

Local people. True stories. Real advice.

Momentum

October 2015

BLACK RIVER
MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
Excellence. Always.



**Inspiring
Others**

INSPIRING OTHERS

Two women share their stories of courage and determination

MICHELLE

Between her job as a behavioral health social worker, finishing up her master's of mental health counseling degree and spending time with her husband and son, Michelle Schoolcraft had every reason to be exhausted every evening when she got home.

But what Michelle didn't know was the deeper, underlying reason for her tiredness. She didn't know she had obstructive sleep apnea.

IT RUNS IN THE FAMILY

For the past three years, Michelle and her primary care doctor have discussed whether or not she should have a sleep study for two reasons. The first: almost every member of her family has been diagnosed with sleep apnea, including her mom, dad, brother, aunts and uncles and even her son. The second reason was her loud snoring. However, Michelle never exhibited any other signs of a sleep disorder, so she never decided to have the sleep study performed.

"My husband never noticed me gasping for air at night, and I didn't have the daytime grogginess or constant desire to fall asleep that most people suffering from sleep apnea experience," Michelle says. "I was always able to gear up in the morning for my work day."

Then, earlier this year, Michelle was at a training where she had to share a room with a co-worker. The woman she roomed with told Michelle that her snoring was not normal and that she should probably have it checked out.

That conversation caused Michelle to once again speak with her doctor. This time, she received a referral to the Black River Memorial Hospital Sleep Lab.

When Michelle came to BRMH on the evening of July 20, she was brought to the sleep study room and given time to get ready for bed like she normally would at home. She was able to bring her own pillow and even spend a little time on her tablet. However, Michelle was a little apprehensive about being watched while she slept, and she worried about actually being able to fall asleep.

"The room was very comfortable and homey, so falling asleep was a lot easier than I thought it would be,"



Michelle and Kathy's lives have both changed because of the care they received at BRMH. See how our expert providers have impacted the lives of other patients at [BRMH.net/perspectives](https://www.brmh.net/perspectives).

Your
Perspective

the lives of other patients at
[BRMH.net/perspectives](https://www.brmh.net/perspectives).

Michelle says. "And the technician, Paula Voskuil, was so personable, and eased my nerves by saying there's nothing she hasn't seen through all her years of working as a sleep technician, so there was nothing I could do that would shock her."

After this first study, Michelle was told that she didn't have quite enough apnea episodes to have the CPAP mask put on during the night; however, Paula said they were concerned about how low her oxygen levels were throughout the night. Eight days later, Michelle was back at BRMH for a follow-up study, wearing the CPAP mask, and from there was diagnosed with obstructive sleep apnea.

Now that Michelle knows one of the major factors contributing to her evening tiredness, she is looking forward to having more energy for herself and her family.

KATHY

October may be the time for all things orange—pumpkins, falling leaves and Halloween—but for the majority of the month, pink is actually the dominant color, a visible reminder of breast cancer awareness month.

Breast cancer awareness month continues to grow every year, and with it, more and more women understand the importance of receiving regular mammograms. Last October, Kathy Potter learned this first hand, when she was diagnosed with breast cancer.

THE DREADED CALLBACK

Kathy has always been diligent about her yearly physicals and regular mammograms. But in October 2014, her routine health check-up uncovered an abnormality.

Nick Kitowski, MD and general surgeon at Black River Memorial Hospital, performed a biopsy of the lump found in Kathy's breast to determine if she had cancer. The bad news—it was cancer. But the good news—it was caught early.

"While I was waiting for the results of my biopsy, I immediately turned to my support system, which included my husband, family, friends and my faith," Kathy says. "So when I heard 'it's breast cancer,' it was hard to take, but I felt prepared to handle it."

Once Kathy and her husband fully absorbed the news, they set out to determine how to proceed with her treatment. Dr. Nick Kitowski walked them through Kathy's treatment options, which included a lumpectomy with radiation or a mastectomy with potentially no chemotherapy/radiation.

The choice was easy for them. The mastectomy option presented the best chance for complete removal of her cancer, and therefore, the lowest risk of it returning.

After the decision was made, Dr. Nick Kitowski explained each step of Kathy's surgery and recovery, ensuring she and her husband were comfortable and confident at all times. In fact, he became an integral part of Kathy's support system.

"Dr. Kitowski, his nurse Hannah and the entire surgical team made me and my whole family feel comfortable during my surgery and recovery," Kathy says. "And it made the experience easier to have it all done in my hometown."

Following her surgery, Kathy was amazed at how quickly she was able to get back to her everyday life. She only missed a couple days of work and never needed to have chemotherapy or radiation. Now, Kathy is back to focusing on her job as the general manager of the Banner Journal and spending time with her grandkids.

