

**MEDICAL CLIENT****Chuck Stevens** - Rehab & Recovery*Interview by Heidi Reyst, Ph.D., CBIS-CE**Written by Kimberly Paetzold, BBA***The day Chuck's life changed****September 17, 2000**

It was a crisp fall day, and Chuck Stevens was with his buddies doing what he loved best – hunting. Staying in South Branch, Michigan, an outdoor paradise, 30 friends and relatives joined in his hunting group. On that fateful day, Chuck spent his time outside and put a neat little rock he found into his pocket – a good luck charm of sorts. After a long day of fresh air, he headed back to his cabin for a home cooked dinner, squirrel and partridge, and laid down to rest. His nap didn't last long; soon his cousin Eddie was waking him to go out.

Not much is known after Eddie and Chuck left that evening, but in South Branch, the roads are curvy and dark. When Eddie, the driver, hit gravel on the side of the road late that night, the car spun out of control, flipped three times and ejected Chuck, who was not wearing his seat belt. The car behind stopped, called for help and the emergency medical technicians came.

**Post accident medical attention**

Chuck had only a few small facial abrasions, but sustained a severe traumatic brain injury (TBI). He was stabilized at St. Mary's Medical Center in Saginaw and transferred to Grand Valley Health Center for sub-acute rehabilitation in October. In December, he was transferred to Faith Medical Care Center to be close to his family but received few therapeutic services. Towards the end of 2001, Chuck's family and physician felt it would be beneficial for him to receive intensive rehabilitation. They chose to send him to Rainbow.



Left to right - Gloria, Chuck's mother and Chuck Stevens

**Chuck's stay at Rainbow**

Chuck came to Rainbow November 3, 2001 and spent the next 13 months in intensive rehabilitation focusing on activities of daily living, communication and mobility. Upon admission, Chuck was evaluated by the speech-language pathology service to determine his communicative-cognitive status, oral motor control, language skills, and swallowing status.

**Rehabilitation gains**

- Upon admission to Rainbow, Chuck was only able to stay alert for 10 minutes of a speech session; he showed poor initiation and a limited gesture system. Upon discharge, Chuck was utilizing a Chat Box for communication, demonstrated movement of his tongue and jaw on command, and was increasing his oral intake.

- When he came to Rainbow, Chuck was unable to participate in his daily personal care. However, Chuck learned to follow instructions to wash his face and brush his hair with moderate physical assistance.

- Chuck also worked very hard with his physical therapists to demonstrate five minutes of sitting and gain trunk control.

He worked himself to achieve 30 minutes of standing twice each week. He started at Rainbow unable to tolerate more than 10 minutes of standing. Chuck also gained the ability to assist the therapist with transfers and turning.

**Quote:** "It is clear that Mrs. Stevens (*Chuck's mother*) has made a very good decision in moving Charles (*Chuck*) to the Rainbow Rehabilitation Centers facility as he is definitely improving each day towards a more effective ability to communicate with the world around him."

**Barbara Walsh Trapp, Ph.D.**

*Rehabilitation Case Manager – Laurel Park Rehabilitation & Counseling Inc.*

**Chuck Goes Home**

Chuck now resides at home with his mother. Frequent visits from his nine year-old daughter, family gatherings with his sister and her children, along with hand wrestling matches with his brother are all part of Chuck's life now. Gloria, Chuck's mom, is a professional nurses aid, a mother of 3 and grandmother of 5. There are good days, there are bad days, but Gloria doesn't let that stop her. She still takes Chuck shopping, attends football games, and visits

the stables that board their horses. She takes him everywhere she can to provide stimulation and provide Chuck with the highest quality of life.

Chuck's home has been renovated to become a barrier free area specially designed to meet his needs. A lift ramp takes him downstairs where he receives 4 weekly OT sessions, a weekly PT session and once a month speech therapy.

Additional therapies will soon include an outdoor in-ground pool that will be equipped with a lift next summer.

Life has drastically changed since Chuck's accident on September 17, 2000 - not unlike his father who also suffered a TBI due to a motor vehicle accident at age 30. But at age 34, life continues, and Chuck still enjoys eating venison, watching the Red Wings, and spending time with

his family. Gains continue to be made: He plans on using his stand-up chair over the holidays in the family recreation room and will soon be getting an electric wheelchair.

We at Rainbow, are all hopeful that his recovery will continue and wish him and his family much success in the future. ♦

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