

Debt Crusher Powers 'Light at the End of the Tunnel'

ECU loan relieves stress, helps Utica resident dig out of high-interest debt



Sheila Dill lived fairly comfortably over the past 30 years or so. If she needed something, she'd go out and buy it.

But after retiring six years ago, her income greatly decreased. However, her spending habits didn't. Typically, her purchases were gradual, but over the past year she incurred a lot of unexpected medical bills, as well.

She went from being able to pay the balance on her credit cards in full each month, then just the minimum amount due, and when she turned to Extra Credit Union for help in January, she wasn't able to pay even that.

Thankfully, Extra Credit Union came to her rescue by consolidating her high-interest credit cards and medical bills with our Debt Crusher Debt Consolidation Loan program.

She is saving \$500 a month, which she is able to apply toward two outstanding cards that soon will be paid off, as well.

"I didn't realize my expenses were getting so out of hand," said Dill, 68, of Utica. "It was a vicious cycle I was in with that high-interest debt. But now, there is light at the end of the tunnel, and it wasn't there before."

Making ends meet

Having been a single mother, Dill had struggled to make ends meet while her children were growing up. She worked as a cook or prep-cook in various restaurants, while selling handmade crafts and cakes on the side.

"We didn't have a lot of money to do a lot with my kids when they were growing up, but we still had fun," Dill said. "We would do a lot of freebie things like have picnics at the park, go to the library, DIY projects ... there's ways you can still do things and be creative. They seemed to appreciate it ... We were raised to give 100 percent. That was my goal, to do the best I could."

Eventually, Dill studied to become a journeyman electrician, a profession she enjoyed for 26 years. Although finding work was slow in the beginning, work picked up after a few years and her financial burdens and stresses were eased.

"I worked hard to get myself to that position," Dill said.

Unfortunately, after retirement, though, finances began to weigh heavily on Dill once again. Still, she tried to remain positive.

"I try to smile all the time whether things are good or bad," Dill said.

Despite her positivity, her finances got the best of her over the past year.

"I would get frustrated because I don't like owing people," Dill said. "I was stressed out. And then I began to get desperate because I didn't feel like I could get out from under it."

Dill noted that her only other option would have been to declare bankruptcy, which is something she didn't want to have to do.

"I didn't want anything lingering that my son would have to pay after I'm gone," Dill said.

She said Extra Credit Union's debt consolidation loan lifted a weight off her shoulders.

"I am thoroughly pleased. I couldn't say enough good things about what the lender, Gabby, did for me ... she worked really hard to help me figure out what I needed to do," Dill said. "I am grateful."