

MR. LESLIE SHAW, JR. - VALIR PACE SUCCESS STORY



Mr. Leslie Shaw designed the concept for this year's participant t-shirt. How did he come up with the idea that he feels represents Valir PACE and the services it provides to its participants? His journey started in June, 2015 – Shaw was taking his daily three mile walk, but on this particular day he was unable to finish his walk. He continued with his normal routine, but later that day he was reaching for his remote control when he fell off the couch and couldn't get back up. Luckily, he was able to get to a phone and reach out for help, but his journey would just be starting.

Shaw had a stroke which left him unable to walk and his speech strained. For seventeen days he was in the hospital when he received word that he would be discharged due to his coverage end date. Leslie felt he was nowhere near ready to go home; he wasn't able to stand on his own and had serious concerns about how he was going to be able to live and

what quality of life he was going to have. He was given no options, but to be discharged from the hospital and work on his recovery on his own.

His limited options and inability to walk, or means to get much needed physical therapy, left Shaw depressed. With lots of time to think, but unable to remain active, Leslie developed a plan to end his life. He felt his quality of life was not there and did not feel he had other options, but luckily that all changed when he found Valir PACE. He said that on September 10th, ten days after enrolling in the Valir PACE program he abandoned all thoughts of ever cutting his life short.

Shaw says the first day or two was a little overwhelming at the PACE center, but on his third day he was wearing an OU Sooners shirt, and one of his now close friends shouted, "BOOMER" and being a faithful fan, he replied, "SOONER". He had found his new home and what have become lifelong friends.

Besides the friends he has made, Shaw is vocal about how much more PACE has done for him and others. In June, 2016 after many years of needing cataract surgery, he was able to have this much needed surgery through his PACE benefits. One of his friends from PACE decided they wanted to be there for him during that surgery, met him there, and drove him home following his surgery. That night, Mr. Shaw said he couldn't sleep. He felt like he was seeing things for the first time, so he watched TV all night long. He said, "I had no idea what they meant by 'high definition' TV before I had my surgery". Shaw said he will never forget going to the center the day after his surgery, hearing a voice and turning around to see their face for the first time. He knew them by their voice, but now was able to put a face to that voice.

It has been a long, but rewarding journey for Leslie Shaw. He says he hopes everyone can see themselves somewhere in the design he conceptualized for this year's shirt. He was in a wheelchair when he first came to Valir PACE, but he opted out of using a walker, working hard to move from his wheelchair to a cane. Mr. Shaw is known for setting goals, and is now working out three times a week on the elliptical machine in the PACE therapy gym. He shared that the "running man" on the shirt does not represent him, but represents the staff at Valir PACE and how they run to meet everyone's needs – every day for everyone, not just him.

Shaw is comfortable sharing his story – he believes he is still alive today because he found the PACE program and met "his people", both those he now calls best friends and the staff that have helped him along his journey. Mr. Shaw wished his dad had been able to find Valir PACE believing he would still be here with him today, if he had.

Leslie Shaw hopes that others will be inspired by his story and journey. He emphasized it has been critical for him to set goals for himself along the way. He has noted it is easy for someone to want to give up but noted, "if they set goals, have a positive attitude and let PACE help them, it will happen – make progress, not excuses".

Thank you Mr. Shaw for letting PACE take this journey with you and for sharing your design concept of how PACE helps people.

