

SERVING ALL ADULTS.

September 2023

JuliAnn Merciez



Bartlesville Takes Care of its People.

Juli Merciez Hypoxic Brain Injury Story

That's how JuliAnn (Juli) Merciez views Elder Care's Foundation Therapy Specialists. She would know.

In 2019, Juli was admitted to the hospital for what she calls "a normal procedure." She expected to be released the next day. What transpired during the procedure left her husband asking the doctor, "Are you telling me my wife is brain dead?"

Juli had suffered a hypoxic event. For eight minutes, her brain was deprived of oxygen. During that time, her heart ceased pumping blood and she stopped breathing. Cardiac arrest. Twice.

The medical professional, wife, mother, and grandmother would survive, but as a changed woman. She would not resume the career she enjoyed. Her husband would become her caretaker. Her children would find their mother to be very different.

She was only fifty.

Juli says what happened to her felt like someone erased the whiteboard full of all her life's events and memories. Along with losing her memory, her sense of smell, vision, and balance were also affected. She needed immediate and long-term



intensive therapy: vision, speech, physical, and psychological. Recovery would be a way of life.

For the first year-and-half, Juli's sole and full-time job was getting therapy. She didn't go out in public, but she traveled 3-4 times a week from her home in Bartlesville to Tulsa for treatment.

AboutElderCare.org

1223 Swan Drive, Bartlesville, OK 74006

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**You give because you care.
We serve because you give.**

Though it was necessary in the beginning, how would commuting, nearly an hour in each direction, multiple times a week, for months on end impact Juli and her family's health and well-being? While Juli's therapy in Tulsa continued, the pursuit of a local source commenced.

A friend mentioned Foundation Therapy Specialists, a place that was, as Juli says, "right here in our



own backyard." The professionals at Elder Care's Foundation Therapy Specialists welcomed Juli with "kindness and a smile."

They started with speech therapy. Juli was still able to speak but had difficulty finding the right words. Instead of "cotton candy," she described the clouds as "something like the stuff you get at the carnival that they spin." Speech therapy helped her organize her thoughts in sequence. It also tapped into the skills she retained to devise workarounds to implement when

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she found herself at a loss. Juli continued to commute to Tulsa for visual therapy; but when such aid did not fully restore her sense of balance, she was referred to Elder Care.

When the visual therapy in Tulsa did not fully restore Juli's sense of balance, she was referred to Elder Care for physical therapy that focused on disorders of vestibular function. Juli can now navigate stairs without stumbling, close her eyes without feeling the world is spinning, and sit on a blue exercise ball without getting dizzy.

Four years after the hypoxic and cardiac events, Juli continues therapy part-time. She consults with her Elder Care team to help prepare for big social events and travel. She no longer mourns who she was but prefers to bolster confidence in who she is now. Her journey has been hard, painful, and at times lonely but Juli remains grateful for her faith, her family, and the community that takes care of its own.

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Foundation Therapy Program

In 2022, we saw our largest increase in utilization. Growth expected in 2023.

- Increased utilization in 2022 by 1,300 hours over 2021 - our clinic's highest utilization since its inception
- 10 employees
- 751 Outpatient therapy patients served (571 in 2021)
- 585 Physical Therapy patients served
- 62 Occupational Therapy patients served
- 74 Speech Therapy patients served (41 in 2021)
- 6,557 hours of Physical Therapy
- 449 hours of Speech Therapy
- 682 hours of Occupational Therapy
- 86 Independent After Care participants
- 96 PWR! Moves classes annualized
- 48 LOUD Crowd groups completed (39 in 2021)
- 48 Brain Builders participants annualized

Game-Changing programs.



For the aging adult in Oklahoma, there are a number of options for those caring for loved ones who have received an Alzheimer's or dementia diagnosis. For those who choose to care for their loved ones at home, having resources for in-home care makes all the difference in the world for the caregiver.

Since 1983, Elder Care has evolved with community need, making nearly unlimited resources available to those who need care.

Elder Care was conceived in response to the need to provide options for families caring for loved ones when choices were few.

Betty Sammer, Elder Care co-founder, recounts the early beginnings. "We witnessed aging adults slipping through the cracks in various ways," she said. "For those families, the only option was to place their loved one in a nursing home. The caregiver had little support for an in-home choice."

Providing choices catalyzed Elder Care's early DayBreak Adult Day Health & Activity Center and case management programs.

"These two programs were a game-changer for older adults."

"We sought to impact the elderly who needed more choices for coping with these difficult diseases. People wanted more options, and there was very little out there in terms of services for seniors. And the fact that we were willing to meet a need, regardless of how we needed to make it happen, was beneficial. In every situation, we asked, 'How do we do it?' Do we do it with volunteers? Or how will we meet this need?"

"The positive impact in our community was immediate and it continued over the years."

Today, in 2023, 12 full-time DayBreak employees serve 60 participants during the day.

Much like the '83 Daybreak Adult Day Health & Activity Center, our 2023 program provides care in a friendly environment but with expanded services: Monday through Friday, from 7:30 am - 5:30 pm.

Participants socialize with peers, participate in therapeutic art and exercise, receive healthy meals and snacks, are offered transportation if needed, enjoy outings and are engaged in stimulating cognitive activities and games.

DayBreak '23 has evolved with the needs in our community to provide care and services for the sophisticated aging adult. And we continue to be the voice for the family who desires choices.



Adult Day Health & Activity Center

2023 DayBreak Adult Day Health & Activity Center

- 59 participants
- 20,154 service hours
- 30% diagnosed with Alzheimer's or dementia
- 5% diagnosed with Parkinson's
- 45% in lower income
- 15% are Veterans
- Adult Day health is the most economical choice for long-term care (2019 Genworth Financial study)



CELEBRATING 40 YEARS.



SETTING NEW HEIGHTS

To commemorate 40 years, Elder Care is hosting a Giving Day & 40-year celebration fundraising breakfast on Saturday, November 11, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Tri-County Technology Event Center. Individual tickets are available for a limited time and sponsorships are available.

Jim Bridenstine, 13th NASA Administrator and former United States House of Representative from Oklahoma's First Congressional District will be the featured guest speaker during the fundraising breakfast.

Mr. Bridenstine also served as a pilot in the United States Navy, acquiring 1900 flight hours and 333 landings on an aircraft carrier. He flew combat missions in Afghanistan (2002) and Iraq (2003) off the *USS Abraham Lincoln*, where he earned an Air Medal and Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V." Originally an E-2C Hawkeye pilot, he transitioned to the F-18 Hornet and flew as an aggressor (Red Air) at the Naval Strike and Air Warfare Center, the parent command to TOPGUN.

Individual tickets for the light breakfast with general seating cost \$50 each, and \$75 each for reserved seating with commemorative merchandise. Tickets may be purchased online at AboutElderCare.org/breakfast or by calling (918) 336-8500. Call for event sponsorships.



FUNDRAISING MERCHANDISE



Celebration T-Shirts.
\$25 each or 2 for \$40

Proceeds benefit Elder Care's many programs



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Have Questions?

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Please consult a tax professional or financial advisor about your giving options.