

6/13/11

Dear Select Staff,

My husband, Barry Oakes, and our one month old twins came by to visit the Therapy Staff yesterday. I have been meaning to write you all a thank you note since November when Barry was discharged to TIRR. I was reminded again of how special Select is to us yesterday and made time today to express my gratitude (while the twins napped).

Barry and I had been married one year when he had his brain stem stroke, which was brought on by his atrial fibrillation. Barry was my whole world (now he has to share with the twins). When I had to decide what LTAC to send him to I only wanted the very best, not knowing what the "best" really even meant. I only left Barry's side to go home and sleep at night and to go research hospitals for the next phase of his recovery. It seems like only yesterday I was talking to Bhuds outside the elevator, grilling him on how he could help my husband and chasing down Jenny to check her credentials. After visiting several LTAC's I decided that Select was the best place for Barry. There was a sincerity, dedication, and passion that I felt here that I did not feel anywhere else. Thank you, Mary, for taking the time to talk with me, and to be such a champion for Select. My gut feeling turned out to be correct. Select truly was the "best."

I wanted to take the time to write to you all to let you know how much what you do every day changes peoples lives. If I didn't have a business degree and an oil career, I swore I would be a therapist after we left Select! Some people come to work just to get away from their family for 10 hours, or to simply collect a paycheck. There were so many of you that truly cared about us, and made us feel safe. It is your job, but it's a job that you love and you truly believe in.

I cannot say enough about the PT, OT, and Speech therapy that Barry received for the one month he was there. Bill, Bhuds, Jenny, and team are truly an incredible group of human beings. If it were not for them, my husband would not be what he is today. They stayed late, they came early, they researched new techniques, unbelievable. Barry came to Select unable to walk, write, talk, eat, drink, or move the majority of his limbs. Thank you Bill, for taking the extra effort to come back late in the day to help Barry take his first real shower. Thanks you Bhuds for all the walks down what seemed liked a hallway that never ended. Thanks Darryl for helping make sure Barry got some work in on the weekends and got up to go outside. Jenny thanks for all your help, as Barry looked forward to your visits with Carol and we'll never forget the green applesauce. Today, after many months of ongoing therapy, he is working full time at his old job. He can drive, eat, drink, golf, and is even aiming at running the half marathon with Bhuds!

The respiratory and nursing team and doctors were great. I cannot say that everyone was fantastic- we had our favorites. After all these months I can still remember several staff names.

David- I will never forget how you went out of your way to calm me when Barry had his bad reflux issues, and would always check in on us. I always knew you REALLY cared.

Eve Rose- you always gave Barry a goal of what restaurant we would eat at, WHEN he was able to eat solid food. (We did go to Babin's in December on a modified diet)

Agnes- thank you for chasing down the issue of the leaking condom catheter.-I always felt good to leave him at night when you were with him.

Robin- thank you for always taking your time with his trache, and to talk with me and make sure I was okay.

Elizabeth- Barry's hero, thank you for being his "voice" when he could not talk

I could go on and on about several more of you. There was not one day that I would not cry in my car either before or after spending the day with Barry. I am forever a changed person because of this experience. I love and cherish my husband more than I ever thought possible. We live each day to the fullest. I had to be strong for my husband, so I tried to be stoic, and could never bring myself to truly tell many of you how grateful I was for the care you provided us. I write to you today, because I want you all to know that what you do is so wonderful and can be life changing. You may not hear enough "thank you's" and for what it's worth, I wanted you to know how much you meant to Nicole and Barry Oakes.

Nicole + Barry

P.S. Attached are pictures of our baby girls, Stella and Madison Oakes. They were born May 12th. I carried them full term. They weighed six pounds each at birth and went straight to the big girl nursery- truly little miracles.