An Appreciation of Plastic Surgery

Some events stay with you for life—like the traumatic automobile accident that Alex Davis experienced over 40 years ago. The ordeal caused both physical and mental trauma. After the accident, she had nightmares, flashbacks and other PTSD symptoms. Alex’s physical injuries included a lacerated neck, a broken arm and pelvis, a kidney contusion and respiratory arrest.

Recovering after the accident, Alex was able to keep up with her busy life. She was a wife and mother, focused on raising four kids. She also worked to further her education and career as an RN, eventually moving up to Director of Home Health and the Community Care Network at WCH.

But Alex continued to carry her wounds for decades. She was self-conscious whenever someone asked about the scars on her neck and arm. She felt constant pain behind her ears that made her unable to sleep on her left side. Finally, she decided that enough was enough.

By May 2019, Alex knew she could trust WCH plastic surgeon, Dr. James Slaby, of Wooster Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, with the scars on her neck and head. Dr. Slaby did not disappoint. His skillful hands worked their magic, helping to heal both the physical and emotional scars.

Today, Alex says, “90 percent of the pain behind my ears is gone. I can sleep on both sides with no shooting pain.”

The outcome has allowed her to face life with newfound confidence. “I used to be very self-conscious of my scars,” she said. Now, the scar on her neck is healing nicely and fading every day, and now is barely noticeable.

Alex cannot say enough positive things about Dr. Slaby and WCH. “Dr. Slaby’s skill set is excellent,” she says. “He always makes you feel special, like you are his only patient. He is the only plastic surgeon I would ever let perform surgery on me.”

When most people think of plastic surgery, they think of “enhancing their appearance in a positive way,” said Dr. Slaby. “While that is certainly part of it, these surgeries often bring about a reduction in physical pain, as well. This was certainly the case with Alex.”

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One year later, a CT scan revealed that Dan was cancer-free. This may make it sound easy, but Dan says there were many dark moments and low-energy days. Dan credits his oncologist, Dr. Joseph Prah; Certified Nurse Practitioner Tyra Schlabach; his wife, Jenny, who was his rock; and Jesus, his Lord and Savior, for helping him through the experience.

“I never felt like a number at WCH and Wooster Cancer Care,” said Dan. “They were all so caring and thorough.” Jenny, an RN in Progressive Care, says she is grateful they could stay local for treatment. This allowed her to keep working while also helping care for Dan.

Now that it’s over, Dan has some advice for everyone. “Even if you feel good, get a colonoscopy. It’s not a death sentence anymore if you catch it early. I never thought I would be here telling this story.”

“If Dan’s cancer had gone undetected longer, it likely would have spread to the liver and decreased his likelihood of survival,” said Dr. Calabretta. “It is very important to start screening for colon cancer as soon as recommended.”

To schedule your screening colonoscopy call 330.202.5686.

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In addition to treating cosmetic issues, plastic surgeons perform “reconstructive surgeries as well, for patients who have sustained defects from traumatic injuries, congenital abnormalities and post-cancer resection deformities,” said Dr. Slaby.

Alex is glad she entrusted herself to Dr. Slaby and readily admits she had a positive experience with WCH in general. “All the nurses were so caring and helpful,” she says. Alex has worked at various medical establishments over the years and refers to Wooster Community Hospital as a “hidden gem.”

“You just receive a level of care here that you don’t at other facilities,” she says. She wants others to know that they don’t have to live with the emotional and physical discomfort of scars, either. “Go see Dr. Slaby and see what he can do to help you.”