

# Shore Rehab Gets a Grandpa Back to His Family



Peter Flanagan is especially thankful for his family's tremendous help and support, including grandchildren Kimberleigh and Madison. "They drew pictures for me that filled the walls in my room."

Anyone who knows Peter Flanagan, 54, will tell you that he loves his grandchildren. The Toms River resident is also known for tackling his challenges head-on. A couple years ago, diabetes-related health issues led to a kidney and a pancreas transplant, and Peter didn't let it slow him down. But when a foot injury developed into a painful infection that spread to his right leg, he was faced with a difficult decision.

## A LIFE-CHANGING CHOICE

For people with diabetes, high levels of blood sugar can cause irreparable damage to blood vessels and nerves in the legs and feet. Poor circulation and reduced sensations complicate minor foot injuries, and the resulting infection can worsen despite antibiotics and wound care.

Peter had two options: surgery and medications to try to clear the infection, or amputation. "There was a chance that adding drugs to fight the infection could affect my kidneys," he says. Once all the potential complications were considered, Peter didn't hesitate. He told his surgeon, Vincent J. Milazzo, M.D., to amputate.

## A HIGHLY SKILLED TEAM

After amputation, physical and occupational therapy is critical for regaining independence. Peter was transferred to Shore Rehabilitation Institute (SRI). At SRI, rehabilitation for amputees starts with therapy to strengthen muscles and balance and prosthesis preparation.

Peter met with Heikki Uustal, M.D., head of the Prosthetics & Orthotics Clinic at the facility. Dr. Uustal, a leading clinician in the field of prosthetics and orthotics, worked with prosthetist Bob Sylvestri, CPO, to evaluate designs and ensure the right prosthetic was selected.

"The Clinic makes it convenient for patients because all team members are there," Dr. Uustal explains. "Patients don't have to travel to different places to get what they need. We have a well-organized and coordinated system in place, and SRI provides an excellent standard of care for patients."

## REHABILITATION FOR RECOVERY

SRI's team of professionals takes patients through the paces in the sophisticated gym and fully equipped Activities of Daily Living Suite to help them relearn self-sufficiency.

"Many of the mobility exercises were difficult for Peter because of a brace he wears on his other foot," says Noreen Giovannone, PT. "Yet he determinedly worked through every one because he wanted to be able to play on the floor with his grandchildren again."

Peter is grateful for the tremendous support of his SRI team and his family. "There were great people at Shore Rehab who took care of me," he says. ■ — *Judee Szaro Treanor*

## FOUR STEPS FOR HAPPY FEET

When you have diabetes, daily foot care can help keep your feet trouble-free. Check your routine for these steps:

- Do you wash and thoroughly dry your feet — including between toes?
- Do you carefully inspect both feet? Look for redness, blisters, cuts, and swelling. Ask your doctor how to handle different foot problems.
- Do you apply moisturizer to dry feet — and remember not to get it between your toes?
- Do you sprinkle talcum powder on your feet if they tend to sweat?



## START YOUR OWN JOURNEY TO RECOVERY

Schedule a tour to learn more about Shore Rehabilitation Institute's rehabilitative programs. Call **732-836-4500** today!