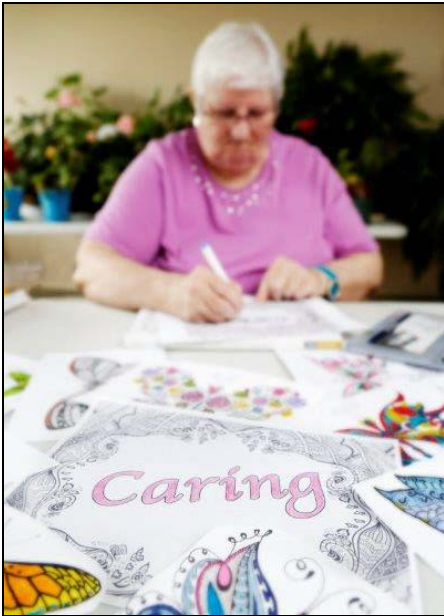


*"It was way, way beyond anything I had ever experienced, to take that much care and concern. You feel pretty secure..."*



Joan is a 72 year old widow who lives alone in a non-profit senior's complex with pain as her constant companion. But you'd never know it from her voice. She's quick to laugh and happy to talk. One of the things she loves to talk about, besides her writing and her crafts, is Langs. Matter of fact Joan admits that her 'raving about Langs' has resulted in at least four people in her building moving to its North Dumfries satellite Community Health Centre.

Joan is a survivor. Her medical issues are complex to say the least. She has fibromyalgia, osteoarthritis, diabetes, high blood pressure, and degenerative disc disease. She also suffers from depression and anxiety as a result of childhood trauma. Joan gets around with the help of a walker but standing for longer than five minutes is excruciating. She describes her fibromyalgia pain *"like a tooth ache that constantly moves around her body for no reason"*. Seven years ago Joan had her thyroid removed when Doctor's discovered thyroid cancer. She also had discs in her neck fused in an attempt to stem the pain from their degeneration but now the lower spine is affected as well.

Joan joined Langs just over five years ago on a friend's recommendation. She was pleasantly surprised to be asked to

an orientation meeting where staff provided an overview of the services the facility offered. She'd never experienced anything like it.

*"In many ways it's just a one stop kind of place. There have been days when I have gone in to see the doctor and somebody else has seen me come in and said 'come to my office when you're done' and then somebody else will say 'come and I'll do your blood work right now' and so they're aware of you as a person when you're there."*

Then four years ago Joan found a lump in her breast. The response at Langs was swift, efficient and as always, caring.

*"My doctor was on maternity leave when she got the results of the test that it was malignant and she actually came back into the office so she could tell me herself."* Joan says with wonder in her voice. *"And she said on the day of the surgery she would be in touch with me unless she was in labour. Well it just so happened she was."* Joan laughs. *"But she called every so often just to see how I was doing. To me that was way, way beyond anything I had ever experienced, to take that much care and concern. You feel pretty secure when you know that there's people around like that."*

Since her mastectomy Joan suffered additional medical complications so Langs arranged for a personal care worker to visit her once week. She has also receives home visits from her social worker Leanne.

*"For me it takes away a lot of the fear,"* explains Joan. *"I mean if I'm really struggling with something I get a lot of reassurance that they're going to do what they can."*

Today Joan is awaiting knee replacement surgery for both knees. She is also seeing a specialist for her lower back in the hopes that paralysis can be avoided. Through it all Joan maintains her optimism and her gratitude to Langs. She believes the Community Health Center has had a huge impact on her quality of life.

*"Oh I think my life would have been very different",* she says with conviction. *"I would probably go so far as to say I would not be living in my own apartment. I would have to be in a nursing home. I don't think I would have ever felt the sort of comfort level that I do with Langs"*