

The Rest of the Story...

Steve Holmes

“My mother said I was born smiling and wheezing,” laughs Steve Holmes, age 81. “I have literally had asthma my entire life. I took medications, but nothing really kept things under control. I also battled constant respiratory infections, which of course, made things worse. In 2001, I had one that was really bad and was referred to Dr. Windt. Dr. Windt not only got me well, he put me on a treatment program that helped me get my infections under control. That, in turn, helped my asthma. The next step he recommended was getting me into a pulmonary rehab program. When I did that, my life began to change.”

Holmes was actually in pretty good physical shape, with the exception of his asthma. He had been a track and field coach and thought he knew how to stay fit, but quickly realized he had more to learn.

“Total fitness isn’t just about hopping on a treadmill,” he says. “There is a full spectrum of things you need to be doing in order to be in good condition overall. You need to look at cardiovascular fitness, but also at strength---especially at core strength, at flexibility, eating right and getting good sleep. If you don’t evaluate all of these things and make improvements, then you are missing a major component to good health. The pulmonary rehab program at CAARD addresses all of these elements and crafts a program just for you--and it works.”

Holmes works out regularly for cardio fitness, has a weekly strength-training regimen which includes core work to help support and strengthen his diaphragm, and does yoga-type stretches every day. He follows a sound nutrition plan and gets plenty of sleep. He feels great and is back coaching high school students at Phillips Exeter Academy in track and field, and is also competing in the master’s divisions of discus, shot put and javelin. In 2017, he became the USTAF (USA Track & Field) North American Champion in discus in his age group.

“I feel better than I have in many years,” he says. “I’m back doing things I never thought I would do again. I’m so grateful to have met Dr. Windt and embarked on the pulmonary rehab program. I’ve got my life back!”

Tracy Hall

“I’ve always had severe allergies,” says Tracy Hall, age 43. “And, I knew I had asthma but I never associated my fatigue with those conditions. I just kept thinking that I was out of shape. I’d be too tired to go hiking with friends, or play with the kids. Even just lugging the groceries in from the car was exhausting and made me feel like I couldn’t breathe. When I saw Dr. Windt, he immediately said that getting my allergies and asthma under control was important, but that pulmonary rehab would also make a difference. I had nothing to lose at that point, so I agreed to try the program.”

Within just a few weeks, Hall noticed a huge difference. “It was amazing,” she says. “I was doing things I didn’t know I could do. I had more endurance and I just started feeling better overall. By the end of the program, I wasn’t needing my inhaler anywhere near as much. I was a new person.”

Hall was also impressed by how learning new breathing techniques impacted her ability to breathe better. “Learning proper breathing techniques allowed me to breathe deeper and more efficiently, and helped me strengthen my lungs. I can now climb stairs, carry things, and be physically active with friends and family and not worry that I can’t keep up. When I came to Dr. Windt, I knew I needed to change my life. I have two kids and I want to be there for them and be able to enjoy activities with them, now I can.”

Before rehab, Hall just “popped a Benadryl and grabbed my inhaler” when her allergy or asthma symptoms flared. Now, with her allergies and asthma under control, and rehab completed, she’s ready for a new and more active life. “Pulmonary rehab was great for me because having the class held me accountable,” she says. “You are expected to show up and commit to the exercises. Everyone believes you will make progress and that encouragement is empowering. Then you start seeing the results and everything changes. You know you can have a different future, an active future, and that makes you feel great.”