



# Community Focus

Fall 2014



Community Care Network's  
**Efforts Change LIVES**

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*(L to R) Richard Ceko, CCN Patient with his family member, Trevor Hanna.*

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# Community Care Network's **Efforts Change LIVES**



*(L to R) Richard Ceko, CCN Patient with his family member, Trevor Hanna*

“Looking at our clients’ statistics, our daily monitoring and involvement has dropped readmissions by over 50%.” — Alex Davis

In Edmund Wu Shi’s (CCN Health Coach) own words, his first Community Care Network (CCN) patient was “a challenge.” In fact, at one point 70 year old Richard Ceko “wanted to quit on me and quit on the program,” said Edmund. “While it was a rough start, I had no intentions of giving up.” And both of them are glad he didn’t.

Today, Richard is healthier and more in charge of his life than he has been in a long time. In fact, this June he bought a fishing pole and got his fishing license and was able to enjoy one of his favorite hobbies again for the first time in eight years. “I like being outside in nature. It’s something I’ve looked forward to doing for a long time,” said Richard.

The program, which began last fall, connects College of Wooster healthcare students (Health Coaches) with Wooster Community Hospital patients. Last fall 30 students completed the classes and interacted with more than 50 patients. After a semester of didactic courses, Edmund was paired with Richard in February to act as his Health Coach. He met with him twice a week.

“Health Coaches focus on meaningful behavioral changes that become a part of life,” said Alex Davis, hospital manager for the CCN program. “They

help clients learn what does and does not work for them and help to put them on a path that is sustainable."When Edmund and Alex sat down with Richard to set goals, they found out that one of Richard's primary goals was to get healthy enough to go fishing again.

When Edmund started working with Richard on meeting some of these health goals, he found that Richard "never listened to other's advice." He felt like he was getting nowhere, so he determined to "put myself in his footsteps. I started to talk about things he enjoyed more such as movies and life hobbies, presenting myself less as a coach and more as just another person who was willing to listen. I noticed Richard slowly started to open up to me and we were building a good relationship.

"After that, I worked on his health concerns, tackling them one at a time and making sure Richard knew exactly what needed to be done." It was like peeling back layers on an onion.

Edmund noticed Richard wasn't taking his medication with regularity, so they got him a pill box. When he still wasn't taking them every day, Richard confessed he couldn't see the light on the pill box.

"It turns out he had cataracts," said Alex, "After cataract surgery, he was far more compliant," and a whole new world of vibrant colors opened up to him. They discovered other things about Richard as well. It wasn't that he didn't want to walk or exercise, he couldn't due to complications with his feet. "He had calluses on his toe and he wasn't wearing diabetic shoes," said Alex. "We took him to the WCH Wound Center where they removed his calluses and followed up with a podiatrist who cut his toenails and fitted him with diabetic shoes."

There were days when Richard didn't feel well, and it turned out he wasn't

watching his carbohydrates or sugar intake. Alex took him grocery shopping and showed him how to read labels. Richard still good naturedly ribs her for the "good pop" she poured down his drain.

They cleaned and painted his house, drained the dishwasher of a few inches of water and discovered he had black mold in his furnace room. They took him to get a shave and a haircut and new glasses. He spent a few weeks in a nursing home and learned to give himself insulin shots. In short, they taught him how to take care of himself.

"If I wasn't in the CCN program, I'd be dead by now. It's as simple as that," said

evident," said Edmund. "His health and overall attitude improved and he even enjoys seeing me now. He has become less of a patient and more of a second grandfather to me." From Dr. Ofori's standpoint, it was "nice to know I had an extra set of eyes and ears out there. A healthcare facilitator can pre-empt major issues and prevent needless readmissions. That is my goal, to make him feel better and live longer." Alex says Edmund and Richard's story is just one of many success stories the CCN program has experienced this past year. "Looking at our clients' statistics, our daily monitoring and involvement has dropped readmissions by over 50%."

**"As much as I've helped him (Richard), he has helped me as well,"**

— Edmund Wu Shi  
CCN Health Coach



Richard. "I didn't take care of myself and I didn't care. They helped me to care and get back on my feet."

Dr. Cyril Ofori, MD, who has been Richard's cardiologist for more than 12 years, agreed with Richard. "A year ago, his one year mortality rate was 50%. This program has extended his life." Richard was a good candidate for this program, said Dr. Ofori, because while his heart function was not worsening, "he was having more readmissions and was less able to take care of himself. He had multiple medical issues he was dealing with as well as social needs."

In Richard's case, the program worked just as hoped. "The improvement was

The program has been a success for the Health Coaches as well. "As much as I've helped him (Richard), he has helped me as well," said Edmund. "Overall, I feel like I helped him to be able to take care of himself efficiently, make better lifestyle choices and just be more open to others because he's usually lonely if I'm not around. I learned how to deal with patients from completely different socioeconomic backgrounds and I learned to never give up on any patient, because change doesn't occur overnight; sometimes, just having someone to talk to is the best medicine."