

# A JOURNEY TO WELLNESS

March 2010



## A PATIENT'S STORY

BY HARRY CROSBY

As a young lad, I would dream I was flying through the air like a bird. What a marvelous sensation – freedom, air blowing in my face, looking down on everything. This was the life! Then I had to wake up.

I had played any sport you can think of growing up – baseball, football, basketball and when I got “older” it was softball.

My wife and I went over Gettysburg battlefield and Niagara Falls in a helicopter, over the whirlpool at Niagara Falls in a cable car and went up in a hot air balloon. Still I longed to “fly”. My daughter and her husband stopped by one day in the summer of '08 to show us pictures. They had gone skydiving!! I asked her why she hadn't told me because I always wanted to do that and I would have gone with them. She said “Okay, we'll go next month.”

Then the “fun” began. My right hip started hurting. I was sure I could just work out the kinks. I went picking blackberries at our cabin in Bedford County and fell one time. I was unable to get up and called for my wife, but she didn't hear me, so I crawled through the blackberry bushes until I could pull myself up – scratched and bleeding. We decided to hold off on the skydiving.

Finally and reluctantly admitting that 72 was “a little over the hill,” I went to see my Primary Care Physician (PCP). X-rays, injections and exercises followed to no avail. My doctor told me to consider the fact that I needed a new hip. I was not looking forward to that, but in 6 weeks I went from limping, to a cane, then to a walker and finally into a wheelchair. My wife volunteers at the YWCA in Greensburg and was casually talking to a worker there and mentioned that I needed a new hip. The woman was really empathic when she told my wife to take me to Dr. DiGioia. She then related her husband's experiences with his 2 hip replacements. The second one having been done by Dr. DiGioia and her husband's unbelievable fast recovery he



Three generations of the brave skydiving family  
(from left to right): Nate (grandson), Harry Crosby,  
George (son-in-law) and Curt (son)

experienced. My wife is also in a Bible study and they were all praying we would make the right decision. Shortly after my wife heard about Dr. DiGioia, a friend of mine (not knowing about my wife's conversation) called telling me his friend had both knees replaced at Magee. My friend, Bob, had his friend call me and we talked like old friends. I asked him everything I could about the surgery and the recovery process. His surgeon was Dr. DiGioia. When my wife heard this her comment was, “I think God is leading us to Dr. DiGioia.” Everyone told me I would have pain afterwards, but that it would not be unbearable.

The appointment with Dr. DiGioia was made and after more x-rays and another injection, it was determined that I definitely needed a new hip. I had to wait 2 months after the injection before the surgery could be performed (it was the longest 2 months of my life). I counted off the days, I just wanted to be rid of the pain and walk again.

I had my surgery on January 5, 2009. Six hours later, they got me up to take a few steps. The staff was absolutely the best – caring, compassionate, and there when you needed them, but firm about the physical therapy. You couldn't talk them into letting you slack at all. Physical therapy started the next morning. I went to the gym with a walker and returned an hour later using a cane. We had PT every

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUBMIT A STORY AND SHARE YOUR “JOURNEY TO WELLNESS,” PLEASE CONTACT

KAREN Cwynar @ [KCwynar@Magee.edu](mailto:KCwynar@Magee.edu).

## (CONTINUED)

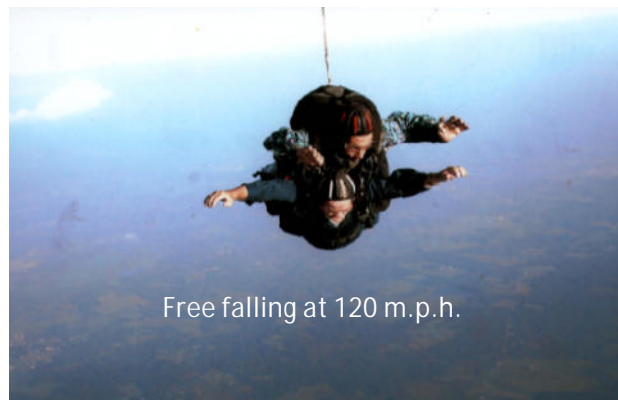
morning and every afternoon for about one hour each. I soon realized that the pain pills made me violently ill and I quit taking them. To be perfectly honest, there was pain after the surgery which is to be expected, but it was never as bad as before the surgery. Because of that, when they asked me where my pain level was – I really didn't know how to answer – it just was not as severe as before. I did everything they told me to do, because I knew they were the pros. I went home on the third day only using a cane and being able to climb steps. PT came to the house the first week and I did one set of exercises on my own in the evening. (My wife is a retired nurse and is like a drill sergeant about the exercises. I always kidded her – I thought she counted to 30 repetitions and then counted backwards).

When I went to church the next Sunday, folks could not believe how well I was doing. I quit using the cane before the end of 3 weeks.

I was amazed that I couldn't tell I had an artificial hip, it felt so natural. However, I do have the scar to remind me.

I turned 73 in March '09. In June, I got to fulfill my dream of skydiving. My son, Curt, his son, Nate (my grandson), and my son-in-law, George, went with me. George had gone before so he was okay with it. My son is scared to death of heights to the point he can't even get up on a stepladder, but he wasn't going to let the "old" man show him up. Nate was scared, but not as scared as Curt. Three generations skydived together. It was great!!! The airplane climbed to an altitude of 13,500 feet (approximately 2 ½ miles) in the air and then we jumped out. A small chute opens immediately to prevent the divers from going over 120 miles per hour. We free fell for 1 mile and then opened the main chute. That slowed us and we just floated down to the ground. It was out of this world to see all the surrounding countryside from up there. You

## Harry Crosby with the jump master



Free falling at 120 m.p.h.



"Thumbs Up" for a safe and perfect landing.

have to see it to believe it. Some of us plan to do it again this summer.

We sent a picture to Dr. DiGioia. If you go into his waiting room, you will see it there.

Thanks to Dr. DiGioia and the great folks who work with him. I feel younger and pain free again. They are the best!

## Harry C. Crosby

Husband, Father, Grandpap of 10 & Great Grandpap of 2



Renaissance Orthopaedics  
300 Halket Street, Suite 1601B  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213  
Phone - (412) 683-7272  
Fax - (412) 683-0341  
www.orthodoctor.com

The Orthopaedic Program  
300 Halket Street, Suite 1601B  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213  
Phone: (412) 641-8643 (for appointments)  
Fax: (412) 641-8657