

MONMOUTH

health & life

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OPERATION WALK USA

TWO LOCAL MEN RECEIVE FREE JOINT REPLACEMENTS THROUGH OPERATION WALK



LONG BRANCH, N.J.—Arthritic disease is the most common cause of disability in the United States, affecting 46 million Americans, or more than 21 percent of the adult population. The debilitating pain of end-stage hip or knee degenerative disease makes even the simplest daily tasks excruciating. While hip and knee replacement surgeries are the most cost-effective and successful of all orthopedic procedures in reducing this pain, these surgeries are expensive and out-of-reach for many under- or uninsured suffering Americans.

Thanks to Operation Walk, a non-profit medical humanitarian organization that provides free hip or knee replacement surgeries for these patients, and a volunteer team of nurses and physicians at Monmouth Medical Center, two local men have been able to receive surgery that will enable them to return to active, productive lives.

Gary Roberti, 56, of Toms River, and George Schwarz, 59, of Long Branch, were both chosen as the recipients of Operation Walk's surgeries at Monmouth Medical Center, the only hospital in New Jersey to participate in the initiative.

Their orthopaedic and joint replacement surgeon, David L. Chalnick, MD, medical director of Monmouth Medical Center's Total Joint Replacement Program, initially heard about Operation Walk through a number of professional outlets and realized it was a way he could help those in need.

"I decided it was a great opportunity to help people in the community in need of joint replacement," he said.

Roberti was recently laid off from his job as a traveling salesman. Without insurance, he was unable to pay for a double hip replacement necessitated by a degenerative condition triggered by trauma from a car accident about a year ago. The intense pain changed Roberti's life dramatically—causing him to give up his daily bike rides, his 50-and-older basketball league and kept him from not only finding a new job but also driving.

"Operation Walk is giving me back my future," said Roberti. "The staff prepared me mentally and spiritually for everything that I'd go through. I couldn't have been in better hands. It was all good and I'm feeling strong."

Schwarz led an active life as well. The former handyman was an avid swimmer, surfer and biker but was forced to give up his physical job and lifestyle as he began experiencing pain he describes as bone-on-bone due to a problem in his left hip. As a result of favoring his hip, he recently developed pain in his left knee and began using a cane to walk.

After the surgery, Schwarz said he couldn't have asked for a better experience. "Everyone I came in contact with during my stay was excellent. It's just a different caliber of staff here. I'm looking forward to getting back on my feet so I can keep-up with my 2-year-old granddaughter at the playground."

According to Dr. Chalnick, both surgeries were successful. "Both patients were extremely appreciative. Through Operation Walk, we are able to give them their lives back."

As part of Operation Walk, all aspects of treatment for



LEFT TO RIGHT > DR. CHALNICK DISCUSSES THE SURGERY WITH PATIENT GARY ROBERTI OF TOMS RIVER. > DR. CHALNICK PREPARES FOR SURGERY. > DR. CHALNICK WITH PATIENT GEORGE SCHWARZ OF LONG BRANCH.

both men—including surgery, hospitalization and pre-and post-operative care—were provided at no cost to the patients. In addition to Dr. Chalnick, time and services were donated by anesthesiologist Yitzhak Belsh, MD, and implants were provided by Smith & Nephew.

“Monmouth Medical Center prides itself on providing quality medical care to those we serve. The compassion and dedication of our staff—like Dr. Chalnick and Dr. Belsh – allow us to provide that same medical care to needy patients identified through Operation Walk,” said Frank J. Vozos, MD, FACS, President and Chief Executive Officer at Monmouth Medical Center. “We couldn’t be any more proud of our staff and their willingness to participate in such a cause.”

Monmouth Medical Center was one of only 49 hospitals in 29 states across the country to provide free joint replacements to more than 200 individuals as part of Operation Walk USA 2012.

Operation Walk USA, now in its second year, drew its inspiration from Operation Walk (International), a private, not-for-profit, volunteer medical services organization that provides free surgical treatment for patients in developing countries, who otherwise have no access to life-improving care for arthritis or other debilitating bone and joint conditions.

Harnessing a national network of volunteer hospitals, physicians, nurses, physical therapists and others, Operation Walk USA is committed to helping those in need by restoring their mobility, self-dignity, productivity and helping them return to their social work.

About the Total Joint Replacement Program At Monmouth Medical Center

THE TOTAL JOINT REPLACEMENT PROGRAM at Monmouth Medical Center is dedicated to the care of hip and knee joint replacement surgery patients. Recently, this dedication was recognized with a prestigious national accreditation, as the program received The Joint Commission’s Disease-Specific Care Certification for Total Hip and Knee Replacement. The goal of our program is to provide high-quality, compassionate care so patients and their families are comfortable, informed and ready to start their recovery. Care is delivered by certified and specialty trained operating room teams, registered nurses, licensed physical and occupational therapists, as well as licensed medical and pain management practitioners. Before the surgery, patients and their loved ones are invited to attend a group educational class that helps prepare them and their families for surgery and recovery, and to initiate comprehensive discharge planning. For More information call 732.923.7666, or visit www.barnabashealth.org/mmcjoint. For a referral to a Monmouth Medical Center Total Joint Replacement Specialist, call 888.724.7123.

