

To a Transplant Nurse,

After attending the National Transplant Games I was struck by how many transplant patients there are and the fact that each person represents a story of hope and determination. I was one of those who fought the good fight against kidney disease and found that in spite of all my running and healthy living that there came a time when I had no choice but to put my health into the hands of others and trust in their abilities. Would this be the end of it all or a new beginning? Fortunately, I was able to be linked with a wonderful living donor and a dedicated and highly skilled surgical team. Then came the post-surgery recovery. You have all these tubes connected to you in various places and some too fierce to mention, you are taking a bunch of drugs including high doses of steroids, you have multiple blood checks and frequent medication doses to take, you cannot eat, you want to sleep but can't due to multiple discomforts. With all these distractions, the nurses are there for you. They are the ones that I really grew to respect for their kind consideration of my condition, treating me as a person, a friend and they knew that I was depending upon their medical expertise to survive if a problem developed. They were there at all times of the day and night and I felt that what they brought to their job was more than just professionalism, it was a belief in humanity and the comfort that a soft hand and gentle voice can bring. They showed me what is meant to care and I could not have been more delighted to have them on my team. They let me know that I was going to be okay and that I was doing well. Their care and support through those first tough days and nights left me feeling that these people were in a class all their own. Although I could not wait to get out of the hospital and on with my recovery, I felt that I left without being able to fully express my appreciation for their care. Fortunately I was able to visit the hospital this past summer, one year post surgery, and did meet with two of my nurses and was able to finally tell them, in person, just how wonderful they were and what their care had meant to me.

Bob Wheeler

- runner, fisherman, and PKD patient