

# Alton Memorial Hospital Nurse Recovers After Open Heart Surgery

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ALTON - Susie Young wishes it had only been a spell put on her by three witches as she and her family watched “Hocus Pocus 2” in her Godfrey home on Sept. 30, 2022.



She felt pain moving down her left arm and “felt like I was being choked.” Having worked at Alton Memorial Hospital for 19 years – first as a nurse on the Medical Care Unit and now in Case Management – Susie was brought to the AMH Emergency Department that Friday night and diagnosed with a heart attack.

“My husband, Jim, took my blood pressure right away at home and I’m sure I was still having the attack when the ambulance arrived,” Young said. “Dr. (Robert) Lutan, my hero, was here and ordered a cardiac cath for that Monday.”

The cardiac cath found five blockages to Young’s heart, which meant a snag had been hit in the family’s planned trip to Disney World starting Oct. 8. Most of them still went,

but her husband stayed home as Susie had open heart surgery on Oct. 7 (the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their first date) at Barnes Jewish Hospital, performed by Dr. Harold Roberts of Washington University Physicians.

Less than three months later, Susie was back working at Alton Memorial Hospital – grateful to her family and also her co-workers and friends for prayers and support during an uneasy time.

“I was in surgery for six hours,” Susie said. “And then I was at Barnes for four days. I was released from their ICU because they actually didn’t have staffing to put me on a patient floor. But then my daughter (Krista Arnott) was at home with me the whole time. She lives close by but she was able to do her job from home while helping me. My other daughter, Aimee Chester, also lives across the street and was also a big help.”

By the way, Aimee herself was born with three holes in her heart and had two open heart surgeries before the age of 3.

“We have matching scars,” Susie said with a laugh.

Susie said that she had no heart issues before last fall, although she does have diabetes and blood pressure issues, and had COVID-19 in 2021.

“Dr. Roberts did say that the COVID likely did a little damage to my heart,” she said. “The whole thing was quite a shock. I had home health come in for six weeks and then did cardiac rehab over at Christian Hospital three times a week for five weeks. That was a little rough at first, but I got a little stronger as time went on and I’m continuing to feel a little better all the time.”

Meanwhile, Susie is grateful to her Case Management co-workers at AMH, who provided an endless string of meals, gift cards, flowers, calls and text messages.

“Between my family, my work family and close friends, it’s all been great,” she said. “And someone donated PTO (vacation time) anonymously. I’ve been caring for patients here for 19 years, so it was nice to be on the receiving end.”

Susie and Jim have been married 35 years. Susie is a 1983 Jersey Community High School graduate and Jim is a 1983 Alton High School graduate. They have three children (daughters Krista and Aimee, and a son, Jimmy), two sons-in-law and five grandchildren.

Now maybe Susie will soon be able to make that trip to Disney World that she missed last fall. She just might skip any “Hocus Pocus” exhibits.



