



# **Senior Renewal helps in journey back to active living**

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**ALTON** - Blanche Mager probably didn't realize it at the time, but now she knows that she had practically "given up" in late 2013.

“I wasn’t answering my phone and my daughter knew that something wasn’t right,” said Blanche, an Alton resident. “I was brought to the ER four times in two weeks. After that, I was placed on the Geropsych floor.”

Assisted living was considered as an option, but Blanche and her family decided not to give up her Alton apartment just yet. Instead, Blanche started attending sessions at the Center for Senior Renewal, located on the second floor of Alton Memorial Hospital’s Olin Wing.

“Before they discharged me, they brought me over here,” said Blanche, now 86 years old. “I just decided that whatever it takes to get well, I would do it.”

It’s an ongoing process, but Blanche has made great strides since then. Her frequency of visits has changed – sometimes as often as three times a week but sometimes only once. But her individual and group sessions with therapist Montana Brown have helped make Blanche one of the “stars” of Senior Renewal.

“Blanche is now probably our biggest cheerleader,” Brown said. “It is so nice to see how she interacts with a new person up here to make them feel comfortable about coming.”

Even at the age of 86, Blanche realizes it’s never too late to learn.

“I just didn’t realize I was so ignorant about depression,” she said. “They helped me to remember that it’s OK to make a mistake. And then I remembered that I used to knit all the time. But the problem was getting started. Now I knit all the time, including when I’m here. Everyone has to do something besides just sit around.

“Senior Renewal is wonderful. They have a van that picks me up at home and I always enjoy seeing everyone here. We laugh a lot, but we also get serious at times when it’s needed. Like a lot of people, I have trouble around the holidays, but my friends here help me with that, too.”

For more information about the Center for Senior Renewal at Alton Memorial Hospital, call 618-463-7895 or visit [www.altonmemorialhospital.org/Medical-Services/Senior-Care/Center-for-Senior-Renewal](http://www.altonmemorialhospital.org/Medical-Services/Senior-Care/Center-for-Senior-Renewal).

**Blanche Mager of Alton works on her knitting – an activity that has helped her a great deal since she began visiting the Center for Senior Renewal at Alton Memorial Hospital.**