Wound Care at HMH Saves Lives

Finding hope and heroes at Howard Memorial Hospital

“I was in bad shape when the wound care team first saw me,” says Mary Floyd. “I don’t think they knew what they were going to do. But they worked on me and worked on me and here I am.”

Mary is a double amputee who had the misfortune of getting bitten by a spider three years ago. The spider bite was on her backside and it soon became infected.

“It was just black,” recalls Mary. Her family took her to a hospital in Texarkana where the doctors said there was no hope.

“They told me it wouldn’t heal at all,” she says. Initially, the doctors thought the infection was related to problems with her legs and performed more surgeries to remove more of them. They also removed part of her tailbone, which the infection had spread to.

“They didn’t even clean me up after the surgery,” says Mary. “That’s how little of a chance they thought I had.”

Fortunately, Mary’s family was not going to stand for this.

“It was so scary,” says Mary. “My husband and kids were beside themselves. But we decided that if I was going to die, it wasn’t going to be in this hospital. It was going to be at home, with all of them loving me.”

They took Mary home and got her into the wound care program at Howard Memorial Hospital. There, they would do what they could to keep Mary’s wounds clean. “I don’t think they had ever seen a person in worse shape,” says Mary.

“They doctored me. They gave me medications. They did everything they could,” says Mary. Initially, she was going to wound care once a day. Then, something miraculous happened: Mary started to get better.

“They just kept at it,” she says. “They didn’t give up.” Daily visits gave way to twice a week, then just once a month. Along the way, Mary had the love and support of her family, including her daughter Debbie and great-granddaughter Nataly.

“My great-grandbaby Nataly was right there with me,” says Mary. “That child was fascinated by everything that was happening. She watched everything they did. She says she’s going to be a doctor and we don’t have any doubt about it!”

Now, two years later, after a journey that included bedsores and two years with a catheter, Mary is a graduate of the wound care program.

“I’m still a double amputee,” she laughs. “Nataly asked if I could grow my legs back. They’re not that good. But they did not give up on me. And neither did my family. They could have let me die in that hospital. Fortunately, my kids didn’t accept that and they got me into wound care at Howard Memorial Hospital.”

There is no question in Mary’s mind that wound care saved her life. “I praise them,” she says. “They can do anything. If they fixed me, I believe they can fix anybody.”

There is no question, either, about where Mary’s hospital of choice is. “If I ever have to go to the hospital again,” she says. “Or if any of my loved ones have to go to the hospital, we’re going right up the road to Howard Memorial.”

Daniel and his team showed so much patience and concern. They were so good to me. I had nothing to do but get well!

-Mary Floyd
A Nightmare Turned Miracle
Lance Hostetler’s devastating injury and inspiring recovery

Just days after Christmas, nine year-old Lance Hostetler was in a terrible accident. He and his older brother Lakin were in the family’s ATV, driving to the far end of some property the Hostetlers had recently purchased. They had planned to cut down a cedar tree there and bring it back to put by their mother’s bird feeders.

It was after lunch, but the fog hadn’t cleared and visibility was poor. The boys just had to cross a T-junction to get to the land. Because of the poor visibility, neither Lakin and Lance, nor the driver of an SUV saw each other’s vehicles. The brothers were hit, and Lance, on the passenger’s side, struck the SUV hard before being thrown from the vehicle. He landed in the middle of the road.

Lance and Lakin’s father and six-year-old sister Lindsey were nearby, hauling hay. If there can be said to be any luck at all in a situation such as theirs, it’s that their father, Justin, in addition to being a farmer, is a first responder.

“I knew with the fog they’d never be able to get a helicopter here,” says Justin. Both boys were injured, but Lance wasn’t responding. Justin radioed in to his fellow first responders. Ambulances and EMTs were soon on the scene.

After he made the call, Justin called his wife Juanita who was working in their house with their youngest daughter Kalli. They rushed to the rest of their family. The boys were loaded in ambulances and sped to Howard Memorial Hospital.

“Lakin actually looked worse,” recalls Juanita. “He had facial abrasions and had to have stitches on his hand. He was in the ER for about four hours.”

Lakin was released and his aunt took him to care for him at her house.