But since it is once again breast cancer awareness month, she has one more thing to share:

"Breast cancer is beatable, especially when you catch it early. We all know mammograms aren't fun, but they are much more enjoyable than battling breast cancer." ■



Things you don't want to talk about

"LEAKING"

Nearly 33 million people suffer from uncontrollable urine loss or leakage, also known as urinary incontinence. This includes nearly 40 percent of women and 30 percent of men. While those who experience it may feel isolated in social or work situations, no one is truly alone when it comes to living with and managing incontinence.

UNDERSTANDING URINARY INCONTINENCE

Several muscles make up the urinary tract and they control the collection, storage and release of urine. When these muscles are weakened or damaged, they don't function as effectively, which results in difficulty controlling urination and unexpected leaks.

While it's normal for muscles in the body to weaken as we age, incontinence is not simply a natural part of aging. Oftentimes, it is actually a side effect or symptom of another medical condition. The type of underlying condition is what influences the severity of incontinence.

Short-term incontinence can be the result of urinary tract or bladder infections, constipation, childbirth or certain medications.

Long-term incontinence is often caused by bladder or pelvic floor muscle weakness, a blockage in the urinary tract, stroke, brain/spinal cord injuries or some surgical procedures.

Chronic incontinence, which may require ongoing management, is typically the result of birth defects or progressive illness.

In addition to multiple causes of incontinence, there are four different forms:

1. Stress—urine loss when coughing, laughing, lifting, exercising
2. Urge—urine loss coupled with a strong, sudden urge to use the bathroom
3. Overflow—the result of incomplete bladder emptying and excessive urine being forced out
4. Functional—uncontrolled urine loss due to physical or mental limitations (such as impaired mobility from arthritis or mental function from conditions like Alzheimer's)

"Incontinence may be a common issue, but it's not normal," says Josiah Nelson, MD and urological surgeon at Black River Memorial Hospital. "There are several different treatment options available, so don't let incontinence keep you from living life."



NO MORE LEAKS



Learn about treatment options for bladder control issues from Black River Memorial Hospital urologist Dr. Josiah Nelson.

November 5 | 6 p.m.
Black River Memorial Hospital
Call 715-284-3629 to register,
or online at brmh.net/noleaks.

...but should.

"ITCHING, BURNING, BLEEDING..."

Three out of four people avoid sitting because of these three symptoms. The underlying cause? **Hemorrhoids**, a condition where veins in your bottom become swollen and inflamed. While they aren't fun to talk about, understanding hemorrhoids is the first step in finding relief.

Hemorrhoids are more likely to develop as people age because the tissues supporting the veins can weaken and stretch due to:

- Straining during bowel movements
- Chronic diarrhea or constipation
- Obesity
- Pregnancy
- Low-fiber diet

Fortunately, there are many effective treatments available to provide relief from hemorrhoid symptoms. One of these is a minimally invasive surgical procedure available at Black River Memorial Hospital from Nick Kitowski, MD, general surgeon. This procedure blocks blood flow to hemorrhoidal tissue to eliminate the pain, itching and discomfort. ■



DON'T SIT ON IT!

Call 715-284-3678 to learn more and setup an appointment with Dr. Kitowski to discuss your options for hemorrhoid relief.





One of the reasons Angie was excited to return to BRMH was the level of teamwork among the staff. “We all care for and support each other,” Angie says. “And this shows in the level of care and compassion we provide to our patients.”

From the speeding ambulance rushing to the hospital to determining the best treatment plan at a patient’s bedside, **Angie, RN, BSN**, knows the emergency department from the outside in.

Angie got her start in emergency care as a local EMT, many times taking patients to Black River Memorial Hospital (BRMH) for care. About a year into being an EMT, she decided to accept a position inside the hospital as an ER tech. It was then that Angie decided to go back to school and finish her bachelor’s of nursing degree.

She completed her education while she continued to work full-time in the BRMH emergency department (ED). After Angie graduated, she left BRMH and got experience working in an intensive care unit and a medical/surgical department. But in 2010, she returned to BRMH to once again work in the ED.

“I like the energy of the ED and the fact that I can be there to help see patients through critical health moments in their lives,” Angie says.

Since returning to BRMH, Angie has moved from direct patient care to being the emergency department patient care coordinator. In this role, she is responsible for ED staff

scheduling, training and education as well as providing backup patient care when the ED is busy. Angie also fills in at the specialty clinics while visiting doctors are seeing patients, and she’s a certified chemotherapy nurse.

Additionally, Angie was instrumental in helping the emergency department implement BRMH’s new electronic health record (EHR) over the past year. Because one of her duties as patient care coordinator is to review patient charts and ensure all documentation and charges are correct, it was natural for her to be a key part in the roll out of the electronic records. Now, she’s very involved with the EHR on a daily basis and helps other staff troubleshoot problems when they pop up.

