How open-heart surgery opened my eyes for a new outlook for a new year

By Terry Tessari
(Recent heart valve surgery patient)

I recently underwent open-heart surgery at the Borgess Heart Institute within Borgess Medical Center. The procedure not only exposed my heart defects for the surgeon to repair, it also opened my eyes to some things I had missed seeing or appreciating—like my body’s recuperative capacities. Let’s start there.

Like many people, I lived with a mitral valve prolapse. Mine, as one cardiologist told me was “the mother of all prolapses.” You could almost hear my murmur without the stethoscope. Then I developed atrial fibrillation. In spite of cautionary recommendations by my cardiologist to increase the management of my condition with certain medications, which I refused out of hand, (I’m not the most compliant patient), I blithely went on with life.

Then I became symptomatic for congestive heart failure. The valve was deteriorating. This is when I made the acquaintance of Dr. Jerry Pratt, Medical Director, Thoracic Surgery, Borgess Heart Institute. The valve had to be repaired and the Afib addressed.

Open-heart surgery can affect a person in many ways and it did me. For a short time after surgery, I was demanding, impatient, self-pitying – unable to come to terms with limitations and incapacity. But then I started to get stronger. I was getting better as my body’s natural capacities to recover and seek homeostasis kicked in. What an eye-opening experience

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Wage increase for non-union associates

Borgess Health non-union associates will receive a 2 percent base rate wage increase, effective the pay period that begins Sunday, Jan. 4, 2015. The increase will be reflected on the Jan. 23, 2015 paycheck.

The opportunity to provide this increase is the result of your (and your colleagues throughout Borgess Health) hard work and commitment to our 125th-year tradition of service excellence on behalf of our patients and the communities we serve. Additionally, with your help, Borgess is on track to meet Fiscal Year 2015 budget targets.

Thank you for your contributions to help Borgess continue living our mission to provide holistic, spiritually centered care. Your efforts enable us to connect with people at many different levels through an environment for better healing and wellness.

Meet Kathy A. Young at an upcoming reception

Kathy A. Young begins as president and CEO, Borgess Health, January 5. Associates have an opportunity to meet Kathy Young when she tours Borgess Health and at receptions scheduled below.

BORGESS MEDICAL CENTER
January 8  4 p.m.–5:30 p.m.  Lawrence Education Center
January 9  11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.  Lawrence Education Center

BORGESS-LEE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
January 12  9 a.m.–9:30 a.m.  Community Room

BORGESS HEALTH & FITNESS CENTER
January 13  4 p.m.–5:30 p.m.  Touring facility

REVERENCE HOME CARE & HOSPICE
January 14  11:15 a.m.–11:45 a.m.  Board Room

BORGESS GARDENS
January 15  9 a.m.–9:30 a.m.  Dining Room

BORGESS HEALTH PARK
January 15  3 p.m.–3:30 p.m.  Community Room

TEXTILE SYSTEMS, INC.
January 23  11 a.m.–11:30 a.m.  Meeting Room

BORGESS-PIPP HOSPITAL
February 5  11 a.m.–11:30 a.m.  Conference Room

BORGESS AT WOODBRIDGE HILLS
February 6  11 a.m.–11:30 a.m.  Family Practice Lounge

Wage increase for non-union associates

Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

Borgess Health and Bronson Healthcare Group are co-sponsoring a special program celebrating the life of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. “Living the Dream” will be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monday, Jan. 19, 2015, in the Lawrence Education Center Auditorium at Borgess Medical Center.

For information on the event, contact Mission Integration, Borgess Health, at (269) 226.7404.

Living the Dream
Renovations, provider moves in the forecast

Patients and visitors to the North Professional Building on the Borgess Medical Center will notice some renovations and office relocations, starting this month.

**Borgess Bariatrics, Borgess Surgical Specialties**

Borgess Bariatrics has moved out of Suite 124, due to renovations. Stuart R. Verseman, MD, FACS, and Terry Wortz, MD, are temporarily relocating to Suite 108, and dieticians are temporarily being housed in Suite 005 of Borgess Emergency & Trauma Center. Borgess Bariatrics, along with Borgess Surgical Specialties, will return to Suite 124 sometime in April or May.

