



Willow Trace rehabilitation unit helps stroke patient re-learn abilities needed in everyday life

■ New transitional therapy room uses household chores as form of therapy

By Dee Ann Campbell
The Choctaw Sun

BUTLER — Peggy Johnson said goodbye to the staff and walked out of Willow Trace Nursing Center's Rehabilitation Unit last Thursday.

She did it with speech that wasn't slurred and legs that held her weight. And she left nearly a week earlier than planned.

The day before she left, she treated the staff to some of her special brownies — brownies that she made right there in the rehab unit. But the brownies were more than just a farewell treat for a staff that had helped her to rehabilitate. They were, in fact, part of that rehabilitation.

On January 16, when 65-year-old Johnson felt a tingling down the left side of her face, she immediately knew what was wrong.

"I had been feeling like something was wrong for a few days," she recalls. "When I felt that tingling, I knew I was having a stroke."

When she arrived at a Meridian hospital, her



Choctaw Sun photo by Dee Ann Campbell
Stroke patient Peggy Johnson is shown in the transitional therapy room at Willow Trace, along with Physical Therapy Assistant Tracie Harris, after she made her delicious brownies for the staff. Also working with Johnson in her therapy were Physical Therapist Brenda Kennedy, Occupational Therapist Stever Cayer, and OT assistant Eldon Crouch.

diagnosis was confirmed. The stroke had left her with slurred speech and the inability to use the right side of her body — problems that the doctors said would require rehabilitation.

"They couldn't tell me how long it would take at first," she remembers. "We thought it might be a long time before I'd be back to normal."

Although no one could tell her just how long her rehabilitation would take to bring her

back to where she had been before her stroke, Johnson would begin with a 21-day stay at a rehab center. The doctors suggested the unit at Riley Memorial Hospital in Meridian. But her family wanted to pursue a different option.

In part because of the proximity to her home in Putnam and to her family members in the area — and because of the positive experiences of a friend who was undergoing rehabilitation at

told me she thought it would be better if we came here. She was right."

Johnson entered Willow Trace's rehab unit on January 19. Although her speech remarkably cleared up in the first few days in the hospital, she still needed physical and occupational therapy to regain use of her left arm and leg.

But her treatment was not limited to the typical therapy given in a rehab unit.

As part of her work to regain the strength and abilities she would need when she returned home, Johnson was one of several patients to use Willow Trace's Transitional Therapy room.

Arranged and decorated to look like a small apartment — complete with kitchen and laundry appliances, dining table, living area, and even a small grocery store area — the room allows patients to re-learn needed skills, increase strength, and practice basic movements that are part of everyday life.

"It helps you to be able to do the things you'd do when you get home," says Johnson. "Cooking, washing dishes, buying groceries, hanging up clothes ... it just helps you to re-learn how to position your body and use your arms again."

Using the transi-

tional therapy room, along with more traditional forms of physical therapy, Johnson's

therapy team put her through an aggressive treatment plan designed to help her regain her pre-stroke abilities within the 21-day time frame. But after only 15 of the 21 days, Johnson was ready to go home.

"I went from a walker to a cane to walking without anything," she says with a big smile. "I've done so well that I'm going home early."

For Johnson, the decision to complete her rehabilitation at Willow Trace was the right one. It was one that offered her the treatment she needed in a facility that was close to home.

And with the transitional therapy room, the facility gave her the opportunity to re-learn her cooking skills in time to offer the staff members a plate of her delicious brownies.

Johnson left Willow Trace on Thursday able to return to most of the activities she was able to do before January 16. Through the experience, she says she has learned about a new facet of Willow Trace that she will gladly share with others.

"If I had to do it over again," says Johnson, "or if I had a family member to go through this, I'd tell them to come here."

THE HARBOR RESTAURANT

251-843-5900

Dine with Your Valentine at the Harbor

Home of the Home Cookin' Buffett

Delicious Steaks - Seafood - Chicken

Thurs. - Sat. 4 - 9 P.M.

Sunday 11 A.M. - 3 P.M.

Turn east on Barrytown Rd. go 1 mile turn left on Mosley Bridge Rd.

Coming up in the Sun ...

- Money Matters for Kids
- Teacher of the Month
- Senator Shelby visits Choctaw

Wild Turkey Federation Banquet

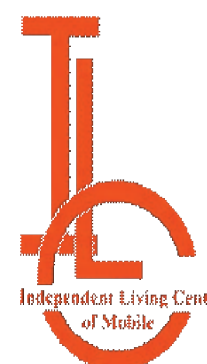
Coming March 10th 2007



Enjoy Family Entertainment

Food! Auction! Fun!

Keep Your Sights Out for More Information



Independent Living Center of Mobile

The Independent Living Center of Mobile (ILC) is a non-profit disability rights agency that serves your area. The ILC has been in operation since 1988. We offer services to anyone with a disability. Our basic services are free.

The ILC of Mobile helps persons with disabilities to achieve or maintain self sufficient and productive lives in their communities. The center assists persons with disabilities through personal and systems advocacy, information and referral, peer support, and skills training. Also, we assist our consumers who are interested in living in the community instead of an institution. We help people who are developmentally disabled with hurricane and other disaster preparations. Each consumer works with an Independent Living Specialist to set his or her own goals then works at their individual pace to achieve them.

Service provided includes counseling, computer training, home modification, interpreting, support groups, etc. The goal of each program offered by the center is to assist each individual served to attain his or her maximum level of independence.

We are funded by the Federal Government through a grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration, State and local government, fundraisers and donations.

For more information about The Independent Living Center, please contact Jim Flora at Telephone (251)460-0301 Ext. 102 Email jimf@ilcmobile.org WEB site: www.ilcmobile.org