

## Home is where the Heart is

*Editor's Note: Stories about those who suffered a traumatic brain injury are about as similar as they are different—they all share that their lives were changed in an instant. But how they went about rebuilding their lives makes each of their stories unique. This is one of those stories...*

On a beautiful August day in Michigan, lunch was being served on the deck at Rainbow's NeuroRehab Campus® (NRC) for Bill Peters and his wife, Barb. They were reminiscing about the journey they experienced here since the frightening accident that occurred in June 2009.

Their candidness in sharing this journey was awe-inspiring, heartbreaking and an incredible inside look at how their lives have changed and how they have exemplified "Home Is Where The Heart Is" philosophy during Bill's NRC stay.

In June 2009, the Peters were taking their daily walk when Barb stopped to speak with neighbors and pet the neighbor's dog. In one single brief moment in time, a commercial truck had side-swiped Bill right off his feet and sent him flying into the air, landing many yards away. Barb and the neighbors rushed to him, found that his right side was bruised badly and there was extensive damage from his shoulder all the way down to his ankle. His muscle had torn away from his right leg. He suffered from gastrointestinal bleeding, hypotension and a traumatic brain injury. Barb recalls his heart stopping several times.

Bill faced a three-hour surgery in the ER and later endured 12 hours of additional microscopic orthopedic surgeries to attach a muscle from his abdomen to his leg, which Bill now jokes jumps when he sneezes!

After a short stay in the hospital's rehabilitation unit, Bill moved into the NRC. Every day, Barb would sit through Bill's therapies and stay for dinner. She wove a web of extended family that long extended past Bill and his therapists. Soon, she had created an environment that made the NRC an extension of their home in Farmington. The Peters together participated in Bill's therapy but also developed incredible relationships with the other NRC clients, their families and staff members.

Bill and Barb remember the first time he was able to move the severely injured right leg at the knee and the countless times the therapists worked with him when he said his leg wouldn't bend. They persistently pushed him harder and



*Bill Peters and Cynthia Halse, Executive Chef at Rainbow's NeuroRehab Campus®*

harder, reassuring Bill that it was all going to work out in the end. And sure enough, through the tenacity of his treatment team, Bill and Barb saw the payoff, his leg began to move and he started to walk again.

The Peters stayed at the NRC through the holiday season and made a big impact on everyone with their involvement in the Community Living Activities. Barb shared with me how they chronicled the journey they shared through journaling and in a photo album. They captured Bill's rehabilitation and the day-to-day living experiences they shared with everyone at the NRC. It is similar to that of a family album that all of us have in our homes that capture those candid moments, holidays, and even again, "first steps."

In one of Bill's last therapeutic sessions, his assignment was to find a food recipe he had never made before, go shopping to get the ingredients, and then prepare it. Being the generous type that he is, Bill made enough for everyone at the center! There in the dining room sat a large family style bowl of an incredibly fresh and tasty Greek Salad. The dish was a huge hit with everyone. I requested his permission to add it to the NRC's Spring/Summer Menu Cycle and call it the "B.P. Greek Salad." He agreed, and now we share it with everyone at dinner time on our Summer Menu. It's like a friendship salad with so much more meaning than just a great flavor profile.

## Home is where the Heart is *continued*

Bill is now in outpatient therapy at Rainbow's Oakland Center, walking successfully with a cane. The Peters stop by at the NRC time and again to visit with all of us and keep their finger on the pulse to make sure our house is in order.

Take time to share and enjoy the B.P. Greek Salad with your home and know that it represents so much more than a fantastic salad, but also all of the heart of someone who has made an incredible journey here at the NRC. ❖

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### *B.P. Greek Salad* (Bill Peters)

Yield: 6- 4oz servings

#### **Ingredients**

- 1 Cucumber
- 1 Fresh Red Bell Pepper
- 1 Fresh Yellow Pepper
- 2 Cups Cherry Tomatoes
- 8 oz. Feta Cheese
- ½ Fresh Red Onion
- 4 oz. Greek Olives

#### **For the Vinaigrette**

- 2 Fresh Garlic Cloves
- 1 Tablespoon Fresh Oregano
- 1 Teaspoon Dijon Mustard
- ¼ Cup Red Wine Vinegar
- ¼ Teaspoon Cracked Black Pepper
- ½ Cup Olive Oil

#### **Directions**

Seed and slice cucumber ¼ in. thick. Large dice red and yellow pepper. Cut the cherry tomatoes in half. Slice red onion in half rounds. Place vegetable ingredients in a large bowl.

For the vinaigrette, mince garlic cloves and finely chop fresh oregano.

In a small bowl, whisk the garlic, oregano, mustard, vinegar and black pepper. While whisking, slowly add the olive oil to make an emulsion.

Pour vinaigrette over the vegetables

Add the feta cheese, olives and toss lightly. Set salad aside for 30 minutes and allow the flavors to develop.

Serve at room temp with fresh baked rustic bread or a fresh grilled chicken breast.