

Giving Matters

St. Jude Memorial Foundation Donor Newsletter

St. Joseph Health 
St. Jude Medical Center
A member of the St. Joseph Hoag Health alliance



Giving Back for a Life Regained



Dick Joe assumed his fatigue was just part of getting older. The stockbroker and grandfather of four recalls taking walks with wife, Marian, that left him short of breath and feeling weak. It wasn't until a visit to the Great Wall of China that Dick was certain something was not right.

"We started climbing, and I was huffing and puffing," he recalls. "I never made it up the Great Wall."

Dick would need an aortic valve replacement, a type of open heart surgery with a typically lengthy recovery time. "The news was a shock, but I felt like I was in good hands with St. Jude," explains Dick.

The procedure was successful thanks to the expert team of surgeons and specialists from St. Jude's Cardiac Surgery Program, which has received the top national rank of three stars from the Society of Thoracic Surgeons. But surgery was just the beginning of Dick's road to recovery.

Over the next three months, Dick worked diligently to regain his health through St. Jude's nationally-recognized Cardiac Rehabilitation Program. Three times a week, with support from a multidisciplinary team of physicians, advance-practice cardiac nurses, exercise physiologists, educators and registered dietitians, Dick would undergo a personalized rehabilitation plan to help him get back on his feet.

"I was in tough shape. I couldn't walk fast, I couldn't pull. It was almost starting at ground zero," he remembers. "But the staff was so patient, kind and kept me positive. After a while, I looked forward to going to rehab."

Upon graduating "with honors" from the program, Dick feels a tremendous difference in his health. "Thanks to St. Jude, I consider myself in better shape than I was before this whole episode happened," says Dick with a smile.

"I am so grateful for everything St. Jude has done for our family," says Marian, who also experienced the program after doctors discovered a blockage in one of her arteries.

The Joes, who are donors to St. Jude, had traditionally made gifts undesignated to "where the need is greatest" in the hospital. But this time, they wanted to support the program which had profoundly impacted their lives.

"During a visit, the Joes spotted a repair tag on one of our recumbent exercise bikes and I jokingly told them we were going to sell snack to get it fixed," laughs Mel Leopoldo, BSN, CCRP, Cardiac Rehabilitation Program clinical coordinator. "A few weeks later, a donation came in to replace the bike from the John H. Grace Foundation, of which Marian is the trustee."

The number of patients seeking cardiac rehabilitation at St. Jude has grown considerably, and gifts like the Joes' can help the team serve even more patients with personalized rehabilitative care. "We are so appreciative of the Joes. Having the latest equipment will directly help those we serve regain their quality of life," says Mel.

For the Joes, it is reassuring to know that these life-changing programs are just down the street. "St. Jude did so much for us, we wanted to do something to help them," says Marian. "A hospital needs resources to provide the very best care, and we are delighted to do our part to help."



**Wish to support a program meaningful to you?
Contact the Memorial Foundation at (714) 992-3033.**