

### ***This Is My Story...Jack Bivens***

It was February 23, 2015; I was on my way to have my morning coffee with friends at Hardee's when I was involved in a traffic accident that left me pretty banged up. MedStar took me from the accident to the Sparta Community Hospital Emergency Room. They looked at my external injuries, and the x-ray showed I had a broken hip, so I was transferred to St. Louis University Intensive Care Unit.

I had surgery on my hip by Dr. Boudreau the next day. There were 7 pins inserted into my hip to put it back into place. I spent the next few days in the ICU, and then moved to the orthopedic floor at SLUH. I had a pretty extensive bump on my head and had developed a blood clot in my leg after the surgery, so I was being monitored fairly close. Recovering from both the accident and the surgery was coming along in St. Louis. I got to eat solid foods on February 26, which to anyone who knows me, knows what a big achievement that was. My eyes were swollen shut from the bump on my head, but the smell of the food overcame me, and I tried to blindly feed myself... much to my wife Kay's dismay.

As I began to stabilize, my wounds were becoming less protrusive, and my condition became less critical, the discussion of therapy and healing became the next big hurdle. There were talks of many different options as to who would be fit to care for me, as I was not to bear weight on my hip for at least 3 months. The Sparta Community Hospital Swing Bed Program was brought up as an option, and that is where I wanted to go for rehabilitation. So, on March 4, with detailed orders for physical therapy, I was transferred to Sparta Community Hospital to be a Swing Bed patient.

I did not really know what to expect from "Swing Bed." It was explained to me that due to the change in my condition, I qualified for a change in the level of care. The Swing Bed patients are those that no longer qualify for acute inpatient care or intensive work-up, but still need skilled care. They said to keep in mind that a "change in the level of care does not involve any change in the quality of care." That was an understatement. Coming from St. Louis University to Sparta Community Hospital was an enhancement in quality care. At Sparta, I felt like I was home.

When I arrived at Sparta Swing Bed, I was still very weak. I was pleased to find out that I had a private room on the regular nursing floor at the hospital. I had three delicious meals a day, a daily shower, and physical therapy twice daily. I was just like any other patient in the hospital, except I had specific goals that we worked on daily. In order to stay, I had to show daily progress on my goals. My goals were simple things, like how to live life without bearing weight on one side of your body. I had to learn to perform modified activities of daily life so I could function but not reinjure myself. I had to dress myself standing on one leg- a difficult task for anyone, let alone an 83 year old man! So, as part of my therapy, one of my goals was to get out of the hospital gown and into clothes everyday.

The Staff at Sparta Community Hospital were so patient with me. Although I was not a critical inpatient, I was still in the hospital, and they were able to continue to monitor me, my injuries, my progress, and stay on top of any adverse event that can happen after a traumatic injury. They were immediately on it when I developed a urinary tract infection, and able to get it treated without skipping a beat on therapy. Not only is the facility clean, the food was good, and the staff was great. I cannot begin to thank the staff enough; they make the hospital a special place for recovery.

I attribute most of my amazing recovery to the Physical Therapy department. **Michael J.** helped me and had a way of getting me to do things I did not think were

possible when I first arrived. He got me to where I needed to be and was strong enough to give me a kick in the pants when I started to feel sorry for myself, which was exactly what I needed.

The nursing staff and the aids were top notch. Everyone was pleasant, positive, upbeat, caring and patient. It is a little humbling to have to rely on someone to bathe you, but they were so professional and unbelievably helpful. I may not have known them when I came in, but I felt like I left with some new friends.

I was a little apprehensive about the Hospitalist program. I am not a sick person, so I did not understand why I would not be seeing Dr. James, but a doctor I had never met? That was, until I met them. The Hospitalists provided excellent care and they seemed to be available at all hours. They met with my family on more than one occasion, explained everything to them, discussed my progress, answered all of their questions, ordered any additional testing I needed, and checked in on me all the time. They were more than attentive to my needs, and they collaborated with Dr. James for my needs after discharge so he could continue my care.

The Social Services department was excellent in coordinating my care as well. They held care plan meetings to keep my family up to date on my progress, and set up my discharge plan, and arranged all of my follow up appointments.

I went back to see my surgeon in St. Louis on March 26. He was very pleased with the progress I had made at Sparta, but said I had another 2 months to be non-weight bearing on my hip. I had met my goals with therapy on the Swing Bed program, so on March 31, 2015, I was discharged home.

Social Services made sure we had ample time to make accommodations at the house for me. At Home Health Care followed up with me once I got home. Vickie Brown was one of my physical therapists at home- and because of the way she cared, I cared. She had a way of getting me to do my exercises even on days I was not due to get a visit! Once I was well enough, I did aquatic therapy at the Center. Dr. Boudreau was impressed that Sparta had aquatic therapy offered, and wrote a prescription for it immediately upon realizing it was available to me.

I am a social person. I enjoyed visiting with every staff member that I came in contact with- both at St. Louis and Sparta. However, at Sparta, I could speak with staff and figure out how we'd know a mutual family member or friend and share stories. They truly are a great group of kindhearted people. When you connect with people and find out that you know a little about where they are coming from, that is when it comes full circle for me. That is when I feel at home. I felt cared for at Sparta Community Hospital.

Today I am more than happy with the progress I've made. Sparta Community Hospital took time with me and they continue to do so. I am a member at the Center, and I continue to walk out there for strengthening. Every staff member I encounter or approach will help me, even though I am no longer his or her "patient." But that is what you get with a small town: nice, friendly, helpful people. Sparta Community Hospital is small enough to care and to know ya, but large enough to have met my needs- I'm forever grateful.