

CAREGIVERS *Each family's caregiving story is unique with a common thread: the desire to care. We thank these families for sharing their stories so that others can learn from them.* share their EXPERIENCES

VIVIAN'S STORY

Beating my personal best

By Vivian Moore

Last year I was diagnosed with high blood pressure and my doctor prescribed medication for it. I decided it was time to get proactive about my health but had never been a very athletic person. My friend Mary tried to convince me to join her running group. The idea of running 10 kilometres seemed insurmountable, but I decided to join anyway. I had no intentions of running a marathon, but wanted to get some exercise.

Getting out to sessions was easier knowing my friend would be there because I didn't want to disappoint her, otherwise I might have found an excuse not to go.

After just a few months, I am pleased to report that I feel better and my doctor's happy with my blood pressure. Last month I ran my first five kilometre marathon. Crossing the finishing line and knowing I had just achieved my



goal was an exhilarating feeling. I am now training for my second race and hoping for a "personal best" finishing time. I owe my friend a lot for believing in me and giving me the encouragement to do what once seemed impossible. ☀️

SANDOR'S STORY

Gone cruising

By Sandor Fazekas

Fresh air, great food and brisk walks around the promenade deck! I was recently diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, but that didn't stop my wife,

Megan, and I from taking a seven-day Alaskan cruise. Megan found out right away that traveling with diabetes would not be a problem. We were able to make special arrangements for à la carte meals, ensuring that mine were specially prepared. The ship's nurse gave me a booklet of diabetes recommended foods, indicating what I should steer clear of on the buffet table. She also had samples of my medications and kept a store of insulin in case of an emergency. We were impressed! This was all pre-arranged and discussed by the cruise representative, even before we'd confirmed the booking.

Tales

I was sure to wear my MedicAlert bracelet, brought the necessary documentation for my medication, purchased extra health insurance, and took a travel blood test kit so that Megan could constantly be reassured that my sugar levels weren't out to sea! Lastly, for walks on the deck and onshore, I took a pair of proper walking shoes at the recommendation of my doctor. No diabetic foot problems, such as blisters, calluses and ulcers, were going to ruin our trip. We had a wonderful cruise and can't wait to plan our next Diabetes-friendly vacation. ☀️



Back to a healthy lifestyle

When Paul Cribben, a Scarborough butcher, went to a public swimming pool three years ago, he didn't expect to leave with a life-altering condition. Soon after his swim, Cribben noticed a small scratch on his leg had festered into a large wound that wouldn't heal.

After several hospital visits, a doctor diagnosed Cribben with a venous leg ulcer. An ultrasound revealed two defective valves in his lower leg impaired blood flow between his legs and heart. Compression therapy was the only answer.

For an active man who spends 12 to 15 hours daily working on his feet and bikes to and from work during warmer months, this was disheartening. If severe pain and swelling in his legs from the ulcer weren't enough, the several layers of bandages compression therapy required prevented him from wearing regular shoes or participating in simple activities, like dancing at his friend's wedding.

Cribben was desperate to find a treatment and get his

life back, even if it meant paying for surgery. During a routine change in compression bandages at the local wound clinic, a nurse recommended a new two-layered compression system. This thinner compression system provided the necessary pressure and Cribben wore regular shoes again.

Unlike the previous system, Coban 2 Layer Compression System made by 3M stayed in place and reduced the swelling in his legs, allowing him to enjoy his daily activities. Cribben explained, "I was finally able to get back on my feet with a smile and be on the go again."

Cribben is not alone. It is estimated that up to 670 000 Canadians suffer from lower leg ulcers, most of which are venous leg ulcers. Although most of those affected are over the age of 65, the populations' increasingly sedentary lifestyle make the condition increasingly prevalent in Canadians as young as 45. With limited treatment available and up to a 97 per cent chance of recurrence, venous leg ulcers tremendously impact the quality of life, not only for those affected, but also their families. ☀️

PAIGE'S STORY

Going on a road trip

By Thea McCarthy

One of our VON nurses arrived for the regular monthly visit in a very rural district. Upon her arrival, her client stated emphatically that he didn't want nursing care. He wanted the nurse to take him to see Rosie, who was "just a few farms down the road." Our client is unable to drive anymore, there is no family in the area and his wife cannot be left alone.

This day was one of the rare ones when someone was there to sit with his wife. No wonder he made such a heartfelt request to be taken to see his "dear Rosie." He wanted to give her a Christmas gift.

The VON nurse quickly ascertained that her client needed this visit with Rosie, whoever Rosie was, and decid-

ed to meet the need. Down the road they went, gift in a plastic bag. It was very obvious the good this jaunt was doing the client, both physically and emotionally. In a few minutes, they arrived at the destination farm. Much to the nurse's surprise, she was invited to accompany her client to see Rosie too. Instead of going into the house, they went into the barn.

Rosie was there and as glad to see her friend as he was to see her. They nuzzled each other and he gave her his gift—bite by delicious bite—and then introduced Rosie to the nurse. Rosie seemed to know that the nurse had gone above and beyond the call. She thanked the nurse the



only way she knew how—with a delightful sounding neigh and a toss of her Clysdale mane. You see, Rosie was the client's old horse, farmed out to a neighbor when the client could no longer care for her. ☀️

Got a tale to tell?

Fax or e-mail us your story. If we publish it, you'll receive a complimentary one-year subscription! Send your story to sarah@bcsgroup.com