“Sometimes people underestimate small facilities like BRMH, but I believe one of BRMH’s greatest strengths is the dedication of every staff member—from the senior leaders to nurses and housekeepers—to ensuring a positive patient experience,” Angie says.

Outside of work, Angie loves spending time outdoors with her family, whether it’s camping, going on long walks with their dog or attending one of her son’s sporting events. When she’s not outside, you might find her inside cooking or crafting. ■

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

A house on Main Street. A job with the city. These were two things **Steve Peterson** never expected to have in his life.

"I'm a country boy who thought I'd be a dairy farmer my entire life," he says.

But a love for sports ultimately led him down the path to becoming the Black River Falls parks and recreation director—and moving into town.

It all started in high school when Steve started playing football. He fell in love with the sport and even continued playing for a year in college. Then, Steve became interested in officiating rather than playing. When he moved back to Black River Falls to continue farming, he expanded his officiating skills to basketball, softball and baseball.

That's how Steve began working for the previous Black River Falls parks and recreation director—helping with the Little League program and umping local baseball and basketball games.

"In 1987, when the parks and rec director asked me if I'd be interested in the job, I thought it would be a part-time position I could take on while I still coached high school football," Steve says. "But it turned into a full-time career and one of the best things that's happened to me."

As the parks and recreation director, Steve is still actively involved in local sports, overseeing the adult softball programs and being on the committees that run youth soccer, swimming and wrestling. He is also President of the Milt Lunda Memorial Arena Committee that manages the building in which youth hockey and figure skating is held.

But one of his largest responsibilities is the local Little League program. Over the years, Steve has worked to expand this program into the surrounding communities, and he's played a key role in implementing a girl's division. Now, there are five different levels within Little League, about 75 teams and 1,200 kids involved from seven different communities.

In addition to athletics, Steve is responsible for maintaining and developing the city parks and Foundation Trail. This included being on the committee to establish the Lunda Park and the Hoffman Aquatic Park.

"One of my biggest goals is keeping our parks up to speed and developing the community into a strong recreational area," Steve says. "We are always looking for new

improvements so people will continue to want to live and work here."

Steve also is an active member of the Jackson County Fair Parks organization and serves on the Fair board.

"I'm a firm believer that being involved in your community not only makes you feel good, but also gives you a sense of pride and ownership," Steve says. "And because of that pride, you want to continue to help make the area even better." ■



Steve and his wife moved out to the Shamrock area in 2012 in preparation for their retirement. When that day comes, Steve looks forward to focusing on being a grandpa and watching his grandkids' activities as opposed to planning them.



Visit our website at www.brmh.net for a full list of hospital events and to view our latest videos.

HOSPITAL EVENTS 2015

Monday, October 5, 12 – 1 p.m.
Better Breather's Club Meeting
Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room

October 6 – 29, 9 – 10 a.m.
(Tuesdays & Thursdays)
Senior Stay Fit Exercise Class
Jackson County Bank Community Room
Register by calling: 715-284-1330

Oct. 9, 6:30 – 9 p.m. & Oct. 10, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Childbirth Education Class (two-day)
Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room

Wednesday, Oct. 14, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.
Diabetes Education & Support Group (DESG) Monthly Meeting
Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room

Friday, October 23, 7 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Partners Book Fair
Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room

Sunday, November 1
Marketplace Insurance – 2016 Open Enrollment Starts
For more info, visit: www.healthcare.gov

November 3 – December 1, 9 – 10 a.m.
(Tuesdays & Thursdays)
Senior Stay Fit Yoga
Jackson County Bank Community Room
Register by calling: 715-284-1330

Tuesday, Nov. 3, 10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Partners Nutman Sale
Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room

Thursday, November 5, 6 p.m.
No More Leaks Educational Event
Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room
Register at brmh.net or by calling
715-284-3629

Saturday, November 7, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.
Diabetes Fair
Skyline Golf Course, BRF

Tuesday, November 10, 6:30 – 8 p.m.
Breastfeeding Education Class
Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room

Wed. Nov. 11, 11:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Blood Drive
Comfort Inn & Suites, BRF

Thursday, November 19, 9:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Partners Holiday Tea
Black River Memorial Hospital

Monday, November 30, 7 p.m.
Hospice Evergreen Memorial Service
Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room

Sunday, December 6, 5:30 p.m.
Love Light Tree Lighting Ceremony
Black River Memorial Hospital

Monday, December 7, 12 – 1 p.m.
Better Breather's Club Meeting
Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room

Thursday, December 7, 4 p.m.
Eye Health Event
Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room

Dec. 11, 6:30 – 9 p.m. & Dec. 12, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Childbirth Education Class (two-day)
Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room

Thursday, Dec. 17, 8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Hospice Gift Wrapping Fundraiser
Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room

Friday, December 18, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Blood Drive
Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room

Thursday, December 31
Marketplace Insurance – Coverage Ends for 2015 Marketplace Plans
For more info, visit: www.healthcare.gov