For Lance, things were not looking good. “He groaned a little when they were cutting off his clothes,” says Juanita. “But he was unresponsive otherwise.”

The emergency department doctors determined that Lance’s brain was bleeding and that his skull had been fractured in several places—seven, according to the CT scan.

“They decided that he needed to go to Little Rock, to the pediatric intensive care unit at the children’s hospital there,” says Juanita. “I suppose I was in shock,” she says, recalling the traumatic events.
“They were so professional. They let us be in the room with Lance, and Dr. Peebles said that Lance could hear us, so we talked to him.”

One thing that stands out clearly to both Juanita and her husband, was the send-off Howard gave them.

“Dr. Peebles gathered everyone around in a circle,” says Justin. “And he said a prayer for us, with the whole staff, before we left.”

The next 48-72 hours were critical for Lance. If his brain stopped bleeding and if the pressure didn’t become too great, it was likely he would survive.

Lance ended up spending 23 days in the hospital, 11 of those in the pediatric intensive care unit in Little Rock. The fractures in his skull had proven to be a blessing, as his brain was able to swell and reduce in pressure without further injury.

“It was amazing to watch God work as Lance healed,” says Juanita. “Throughout the ordeal, the Hostetlers felt blessed and surrounded by love and support. Family and friends took over the farm chores while they were in Little Rock.

Lance had some work ahead of him, after he got out of the hospital. There was rehab, but, miraculously, not as much as the doctors originally anticipated. He has lost his hearing in one ear, and his eyes don’t dilate as they used to, but, says Juanita, “He doesn’t realize how minor these things are!”

These issues could resolve themselves, but even if they don’t, Juanita and her family consider themselves exceptionally blessed.

“It was inspiring,” says Juanita. “The whole community just pulled together for us.”

“It could have been so much worse,” says Juanita. “And we had the right people, the right family, and the right hospital there to get us through this. God took care of us.”

Respiratory Therapist, Miranda Chandler, pictured left, manually ventilated Lance during the 125 mile trip from HMH to Children’s Hospital in Little Rock.
Hospitalists: A Guide Throughout Your Stay

New program at HMH serves patients and their families

Hospitalist programs are gaining popularity throughout the United States, in both rural and urban areas. Howard is pleased to offer this new service. Doctors Charles Beard and Chinedu Ede will be taking on this responsibility at Howard Memorial Hospital.

“We are proud to bring this new kind of care to the patients at HMH,” says Dr. Beard. “Hospitalists are a great resource for patients and their families. I look forward to getting to know my patients, helping them through their hospital stay, and making their experience more positive.”

With the hospitalist program, patients and their families can rest easier knowing they have an advocate and expert to guide them through their hospital stay.

A hospitalist is a medical provider usually assigned to a 12-hour shift responsible for patients from the time of their admittance to the hospital to the time of their release. They coordinate a patient’s care, working with nurses, physical therapists, social workers, and other staff to ensure the best possible care and the best possible communication.

The hospitalist also is responsible for clearly communicating with the patient and their family. A stay in the hospital can be a confusing time. With so many caregivers going in and out, with so many different tests and procedures, it can get stressful even under the best circumstances. A hospitalist will be there to ensure both patient and family knows what is going on and why. He or she will also make sure all questions are answered.

“It’s an excellent service,” says Dr. Ede. “With so much going on, patients can feel like so many things are happening and that they have no control over it. As a hospitalist, it’s my duty to make sure all questions are answered and that the patient and his or her family feels comfortable with what is happening. It can feel like such a powerless position for a patient to be in, but we’re hoping to change that with the hospitalist program. I love my job, and I can’t wait to help more people.”

When it’s time to leave the hospital, the hospitalist will coordinate discharge instructions and follow up actions, like physical therapy, home visits, or wound care.
The Latest from HMH to Your InBox

Get the latest news from Howard Memorial Hospital by signing up for our monthly e-newsletter! Filled with health tips, useful information, and current events and happenings at our hospital, our e-newsletter brings everything you need to know right to your inbox. If you like the high quality, informative, and entertaining articles in our paper publication, you’ll love the e-newsletter.

Sign up today!