

Family Connections Going the Extra Mile for Joyce

Joyce Patchak is a 54 year old Sheboygan woman who has a handicap – she wears an artificial limb – and it no longer fit her properly. She was in so much pain, she was afraid she would not be able to work any longer. And that job was very important to this independent woman who knew if she could just have a properly fitted leg, she could maintain her quality of life and continue working as a productive citizen.

Living pay check to pay check, she was keeping up with the cost of day to day needs, but the additional cost for a new prosthetic leg was more than she could handle. She had been denied disability and the MAPPS program and had tried calling Easter Seals, the Department of Social Services and Impact. Her husband heard a similar situation being discussed on WTMJ Channel 4's helpline and in desperation decided to call the station about his wife's dilemma. They told him to call the REACH helpline in Sheboygan and that's where the story begins.

Rebecca Wampler, a resource specialist at Family Connections, received Joyce's case as a referral from REACH, one of Family Connections' programs on July 31, 2008. She discovered that Joyce was one of those people who had truly slipped through the cracks of eligibility in every way. After checking with the Aging and Disability Resource Center, Wampler realized that Joyce was indeed doing everything she could possibly do to find assistance. She might have a chance at disability if she quit working but she is a very conscientious woman who is adamant about working.

Wampler continued on her search for additional community resources for Joyce over the next several months, meeting with Family Service Association, Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, St. Vincent de Paul and Lakeshore CAP, all to no avail. The solution kept coming back to getting a new, properly fitting prosthesis.

The original cost for a new leg was \$13,100.00. Because of Joyce's timely payment patterns for the purchase of her current leg, Tim Kading, the prosthetic technician at Wisconsin Prosthetics and Orthotics, agreed to reduce the cost of the leg to just over \$7,000 for materials only and take a down payment of \$2800 so she could continue to work and earning money. There would be no charge for labor.

Pledges were made for \$50.00 from Catholic Charities, \$500.00 from Hearthstone and \$400 from a member of Hearthstone and two additional donors. Additional monies were sought with a grant of \$1500 from the Limbs for Life but it fell through because their Oklahoma-based company uses recycled parts which are illegal to use for prosthetics in Wisconsin.

There should be a happy ending to this story – and there was. Life Without Limbations has given Joyce a grant towards her prosthesis covering the full cost of the leg. Three and a half months of patience and collaborative efforts have Joyce back on the job, pain-free and very happy with her new limb. Rebecca Wampler has the satisfaction of knowing her perseverance restored Joyce's independence. And United Way and one of its affiliated agencies have once again proved that "living united" works!