

Great Steps Program helps to increase confidence



Marion Updyke, a resident at Arbor North Semi-Assisted Living Center in Jackson, MI, said that until recently she wasn't confident in her balance.

Two months ago, 88-year-old Marion enrolled in Great Lakes Caring's Great StepsSM program, a comprehensive next-generation care initiative designed to not only help prevent falling, but also address the underlying issues that may be causing those falls.

"Before working with Great Lakes Caring, my stability wasn't the best. I was falling because I lost my balance often," Marion said. "Even though it was a reality, I tried not to think about falling. I don't like it. I was afraid of getting hurt or injuring myself permanently."

Marion worked with Julian Delapas, Great Lakes Caring physical therapy assistant and physical therapist Connie Hinkley who have seen a progressive, noticeable improvement in her movement.

"We started with some basic strengthening and endurance exercises, and learned her tolerance for them. Then, we focused on balance, teaching her strategies so she doesn't lose her balance, and also can regain her balance if she were to stumble. That progressed along into more advanced tasks and activities to intentionally disrupt her balance so she could develop the coordination to keep it," Julian said. "She kept sticking with the program and has made great progress. She dropped significantly in her risk of falls."

Marion said she sees improvement, too.

"The program has given me more peace of mind. I like my life better now," Marion said. "It's easier to do my day-to-day activities, like standing to wash dishes, since working with Great Steps. It helps you get back to where you used to be."

The benefits of Great Steps are not only physical, but emotional and mental, too.

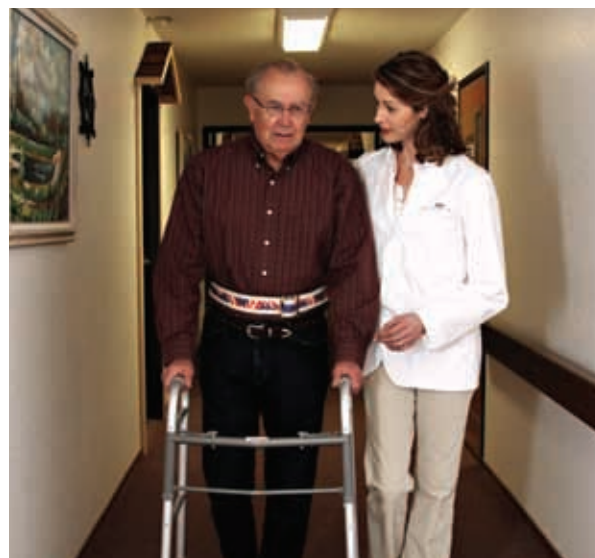
“Generally, people with balance impairments are a little more sedentary, not so confident in their movement, and not so confident in themselves. So, they tend to keep themselves in a safe environment, which limits them. Marion wasn’t keeping herself sheltered, but her confidence in herself and her ability to get up and go wasn’t quite where it is now. Building her confidence and showing her how much she’s improving has helped a great deal to keep her more active,” Julian said.

Kevin Ganton, owner and operator of Arbor North, said that having a program like Great Steps is a huge advantage for his facility’s residents.

“For us, it’s a fabulous resource to call upon to assist in managing the quality of life of our residents,” Kevin said. “Fall prevention and balance are big issues in the retirement community, so it’s a relief to have Great Lakes Caring’s program to utilize. It’s unquestioned – the program works. We’ve seen a significant reduction in falls in those residents who work with Great Steps, and we’re thankful for that.”

Marion said she’s thankful for Great Steps, too.

“It’s helped me, and I’m glad for it.”



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