



Bill's Story

Several years ago I was diagnosed with COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease). I was a smoker and had attempted to quit on a number of occasions. I tried several times to quit, but the bottom line was that I was not ready to quit. In June 2005 I had a serious heart attack, and I was shocked four times on the way to the hospital to get my heart beating properly. I was given my last rites at the hospital. I feel someone had plans for me, and I was able to recover. When I was discharged my future did not look good. I noticed after this episode that my breathing was really labored as my COPD had progressed and my heart had damage that could not be repaired. I stopped smoking the day of my heart attack and started taking care of myself.

I never thought I would ever get on a treadmill again. My doctor suggested that I take the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program that is offered through St. Joseph Hospital. I took that program and graduated in December 2005. The program had an education component as well as exercise. It was highly recommended we follow up this program with an exercise program. I joined the Bangor Y Pulmonary Exercise Program at that time. I have made this program part of my life and I make it a must. What makes it easy and fun is being with those also taking the program. We learn so much from one another. I am very grateful to the trainers from the Y as well as representatives from St. Joseph Hospital that are always in attendance to help us. They are very caring people.

In closing, I can do things today I couldn't do some time ago. Through the programs above, I have learned to live with COPD and it has made me a very grateful person. My lung capacity has improved some, and my doctor on my last visit was very upbeat about my future. My heart has also improved. I highly recommend the program.