

## CASE STUDY #1:

### Helping Paul Help Himself

**LIVE WELL PROGRAM** - Paul, a patient at the St. Helena Family Health Center, smiled ear to ear as he spoke of his transformation. He was smiling, outgoing, and amazingly, his body was more up-and-down-straight than it had been and he seemed to be moving with ease. He even looked younger than he had in the past, when he had been stooped over and used a cane due to his severe chronic pain when walking or standing. "I owe it all to the clinic's Live Well Program. I really mean that, I owe it all to Live Well!"

Experiencing severe lower back pain for years, partially due to scoliosis, Paul's continual pain caused him to limp. Getting up out of bed or a chair was horrifically painful, and he couldn't stand for long periods of time. His life seemed to be dictated by his pain. He also sank into a deep depression due to all of the troubling health issues and pain. Distressed because he had been on pain meds for so long and he was still dealing with the pain and side effects of meds.

Dr. Dean Jennings developed a pain management plan with Paul, prescribed a cane to ease the pain while walking or standing, and referred Paul to the clinic's Live Well Program. Paul agreed to the referral, but felt in his heart of hearts that it would only be a waste of his time. He didn't feel any "program" had the answer to his particular problems. But he did go for service.

In time, he became quite obsessed about going to Live Well appointments. After a few months, he noticed something a little different with his body. His movement was not so labored nor as painful. He even noticed a better feeling in his emotions. Paul continued to be faithful to the commitment he had made to Live Well and to himself. Eventually Paul tossed the cane and his body is straighter than it has been for years. He is also brighter, sharper, and more pain free. Paul says he owes it all to Live Well. We know that is partially true but if it weren't for Paul's investment of his time, determination, and his commitment to the Live Well Program, he would not have reached goals that he once thought were impossible.

## CASE STUDY #2:

### The Healing Power of Relationships



Relationships are primary in small towns - most of us understand that. Relationships are the fabric that binds rural residents together as a community; they set rural residents apart from their big city neighbors and the relationships enable those folks to accomplish things together that they could not do alone. It's the same in health care, where patient/provider relationships are primary, some would even say sacred; in long-term relationships between patients and providers, wonderful things can happen.

Sunshine, 80, of Pacific City, OR lives up to her name. Friendly, warm and full of life, she loves her family, her community, quilting and handwork, and making things for others. She loves to read and to visit with people. She has a lot to live for. "I'll go when the good Lord is ready to take me," she says with a smile, "but I hope He's not ready for me yet." For most of her life she focused on others. When her husband passed in 2006, she said "I will miss him dearly, and now it's time for me to take care of my health." That decision marked a turning point for Sunshine.

Sunshine has had some health challenges to face: diabetes, heart and kidney problems. She started seeing Donna Jose, Adult Nurse Practitioner (ANP) at Bayshore Medical-Pacific City, and the two hit it off. Together they got busy addressing Sunshine's health. Working on her medications improved her diabetes and kidneys and a new pacemaker has addressed her heart problems. Sunshine has learned to regulate her own insulin. Donna says "Managing her blood sugar has been key to all kinds of good things happening."

*Continued on page 2...*

*Case Studies continued...*

“Nobody’s going to take care of my health but me,” says Sunshine, “I wish more people would realize that they’re responsible for their own health. No one else can do it for you.” She sees Donna on a regular basis to track her health markers. “There is great power in long term relationships in health care,” Donna said. “You can work on and achieve goals with a patient in a trusting relationship that you cannot do with someone you see once or twice. It’s a joy to have someone like Sunshine as a patient. It’s what makes it all worthwhile.”

### **CASE STUDY #3:**

## **Time for One More**



Benny\* did not know where to turn for health care support. He never dreamed he would find himself in this position. He was in his 40s with no job, Medi-Cal coverage, a new baby arriving in just a couple of months, and he had almost died. He had just been discharged from Intensive Care at a hospital over 35 miles away following a pulmonary emboli. The hospital’s doctor had started him on anticoagulation medications but these meds require very frequent testing to monitor blood clotting time. He needed a doctor fast. Benny had many questions. How and where would he be able to get those frequent tests? Where could he find a new local doctor to oversee his medical care since so many were not taking new patients or Medi-Cal patients? Would he be able to wait for the next available appointment, weeks out, if he could find a new doctor? He needed help.

Benny’s friend had heard of Forest Road Health and Wellness Center in Sonora, CA and suggested he ask them. When he called to establish care as a new patient, he asked if he could be seen the next day for the first set of tests he needed. Maranda Dunn, Front Office Coordinator, recognized how critical his need was. In spite of the current scheduling crunch caused by the expansion of Medi-Cal eligibility, the entire staff pulled together and managed to get Benny established both for primary care with Dr Christian Mullins and with the Anticoagulation Clinic for his lab work the next day and medication adjustments. It took an extra hour and a half that day to coordinate it all but Benny received the help he needed. After this team effort, both Benny and the staff feel Forest Road is the best place to receive care, the best place to practice medicine, and the best place to work.

*\*Name has been changed for patient privacy.*

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