way as travel agencies were replaced by modern tools that allow you to look at all of the options, compare prices, and self book. You need the same solution for anything required around around the family care space.”

Greenhill followed Geoffrey Moore’s notion from Crossing the

Chasm(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crossing_the_Chasm), in realizing in 2011 that they had to establish a beachhead. “We decided to first focus on the opportunity that creating a marketplace for finding good childcare presented.”

She added “our overall vision is not just to say that people need to be less stressed and better performers at work, they actually need to have quality support at home in order to better achieve their goals professionally and personally. Right now too many people don’t have access to services they need.”

Out of all of the children younger than six who need childcare, only one in four has an available daycare spot. Greenhill suggested “everyone else ends up on a wait list. Another 1-4 families find someone within their family or personal network. But what happens with the other 2 families? They generally end up struggling. We want to become the consistent, effective, service that makes life less stressful.”

On top of the vastly different care needs each age of child presents, Greenhill also points out 44 percent of these families also need some form of support around an elderly relative. As well, half the time that relative doesn’t “even live in their city”. It’s hard enough figuring out your local care options, now factor in finding good help that’s often over 100km’s away.

Beyond families finding good help, the other key part of the myBestHelper community platform is allowing caregivers the chance to find the types of family situations that fit best their skills, background, availability, and personality.

The “Happy Days” family model is long gone. Here are some of the “unique” situations that they’ve helped families with:

- Family with shift work (two nurses) needs someone to help kids get ready for school in the morning, pick them up in the afternoon and make them dinner. They found two great helpers to split the morning and afternoon shifts.
- Two families were looking for a nanny they could share, so sometimes nanny is looking after 1 child,

sometimes

- Family has elderly parents who need a bit of extra help around the house, keeping everything tidy and running errands. They found a friendly UBC student with a car to help out three times a week.

It's being driven on the premise of bringing innovation to family care services, but more importantly it's about transparency and fairness.

For instance, Greenhill thinks businesses that charge \$30 per day just to access their service to find even a temporary solution are "simply preying on people who are desperate. Our vision is having one flat fee for a year, and to say 'we have your back.' You're not alone in this task of raising kids or caring for your loved ones."

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[John Gray](http://betakit.com/author/john-gray/) (<http://betakit.com/author/john-gray/>)

John is BetaKit's first West Coast Editor. He's BC born and raised with a Vancouver postal code for the last 35 years. John's been involved with the start-up community since early 2009. He's co-founder of Omniscient Technologies a visual analytics company whose assets were acquired in October 2011. John and his co-founder reacquired their IP in October 2014 and will be launching a new version Mentionmapp.com this year. As a writer, John cares about keeping the humanity in

our stories and conversations about technology. He has a B.Ap.Sc. in Communications and a B.A. in English, both from Simon Fraser University.

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