

The Inter-Mountain

Stroke victim returns home

ELKINS – Before September, Nellie Galford had never experienced any significant health problems. That changed one morning when a stroke nearly ended her life.

“I woke up and had my devotions. Then, I thought I would get dressed for the day, and I just passed out. That’s the last I knew for about five days. I don’t remember much of anything. I woke up in Morgantown,” she said. “That’s the first one I’ve ever had. I’d never had any health issues of any kind.”

She received inpatient care at two facilities before coming to Elkins Rehabilitation and Care Center.

“My daughter was trying to get me here to Elkins,” Galford said.

It’s hard for Galford to remember those early days after the stroke.

“I don’t know what the prognosis was. At that point, probably not very good,” she said.

Physical therapist Maggie Cooper remembers when Galford first came to ERCC, however.

“When she first came, we weren’t sure if she was going to be able to go home alone,” Cooper said.

Eight weeks later, Galford defied the odds when she was able to return to her home, where she could be independent save for frequent visits from

her daughter to check on her well-being.

“If I could tell everybody who had to go to a facility, come here. They’ve given me a lot of extensive therapy. I’ve had neck and shoulder treatments because of my stiff neck, which I still have problems with,” she said.

It took a lot of work, Cooper said. Galford’s stroke was severe.

“It was pretty life-changing. She was pretty much paralyzed on one side. She couldn’t swallow and was having trouble with her speech. We had to start from pretty much square one to get everything back,” Cooper said.

Before the stroke, Galford had no mobility issues.

“They’ve helped me to walk as much as I can. I still don’t have too good use of one side,” she said.

Going from an active lifestyle to having mobility restrictions has been a challenge, but it’s one Galford has taken head-on.

“It was very unexpected, to say the least. The only thing I can actually say is it’s changed me. I liked to be active. I loved gardening and working in my yard, just the natural things. I drove and went a lot of places. That will all be curbed. But I can handle that all right,” he said.

Galford, who taught Sunday school for more than 50 years, still plans to remain active as much as possible.

“I would like to get so I can go about on both feet someday, but if I don’t, I’ll still be active with my church and community as much as possible,” she said.

Cooper said Galford has maintained a positive attitude and a determination that has aided in her recovery.

“We’ve worked on all the different aspects of her care. She’s worked really hard and now she’s going to be able to go home,” Cooper said.

That, in itself, is a blessing.

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