**Borgess Internal Medicine**

Borgess Internal Medicine is moving out of Suite 124 on January 9, and will temporarily relocate to Borgess Internal Medicine, 1701 Gull Road, Kalamazoo. The office will move to Suite 108 in the North Professional Building sometime in April or May.

**Other provider moves**

- Borgess Internal Medicine on Currier Drive has moved to Borgess ProMed Physicians Family Practice, 7901 Angling Road, Portage.
- Borgess Family Medicine at Lakeview in Battle Creek no longer sees patients at that location.
- Amy Juodawlkis, PA, is accepting patients at Borgess Internal Medicine, 842 East Columbia Ave., Suite 2, Battle Creek.

For information on renovations and provider moves, contact Becky Cross, director, Practice Operations, Borgess Medical Group, at (269) 226.7486 or becky.cross@borgess.com.

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**Borgess United Way Raffle Prizes**

Borgess Health associates are automatically eligible to win exciting prizes when they submit their pledges to the Borgess United Way Campaign.

The campaign prizes are:

- $100 VISA Gift Card (2)
- $100 Meijer Gift Card (2)
- $50 VISA Gift Card (4)
- $50 Meijer Gift Card (4)
- $50 Gift Card to Miller Auditorium (2)
- $50 Borgess Seasons Gift Shop Gift Card (2)
- $25 Meijer Gift Card (4)
- $25 Borgess Seasons Gift Shop Gift Card (4)
- $25 Gift Card to Miller Auditorium (20)
- Year-long Borgess Health & Fitness Center Membership (1)
- United Way Designated Parking Space (9)

The raffle drawing is computer-generated.

Associates may only win one prize. Designated parking spaces will be awarded to associates who work on the BMC campus only. Associates with an “A” sticker are not eligible to win a parking space.

The raffle drawing will take place following the conclusion of the Borgess United Way Campaign.
to be healing after major surgery and my attitude had to catch up, which it did.

At a large, sophisticated medical facility like Borgess Medical Center, it’s an ongoing challenge to maintain personal, caring connections with the constant turnover of patients who fill its beds. As I filled a bed, I was almost expecting an impersonal response as one of the realities of institutional care—but my eyes were opened. I was pleasantly surprised by the human touch so many of the staff and caregivers extended to me. There was one individual, however, whose interaction with me, though brief, meant so much.

Caring and supportive encouragement dropped my anxiety level to below registering. His name is Norm Foura, RN, PACU. He receives and preps patients in the pre-surgical area. If there ever was the right person for the job, Norm fills that role. His caring and supportive encouragement dropped my anxiety level to below registering. He was so calming and comforting that I asked him if he could come with me into the operating room and hold my hand during surgery. He possesses human qualities you cannot teach and response manners that go way beyond the expected standard of care.

My eyes were opened to the fact that medical personnel are not just functionaries carrying out their duties in an impersonal way. They’re people, many of whom have been on the patient side of the hospital experience and have learned from being in the bed the value of the personal touch that they then apply as caregivers beside the bed.

Finally, my eyes were opened to how important family is in the recovery process. Caregiving is not easy, but in a recent AARP Bulletin (Nov. 14), the author writes of the unexpected joys of caregiving, like receiving satisfaction by giving back to a loved one and learning to manage a challenge. When I became impatient and demanding, I would ask my family to read the article again. My personal discovery was how much joy I found being home with my family with eyes wide open to new truths and my healing heart appreciative of their love and care.

Swab a cheek, Save a life
Sandy Wilson, RN, cardiac outcomes specialist, (left) helps Andy VanBeck, of Kalamazoo, through the bone marrow registration process with the simple use of a cheek swab. The successful drive was held December 29 at Borgess Medical Center in support of Ben Schmidt, RN, CVL, and cancer patients worldwide. Wilson was assisted by Nan Meyers, RN, clinical nurse specialist, and many other Borgess Health associates.