

A JOURNEY TO WELLNESS

April 2010



A PATIENT'S STORY

BY MARIE BIERNESSE

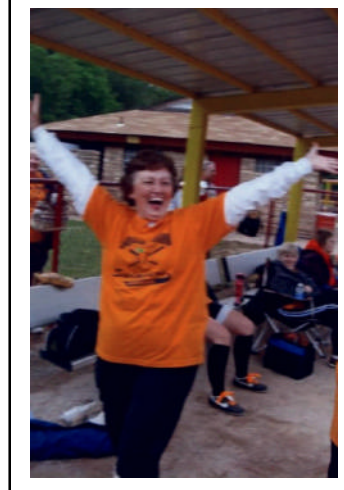
Life after knee replacement is better than I could have ever imagined. You see, I have been a patient of Dr. DiGioia's since 2000. I have always been active and using and abusing my knees is part of my life.

My knees were not aging as gracefully as the rest of me. I had/have osteoarthritis in my knees and they were needing continuous care. I wore braces, had shots, did exercises, took far too many pain pills and tried to lose weight. For some reason, I was dreading and delaying the inevitable. My knees would have to be replaced and the longer I put it off my leg muscles just grew weaker. Walking was painful and steps had to be done one at a time. Finally in January of 2008, I could no longer deny that I needed the surgery. The right knee was worse than the left, so that one would be done first. After the surgery, I was surprised at how quickly I was up and about and was more surprised that I could leave the hospital with only a cane.

Dr. DiGioia and his excellent staff are to be commended for their support and concern with which they care for a patient. If you follow their direction, go to therapy and do the exercises, you can get your life back. It doesn't happen by magic though; recovery is a lot of hard work.

As the mother of four, and grandmother to six, there is always some activity that I am involved with. When the children were all at home there was girl scouts, boy scouts, school activities, camping, hiking, backpacking, fishing – you get the idea. Once the children were grown, out of college and settled, my love of the outdoors found a new outlet – softball.

That's right, softball. It seems there are a lot of maturing women, like myself, who stay active by playing senior softball. I became a team member



Marie Biernesser having a "feel good moment" (picture above) and catching a 31inch Musky while fishing with her son at Pymatuning (picture below).



in 1993 and found my niche as catcher on the team. We belong to a league and during the season we usually play two games a week. In 2006, I wanted more so I joined a second team. This was a tournament team which means that we traveled out of state to play.

After my surgery in 2008, I did not tell my team members about my surgery when the softball season started in April because I was afraid they would treat me differently. I played the entire 2008 season without them knowing. It wasn't until the 2009 season that I told them.

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

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The tournament team learned that the National Senior Games for 2009 would be held in California in August, and the team decided to go. It was a hot, windy and tiring tournament. On the last day of the tournament, we had to play four games. But we came away victorious. YEA, we won the GOLD medal for our age division, 60+. It was all very exciting. We got to stand on the center podium, were awarded our medals and they played the National Anthem. I shall long cherish and remember that day.

Part of staying active is being involved with our children and grandchildren. Our one daughter has run 11 marathons and on marathon day, our part is to zig zag the course with her two sons to be her support team. By wearing a pedometer, I can tell you that we walk between 7 and 10 miles that day.

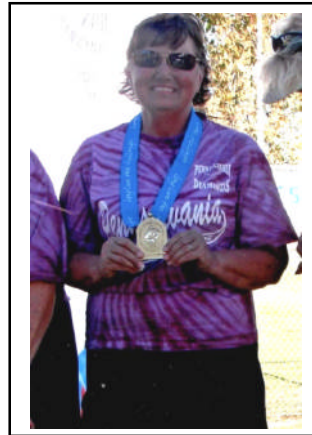
Our children are all out of state, so we have to plan our family get togethers. One of our favorite is on Thanksgiving Day in Virginia. On that day we all, 13 of us, get up early for the 5K-10K Turkey Trot. Some run, some of us walk, but we all reach the finish line at our own pace. We then go back to the house to prepare our turkey dinner. The run/walk in the morning takes some of the guilt away from indulging in the meal.



Marie and her wonderful family in Virginia as they prepare for the 5K-10K Thanksgiving Day Turkey Trot.



2009 Softball Season



A Future Olympian???

Marie proudly wears her Gold Medal after her team (age division 60+) came in first place at the National Senior Games in California in August 2009.

I will celebrate two milestones this year – my 50th wedding anniversary and my 70th birthday. I am constantly adding “things to do” to my bucket list and look forward to more challenges and accomplishments in my life.

It is just a matter of time before my left knee will need to be done. I will not wait quite as long this time because I now know that life after surgery will be better than ever.

~ Marie Biernesser



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