

After a life of pain, hug time for Nana

Carolyn German has three grandchildren. One in Germany and two in Florida.

She tries to visit her son, in the Army in Germany, and her daughter, a Navy wife, in Florida, at least twice a year.

The children rush to greet her, begging to be picked up and hugged. "They are the lights of my life," she said.

But picking them up, especially the older ones, had not been possible. Virtually life-long back problems sternly reminded her of the price she would pay.

No longer, however. To the children's delight, and hers, on her visits, she happily bundles the kids in her arms.

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Carolyn, 61, is an Eastern Shore native. She grew up in Salisbury in Wicomico County and lives now in Woolford, in Dorchester County, with her husband, Mike, a retired barber.

Even as a girl, she suffered from "back problems."

"We were tested in school," she recalls. She was told she had scoliosis, an abnormal spinal curvature, mild at that age but still scoliosis.

In the summers, as a teenager, she worked for her grandfather, Raymond Dykes, a local watermelon grower.

"It was awful on my back. Watermelons can weigh up to 30 pounds. One night, the pain was so bad I had to lie on the floor."

She noted, almost parenthetically, that it wasn't the case of not working those summers for Mr. Dykes. "In those days, we worked as kids if and when we had to. And I had to."

Carolyn's somewhat historic struggle with a lower back pain continued into her employment and into her marriage.

A graduate of the McQueen Willis School of Nursing at Easton Memorial Hospital, Class of 1970, she was employed for 37 years at the Eastern Shore Hospital Center in Cambridge, often having to physically assist geriatric patients and help control others who became unruly.



The Cianci Chronicles

Dr. Christopher Cianci
Licensed chiropractor,
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(Authored by Bruce Hotchkiss)

Of course, the exertion played out in back pain, but, as she knew, it was part of the job.

Even when she was promoted to an administrative position in the hospital, there was no real relief.

She said that the tension associated with the post was reflected in pain in the upper part of her spine, in her neck.

The pain increased markedly, she said, with her pregnancy for her first child, born in 1975.

"It really started to hurt."

She responded with muscle relaxants and as much bed rest as she could get.

But that was only mildly effective.

She tried chiropractic care in Cambridge some 25 years ago, and she decided to return to it a few years ago when she developed an inability to walk without extreme discomfort.

A friend, Chuck Prahl of Cambridge and a long time patient of Dr. Christopher Cianci, urged her to visit the Easton chiropractor. It was on April Fool's Day in 2011 when Carolyn German had her first appointment.

* * *

Carolyn had some common childhood mishaps, Dr. Cianci said, like falling off horses and bikes, "things that come back to haunt us in later years."

"When I first saw her,"

Dr. Cianci related, "she had been taking a common prescription for neck pain that eventually ended up not helping."

Carolyn was quite concerned, Dr. Cianci recalled, about her hip pain, too. She had had an MRI of her hip. The results, she was told, were "inconclusive."

"We often ask patients when we are taking a history if their current health issues are affecting their mood and attitude. Carolyn answered with a resounding 'Yes'," Dr. Cianci said.

"She was upset because her neck and back and hip pain had caused her to have to cancel a trip to visit her son – and the grandchild, of course."

In addition to the usual x-rays and nervous system tests that Dr. Cianci performs routinely on new patients, he did a specialized motion x-ray study to pinpoint the cause of Carolyn's neck problems.

"The process is quite detailed," he said, "Suffice it to say the analysis made it clear to us which vertebrae needed to be adjusted to get Carolyn the relief she so longed for."

* * *

"The pain is gone."

With those four words, Carolyn summed up the results of her chiropractic care and put a period on a history of a half-century of pain.

Gone also is any anxiety about, or reluctance to travel.

"I am not afraid to go anywhere or do anything ... and if I feel a twinge or if something hurts, I tell Dr. Cianci about it and he fixes it."

And oh yes, the grandchildren. Florida and Germany are just a flight away and there are no ups-a-daisy problems now when she gets there.

"As I said, the grandchildren are the lights of my life."

(Dr. Christopher Cianci has been providing chiropractic health care in Easton since 1991. The Cianci Chiropractic Center is located at 8737 Brooks Drive, Suite 201, in the industrial and commercial park on Glebe Road, across from the new Lowe's. For further information, call 410-820-4070 or visit him on the Web at www.drcianci.com.)

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