



# RehabMatters

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## Marjorie Adams

### *An Inspiration To All!*

By **Ann M. Ciotoli**

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Marjorie Adams, an active thirty-seven-year-old elementary school teacher and mother of four, enjoyed a life of good health until October 2008, when she discovered her headaches and jaw pain were symptoms of a benign brain tumor. In November 2008, she was admitted to Mercy Hospital for a craniotomy to remove the tumor.

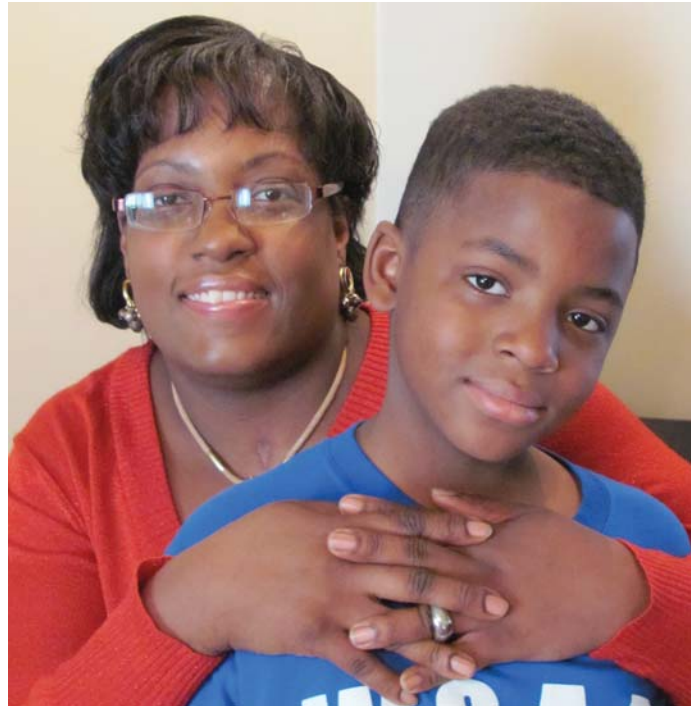
Initially, she did not experience any complications following surgery; however, several days later, Marjorie suffered a basilar artery stroke. The stroke made her lethargic and confused. The doctors gave Marjorie a 20% chance of survival. Shortly after the stroke, she developed pneumonia which left her unable to breathe without a tracheostomy tube.

Over the next few weeks, Marjorie's status improved and she became more awake and alert. She was able to communicate with nurses using sign language because she was unable to speak with the tracheostomy tube.

Once her status improved, Marjorie was transferred to HealthSouth Hospital of Pittsburgh, a long-term acute care hospital located in Monroeville, where her respiratory status and other medical problems were further assessed and stabilized. Marjorie began speech and physical therapy to improve communication and cognitive skills as well as exercises for strength and endurance.

"What I remember most about Margie is her motivation to get better for her children," said Harriett Arnett, Marjorie's primary nurse at HealthSouth. "In the beginning of her recovery, she was fighting an uphill battle. Margie could remember some things but was unable to make the 'puzzle pieces' all fit together. But she never forgot her children and the drive to get better for them and eventually for her as well."

Once Marjorie's tracheostomy was removed, she began speaking on her own. Her physical status improved and her treatment team at HealthSouth Hospital felt she was ready for more aggressive rehabilitation. Marjorie took the next step in her continuum of care and chose HealthSouth Harmarville's Stroke Program.



"My boys kept me going," said Marjorie. "Starting to walk again was very difficult for me, but I knew I had to do it. I knew I had to get better to take care of my sons."

A few weeks later, Marjorie was discharged from Harmarville and needed only minimal assistance with her daily activities. She continued with an outpatient therapy program at HealthSouth in Monroeville to further her strength in walking and self care. "Marjorie fully invested herself in her therapy," said Carol Kenyon, PT. "She often had questions that indicated she was focusing mind, body, and spirit into her recovery. She made every effort to learn about her condition and follow her therapist's advice. She was an inspiration to our staff."

By the end of summer 2009, Marjorie began receiving services through the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). She is now pursuing a master's degree in adult education and training. Marjorie is back to many of her former hobbies and also home schools her youngest son.

"God guides my steps," said Marjorie. Recalling her experience at HealthSouth, she says, "When I didn't think I could do anymore, they just smiled at me and said, 'Yes you can.' I now appreciate and live every day to the fullest."

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