

HEALTH and WELLNESS



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Journey to wellness

By LAUREN ALBRECHT
CORRESPONDENT

If health conditions were like frequent flier miles, Carmen Sarno would have enough points to get to heaven and back.

His most recent bout with failing health almost left him without a round-trip back home to Winter Haven. "All my organs were shutting down," says Sarno "and the doctors were trying to prepare my wife about my end of life."

"My family from California and Boston came to give support," he says. To Sarno, family means everything. "My sister, Maryann Moore, brothers Ron and Sunny Sarno, daughter Tammi, my wife Dona, and my son Richard and his wife Suzie all gathered around me at my darkest hour," he says.

Acute respiratory failure, internal bleeding, and cardiac arrest were just a few serious conditions that Sarno could not recall. "I was so out of it in the hospital." With so many tests performed and so many hours in medical procedures, even the total

amount of his retired vacation days couldn't equal the total time spent in two hospitals and one skilled rehabilitation facility.

Somehow he was able to survive life-threatening conditions. When Doctors advised dialysis because his kidneys couldn't fulfill their function of eliminating waste from the blood, things improved. Tests revealed that his body was healing.

He was too medically fragile to go home and too weak to stand. So, he was discharged to Spring Lake Rehabilitation to get the coaching he needed for recovery. If Sarno had his way, he might not have recovered. "I didn't want to get out of bed," says Sarno, "but they were determined."

That first week, it took four aides to get him standing. In the blink of an eye, he sat back down and gasped for breath even with the use of an oxygen tank. His fragile state and sedentary lifestyle resulted in fatigue with any physical effort and use of supplemental oxygen was necessary 24/7.

"Fragile patients need a gradual and improved return to fitness. Typically they may be better served with exercise and specialized equipment that is formalized specifically for de-conditioned joints, atrophied bones and muscles. Many times we prescribe gravity altered exercise. Essentially, it means that body weight is partially suspended and reduced during exercise," says Emily Perez, SLP – director of rehab for Spring Lake Rehabilitation.

Rehab equipment and programs have changed in the last few years and specifically to address the needs and characteristics of injured and aging bodies and/or obesity. Swiveling seats, handles and adjustable parts make it easier for a wider variety of people to access exercise equipment.

"Having all the right equipment is one thing," says Perez, "but therapy-governed exercise is needed to safely navigate into health and wellness." She says rehab therapists directly communicate with the

referring physician and can confer regarding exercise tolerance, health progression and best outcomes.

Sarno says he was rarely serious about his health and wellness. "I was given a wake-up call," he says regarding his latest condition. Now he's on the mend.

Three times a week a specialized medical van transports him to outpatient therapy. "I can't say enough about what this team has done for me," says Sarno. After two months of therapy, Sarno lost a total of 85 pounds. He's progressed from not being able to walk to now walking in the community with a cane.

Sarno says, "My therapists, Rachel, Natalie, Craig and Leo made a huge difference in my life. I am in the best shape now because of their motivation and effort."

Spring Lake Rehabilitation Center offers comprehensive rehabilitative outpatient and inpatient services for short or long term at 1540 6th Street N.W., Winter Haven, Florida, 33881.



Carmen Sarno

Knights give \$24,900 to pregnancy center for ultrasound machine

A \$24,900 donation from the Knights of Columbus has enabled the Winter Haven-based LifeChoice Pregnancy Resource Center of Winter Haven to acquire a new ultrasound machine featuring the latest technology which allows a pregnant woman to see a child alive in her womb.

"Ultrasound gives abortion minded and vulnerable women and their families a chance to see life that was created by God. We have found that 80 to 85 percent of women and families who are given this opportunity will choose life for the baby," said Dr. Peter Verrill, medical director of LifeChoice Pregnancy Resource Center, noting the machine will enhance the center's ability to assist pregnant women in choosing life over abortion for their unborn babies.

Verrill accepted a check on behalf of the LifeChoice Pregnancy

Resource Center from K of C District Deputy Everett Evans and long time knight Chuck Langbine during the pro-life organization's annual fundraising dinner on May 12 at St. Matthew Church in Winter Haven. Nearly 200 people of all faiths were on hand for the function.

The New-Haven, CT-based Knights of Columbus Supreme Council provided \$9,000 in seed money for the ultrasound machine from its Culture of Life Fund, with additional funding derived from a Florida Knights Columbus Relay for Life held earlier this year in Orlando and donations from five K of C District 45 councils — 4726, of St. Joseph Church in Winter Haven; 5643, of Holy Spirit Church in Lake Wales; 7091, of St. Matthew Church in Winter Haven; 10484, of St. Ann Church in Haines City; and 12341, of St. Thomas Aquinas Church

in Bartow.

Langbine, who has been a member of the Knights of Columbus for 65 years, was appointed to spearhead the fundraising effort in District 45 by Evans. Over the course of several months, Langbine interacted with the K of C Supreme Council, met with Relay for Life chair Larry Scottie and attended meetings of each K of C council in the district to solicit their support for this K of C pro-life initiative. Langbine is a past Grand Knight of Council 4726, who has also served the K of C on the district and state levels.

"We thank Chuck for all of his hard work and the commitments made by Supreme, Relay for Life and District 45 councils to make this a very successful endeavor which will not only save the lives of countless unborn children, but also spare many mothers — and fathers — a



PHOTO PROVIDED

The Winter Haven-based LifeChoice Pregnancy Resource Center was recently on the receiving end of a donation of \$24,900 from the Knights of Columbus which enabled it to purchase a new technologically advanced ultrasound machine. Dr. Peter Verrill, medical director of LifeChoice, accepts a check from long-time knight Chuck Langbine, who spearheaded a drive to raise funds for the machine and K of C District Director Everett Evans. Five K of C councils in District 45 — 4726, of St. Joseph Church in Winter Haven; 5643, of Holy Spirit Church in Lake Wales; 7091, of St. Matthew Church in Winter Haven; 10484, of St. Ann Church in Haines City and 12341, of St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Bartow, contributed funds to the drive.

lifetime of regret," said Evans, who also praised LifeChoice for the "competent and compassionate care" it provides to pregnant women both before and after they give birth.

The Knights of Columbus Ultrasound Initiative began in 2009

with the purchase of 13 ultrasound machines for pregnancy centers dedicated to helping women keep and care for their unborn babies. Since that start, the program has helped fund more than 500 ultrasound machines valued at nearly \$26 million for

pregnancy centers in all 50 states, as well as Canada and Jamaica.

The LifeChoice Pregnancy Resource Center is one of 35 pro-life organizations in Florida that have purchased an ultrasound machine with funding from this K of C initiative.