

Bonutti Clinic and St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital work together to bring a continuum of care to Total Knee Replacement



No one looks forward to the idea of having knee replacement surgery, and Shirley Payne of Ingraham is no exception. A retired schoolteacher, Shirley put off having her knee replaced until she discovered she didn't have the freedom to get around anymore. She wanted to remain active to help her husband Ron in his ministry as the preacher at Ingraham Christian Church, but found it difficult to keep up with the junior high students she teaches at the church. "Ron would help me when he could and I would use ramps whenever possible, but it just wasn't enough," she said. She decided that she had to tackle her fears and have her knee replaced after she fell a number of times and hurt herself. "The last time I fell, I told myself 'O.K., I'm just going to get this taken care of before I really hurt myself.'"

She and her husband met with Dr. Peter Bonutti, who had done her previous arthroscopic procedures, and together they decided knee replacement was necessary, so Shirley was scheduled for surgery at St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital. She was not looking forward to it, fearful of the unknown, not knowing quite what to anticipate during and after her surgery. Dr. Bonutti's office scheduled her to attend St. Anthony's Bone and Joint Education Program, a program for patients undergoing total joint replacement surgery. She and her husband were grateful for the three-hour program which focuses on reducing anxiety by arming patients with education. "It helped me to better understand what would take place, how I would feel afterwards, and how I could do things to assist in my recovery," Shirley explained.

Dr. Bonutti performed a total replacement of Shirley's knee, which went well. As most patients, Shirley underwent some pain and discomfort following her surgery that comes



with totally replacing a joint. However, since Dr. Bonutti was able to use a minimally-invasive technique which allowed for fewer and smaller incisions than a typical knee replacement surgery, Shirley was able to be out of bed the day after her surgery, walking down the hall with the assistance of a physical therapist and a walker.



Shirley stayed in St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital for 3½ days, each day progressing farther and farther in bending her knee. The Physical Therapy room for orthopedic patients was located on the sixth floor down the hall from her room. While her first session was difficult, she progressed quickly, increasing the angle of her knee bend with each session. The therapy staff encouraged her each step of the way, while also challenging her. "I don't think I could have done it without their help," she says of the therapy staff.

After returning home, she had to build up her strength, her stamina, and sometimes learning how to do things slightly differently. She shared a story where she and her husband were at a restaurant near St. Louis when she had to get up and cross the room to get some tea. "After you have knee surgery, you can't just get up and walk; you have to get yourself ready – it's like doing a little dance," she said laughing. "When I got up and crossed the room, a lady sitting at a table nearby said, 'I bet you had a knee replacement.' She had her knee replaced by Dr. Bonutti as well. It was neat that we have this 'sisterhood' because of the fact that we had our knees replaced."

Shirley is grateful for the care she received by Dr. Bonutti and the staff at St. Anthony's. "They treated me wonderfully. I am so glad that I faced my fears and decided to get my knee replaced. I can now get around fine without having to fear falling or having to favor one leg over the other." Shirley may have to have her right knee replaced eventually but now that she can take some of the burden off the right leg by using her left leg, she can give herself some time. "Now that I have gone through it, I wouldn't hesitate having my right knee replaced by Dr. Bonutti and the great staff at St. Anthony's. They both were excellent and helped give me my freedom back."

