

In October of 2013, my oldest son suddenly faced a difficult divorce. The only way he could secure custody of his children was to have a care plan in place which included caregivers. My husband, who has been self employed for over 30 years, offered to walk away from his work to care for the grandchildren. I then lost my job in Nov 2013 after 28 years, which allowed me to help care for the grandchildren as well. The only problem with this plan is we now had no income and were too young for retirement.

My son received custody of the children and we moved into his home in another state to begin our caregiving. We started to pull money out of our retirement account to survive, but pulling this money was about 4-5 years ahead of plan, which would cause our retirement funds to dwindle quickly.

After about 6 months, I found out about vacation rentals. Renting our home was the last thing I would want to do, since this is our home we live in and travel to for respite. However, the only other choice was to lose the house to foreclosure. So, in June 2014, I placed my home on VRBO.com and Airbnb.com. This allowed us to be able to make mortgage payments plus a few more bills for the remainder of 2014. This year (2015) I have been able to book enough reservations to pay for the mortgage the entire year by only renting my home out twice a month for about 3 days each.

My guests have been able to enjoy the sites and attractions in our local community, traveling to the beach and mountains. Without the assistance of Airbnb and VRBO, I would not have been able to reach the travelers to market my home.

Without the ability to rent our home as a vacation rental, we would not have a home for our future retirement and our retirement funds would have been depleted more quickly.