

Clarence L. Foster, Jr. (JR) Appreciation

C.L. Foster, Jr. (J.R.) became a volunteer at Truman Medical Center Lakewood in 2004. J.R. is a car and motorcycle enthusiast, as well as a double amputee, and has become a valuable member of the Volunteer Services Department at TMC Lakewood. His appreciation for clients is remarkable. Though by many he would be considered handicapped, it has never stopped him from reaching out to assist others.

J.R. started as a volunteer doing repair and maintenance on wheelchairs, which is a great service to the hospital. He still spends every Thursday helping with that project.

J.R. deals cards every Monday morning and Friday afternoon for the "Men's Club" for a group of long-term care residents, and has organized a group of approximately 12-15 of them who go to a brunch outing a couple times a year (and also convinced his Rotary club to cover the tab). Andrew Hawkins, Recreational Therapy & Intergenerational Coordinator, commented, "The men love to joke with him, tell stories and talk about cars and life. It's actually quite therapeutic for our men, and J.R. is a valuable asset to our activities department.

His willingness to volunteer extends to whatever he sees that he can do that will save the hospital time and money. This summer he worked with the groundskeepers mowing large areas of hospital property as well as other facilities projects.

His current project is a vehicle mock-up for Rehabilitation Therapy. J.R. obtained the donation of a Chevy S-10 pick-up cab, and then talked a salvage lot into towing it to his house. He spent approximately 150 hours in his garage at home to rehab the vehicle and meet safety standards to complete this "work of heart" before it was moved to RT Dept. at TMC Lakewood this past April. He has great empathy for those who are physically challenged to learn how to transfer from a wheelchair to a vehicle, and is looking forward to helping other rehab patients. Vicki Ross, OTR/L, Director Rehabilitation Services, gives J.R. a lot of credit for his dedication to rehab patients. "His own trauma (a tragic accident) 25 years ago, enables him to do peer counseling for patients on the rehab unit who need a "you can do this, look at me" type of talk. He has an engaging, boisterous personality and a benevolent "can do" attitude and offers to do almost ANYTHING we need him to do," commented Vicki. "J.R. IS JUST TRULY AMAZING."