



Adult Day Program Client Pays It Forward



Ron Lake likes to refer to himself as an ADP “Ambassador” and for good reason.

The 67-year-old father of three remembers the first day he attended Community Care Durham’s Adult

Day Program (ADP). He said he didn’t know what to expect and was nervous.

Then he met Lorne Gregory Bolton, another client, who warmly welcomed Lake to the program.

“That was something to learn from,” said Lake. “From that point on I’ve made it my business to greet them (new ADP clients).”

The ADP program has been a regular part of Lake’s life since he suffered a stroke. He said he’ll never forget the day – Dec. 28, 2013 – because it’s his “sweetie’s birthday”, his wife Alina.

The stroke was a result of a heart valve problem. He had the valve replaced in 2001 but by 2013 something wasn’t right. He found himself getting out of breath after doing regular tasks. It got to the point where one night he said to his wife “Something’s not right” and the next morning he went to the ER.

Lake was right. He underwent open heart surgery again to fix his heart valve and the prognosis wasn’t good. An infection was discovered. The doctor notified his family to get his affairs in order and admitted Lake’s heart was the worst he’d ever seen.

“It was a miracle I was alive,” he said.

The infection resulted in a massive brain bleed. Doctors performed a craniectomy and Lake was left in a coma for two months. He’d suffered two strokes during the operations but he survived. He came out of the ordeal with memory problems and he’s undergone extensive physical therapy to gain strength and mobility on his left side. He feels fortunate however, that his speech was left unchanged.

“My wife was by my side every day. She’s one of the reasons I survived,” he said.

As part of Lake’s rehabilitation he worked out at the Abilities Centre in Whitby and he attended the CCD’s ADP where he enjoyed balloon badminton, trivia, word games and music. He’s been a regular of the program since about 2015 he said. He said the staff and volunteers at the ADP are so thoughtful, “and they get everyone involved.”

“I can’t say enough good things about them,” he said. “The staff are amazingly great. It’s like a big, happy family.”

COVID-19 prevented the ADPs being offered in person but Lake said he still enjoys participating in the online program on Zoom.

As the self-professed ADP Ambassador, Lake said he’s looking forward to the resumption of in-person ADP sessions where he can again greet the clients, staff and volunteers. He said he’ll also continue his workouts to continually get stronger.

“I’m trying to get to the best I can be,” he said.