



For Immediate Release:

8-18-10

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CORE Health Care collaborates with Texas Star Recovery resulting in Successful Outcome for
"Tiger Lady"

Recently the admission department at CORE Health Care received a call about a woman that was currently receiving services at Texas Star Recovery. Brenda Bell had a significant history of abusing alcohol and had not been able to have long term success in substance abuse rehabilitation. The clinical team at Texas Star Recovery wondered if Brenda would benefit from Post Acute Brain Injury Rehabilitation at CORE. Upon evaluation it was discovered that in her past as a boxer, she had suffered multiple concussions resulting in cognitive deficits that had never been addressed in therapy. She was diagnosed with Dementia Pugilistica, caused by repetitive blows to the head over a long period of time.

Brenda holds a black belt in Chung Moo Doe martial arts and a 3rd Dan black belt in American Moo Duk Kwan-Tae Kwon Do. She fought in "Point" Karate in the 70's through the 90's and has won numerous events. She made the transition to professional boxing in her thirties and was nicknamed the "Tiger Lady." Brenda never fought as an amateur but went straight to pro competition and at one time she was ranked 4th in the World in her weight division. In 2001, she was named Women Boxing Archive Network's "Fighter of the Month" as they stated that she represents the elite of guts, determination, and fearlessness in women's boxing.

Brenda grew up in the San Marcos area and returned to the area after difficulties with confusion, disorientation, loss of memory, poor concentration, dizziness, and impaired balance forced her to retire from boxing. Unable to continue pursuing her passion, she became depressed and began to drink alcohol, breaking an 11 year sobriety. Her quality of life deteriorated as she often had poor judgment and impulsive behaviors with the constant threat of losing her job and her home.

Collaboration between the two facilities, and the love of her family brought her to CORE, giving her a second chance at rehabilitation and a successful life. Brenda was a resident at CORE for eight months where she received a multitude of therapies to help her increase her independence, maintain her health and safety, develop new vocational pursuits and promote continued sobriety.

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Brenda's rehabilitation was funded through the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services (CRS) program which helps Texans with traumatic spinal cord and brain injuries receive intensive therapies to increase independence. Brenda received speech, occupational, cognitive, physical, vocational and psychological therapies to address her deficits.

Since discharging from CORE, Brenda has experienced many successes. She is living in her own apartment and she is pursuing art as her new healthy passion. She has worked with publisher "Mel Coley", a spiritual writer/artist to sketch characters for his stories and has been involved in art exhibits throughout the Hill Country. Brenda graduated from the "Hands of Hope" course, a Christian Women's Job Corp, at the San Marcos Baptist Church where she experienced Bible study, academic skills and job readiness. She volunteers at the women's shelter and gives presentations at women's conferences. Brenda has developed a new blog, www.brendabell.org, where she writes of her journey since brain injury rehabilitation and her spiritual path to staying healthy. Additionally, she is working on a documentary of her life and will be returning to school in the Fall for a degree in Fine Arts.

Brenda states, "I retired from boxing and my new world is art. I am on a journey of change and enjoy hiking and walking along the way with God. I will continue to increase my faith and confidence, my strength and my courage is in the Lord. I can do all things through Christ, for I am the "Tiger Lady" strong and sure, I will continue to walk my path. I may no longer be in the boxing ring but I am in God's ring. The beginning of a new life, a new chapter. Sure, I had a lot of tears, rejections, joys, victories and just a lot of hard work. This is the first year to see myself actually growing mentally and physically strong. I am still weak to struggles and challenges along the way. My goal is to build myself mentally and physically to the fullest. I am a new species that God has created. I am the one to build true character. I am the one to take control of my emotions and health. I must reshape my daily experiences of life. It is a must that I discipline myself. I no longer have to self destruct since I do respect my body as the highest, I must believe that I am choosing a new behavior pattern being true to self as a woman of strength. I learned at brain rehab about Plasticity. I am motivated for my brain's plasticity to change to a positive outcome."

Located in Dripping Springs, TX, CORE Health Care provides post-acute brain injury rehabilitation and long-term care for individuals with brain injuries, complex psychiatric disorders, autism or other special needs

Texas Star Recovery offers in-patient and outpatient detox and substance abuse rehabilitation program for adults who are chemically dependent in Austin, TX.

For More Information on the DARS Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services program, contact:
1-800-628-5115 or DARS.Inquiries@dars.state.tx.us