

St. Paul's PACE Exceeds Expectations



Carol Arendt 57, has been a St. Paul's PACE participant since November 2015.

Before Carol Arendt joined St. Paul's Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) she was depressed, morbidly obese, and confined to a wheelchair. At nearly 400 pounds, she avoided walking for fear of falling.

As a teenager, Carol was involved in a horrible accident that spiraled into health issues. Plagued by pain due to osteoarthritis in multiple joints, diabetic, partially blind and clinically depressed, Carol felt hopeless.

"I've had several injuries to my knees, back, and shoulders throughout the years," Carol explained. "I was injured in my teens. I was on a bike, and a truck and a car crashed into me. Arthritis set in. I've been off and on crutches for so long the doctors suggested a wheelchair. My family said once I was in a wheelchair I'd never get out of it. I was depressed and needed something to look forward to."

"St. Paul's PACE is a great place for people who need help. I wasn't expecting to get out of it what I have - counseling, support, physical therapy, and friendships ... St. Paul's PACE has changed my life."

- St. Paul's PACE Participant Carol Arendt

Carol's sister told her about St. Paul's PACE. She decided to give it a try. Her doctor had told her that she needed to be in a daycare center or have something to keep her busy.

"St. Paul's PACE became a place of hope," Carol beamed. "Over the years, I've

fallen a lot. I got beat up a lot in high school and junior high. I was bullied. It took a toll on my self-esteem. St. Paul's PACE has helped me put the past in the past and move on. I look ahead. I have friends here and a support system. I didn't have anyone supporting me when I was growing up."

While at St. Paul's PACE, Carol began a physical therapy program that included muscle strengthening, light exercises, and pain management techniques. After two years, Carol no longer relies on a powered wheelchair to get around. She uses a walker. She has lost more than 70 pounds in 18 months and is no longer depressed.

"I haven't had any operations, just physical therapy at St. Paul's PACE and exercises they gave me to do at home too. I stay motivated. In a year I have gone from being dependent on a wheelchair to walking. I am happier. There is hope that someday in the future I may walk with a cane instead of a walker."

Carol, who lives alone, also receives home care through St. Paul's PACE. She gets help me with dishes, laundry, and grocery shopping – things that are difficult to do with a walker.

"St. Paul's PACE is a great place for people who need help," Carol exclaimed. "I wasn't expecting to get out of it what I have – counseling, support, physical therapy, and friendships. There's a lot of emotional support, which is huge. I didn't think I'd ever get out of my wheelchair and now I am getting around with a walker. It's given me freedom. St. Paul's PACE has changed my life." ■



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