

## Patient Story

# Landmark Helps Save a Life



**Landmark routinely enhances the quality of patients' lives. But sometimes, Landmark also helps save a patient's life.**

**Such was the case with Michael Sullivan, a 73-year-old retired musician living in an assisted living facility in Portland, Oregon. Michael was born into a musical family. As a child, Michael's father did a musical radio show, and Michael and his brother were guests on the show every Saturday. They were called the "Singing Sullivans." Michael went on to become a music writer, director and producer. He recorded music in Nashville and toured in a musical show.**

**But by the time Landmark began treating him two years ago, he never thought he would sing again.**

## Physical Challenges

Michael was suffering from both physical and emotional pain when Landmark began to provide him with medical care. Michael had lung disease, major depressive disorder, substance abuse, heart failure and arthritis. "I was hospitalized or admitted to a skilled nursing facility five or six times a year, due to pneumonia and other issues," Michael says.

As Michael's physical challenges worsened, Landmark checked in on him more frequently, in person and by phone.

Then one day, when a Landmark provider came to Michael for a medical visit, she found him unresponsive and in need of hospitalization. "I was unconscious and in septic shock. My kidneys were shutting down. My respiratory system was shutting down. Landmark saved my life. Landmark intervened and got me to the hospital."

"Thank God for Landmark. If it weren't for Landmark, I wouldn't be singing, I would be dead."

## Emotional Pain

While Michael was dealing with his physical challenges, his very best friend passed away from cancer.

Michael says, "I was having so many physical problems, and then when my good friend passed away from cancer, I just gave up. I was dependent on alcohol and addicted to pain medication. I had lost my health, my friend, my apartment and my job. I was going through terrible physical and emotional suffering."

"After my friend died, I didn't want to live anymore. I wondered—what was the point, when I am physically and mentally suffering? I just couldn't go on, and I tried to end my life several times."

Michael felt that nobody cared about him anymore, until Landmark stepped in.

Michael says, "Then Landmark took over and became the battery charger that kept me going. My Landmark therapist visited me and called me a lot on the phone. She sent a depression specialist to see me as well. And I took a course in depression and learned a lot—I never realized all the singers and actors over the years who experienced serious depression."

Michael's doctor told him he didn't just have depression, he had suicidal depression.

**"Over time, I realized that people do care about me. Now my Landmark therapist comes about every two weeks, because I don't want to get depressed again. Anytime I want, I can call my Landmark therapist."**

## Improvements in Health and Emotional Outlook

Landmark's frequent medical and mental health visits and phone calls, in conjunction with Michael's primary care physician and other specialists, helped Michael in numerous ways.

The frequency of his hospitalizations decreased, his depression lifted, his mobility improved, and he was able to wean off his narcotic pain medications. "I also gave up drinking, but I haven't given up ice cream," Michael says, laughing. "My doctor told me that at my age, a little ice cream is okay."

Michael says, "My Landmark doctor comes to visit me about once a month or whenever I call for an appointment. They have even done X-rays here at my home. Landmark calls my primary care doctor and informs him of what is going on with me. I still see my primary care doctor and specialists too."

"After nearly dying several times, my health has slowly gotten better. I am feeling healthier."

## A Dream Realized

With the help of Landmark, Michael came out of his depression and he started singing again. Michael says, "I realized that when I'm singing, I'm not in any pain. So I just kept on singing."

Pretty soon, people were listening to Michael sing, and musicians began to come to the assisted living center. "We were making music together, and we planned a concert," Michael says. "We put on a show here, with a packed house. What I thought was a liability—my health— is now a musical on a stage. I now choose to focus on the good things that bring me peace of mind. I started sharing my talent with people. When I sing I'm alive."

At the musical show, Michael had a special experience he shared with the audience. He says, "When I walked out onto the stage

with just a cane—you see, I used to use a wheelchair—I said to the crowd, 'Ladies and gentlemen, a miracle has just happened.' And I almost started to cry."

Michael and his musician friends will be putting on a second musical show soon, called "Heart and Soul." Michael says, "I can't believe this will be my second concert. It is a dream come true."

**Michael says. "I am so grateful to Landmark. They saved my life and continue to do so. I wanted to tell my story, because letting people know about Landmark could save another life."**