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## Pains and gains

Rehab center's new designation aids cancer patients' physical recovery



Dick Butler, left, watches his wife, Claysil Gibson Butler, undergo occupational therapy with Katie Roof on Tuesday at Rehabilitation Services of Craig. Claysil was diagnosed with a brain tumor two years ago and uses the therapy sessions to improve her physical well being. Rehab Services recently was accredited and certified as a Center of Excellence for Cancer Rehabilitation, making it one of the only centers of its kind on the Western Slope. [Enlarge photo](#) — Photo by [Hans Hallgren](#)

The brain tumor — or “the big mean one” — was diagnosed Aug. 5, 2006. Subsequent radiation and chemotherapy treatments paralyzed her left leg, arm and side of her mouth, and left her depressed and fearful of what possibly lay ahead.

But, there Claysil Gibson Butler was Tuesday morning, well past the four months doctors estimated she had to live, continuing the fight to improve her physical well being and attitude in the face of America's second-leading cause of death.

Cancer.

The “big mean one.”

“Come on, lefty,” the 71-year-old Moffat County resident said as she struggled to her feet. “Come on, lefty, get it up. Come on boy, walk. You can do it. Come on, lefty, go.”

Katie Roof, an occupational therapist at Rehabilitation Services of Craig, helped Claysil rise to her feet. On this day, Roof gently nurtured Claysil through one of her three, one-hour therapy sessions per week.

They sat for a time as Roof massaged and prodded Claysil’s arm and leg. Then it was time to move, time to get the blood flowing. Time to command her leg to do what it was meant to.

They headed toward a workstation about 10 feet away, where an ironing board was set up.

Claysil wanted Roof to guide her through a session on how to work on household chores with her physical limitations.

Claysil struggled, but she remained undeterred.

“Attitude,” Claysil’s husband, Dick Butler, said, as he watched his wife navigate the exercise. “It’s the one thing we can control. It’s the only thing we can control.”

He pointed to a one-page sheet.

The words on the sheet, said Dick, 73, himself a prostate cancer survivor, are what he and his wife live by.

It’s a work written by Charles Swindoll, an evangelical Christian pastor, author and educator. Appropriately, the work is titled “Attitude,” and is one of two Rehab Services uses to keep patients hopeful and motivated.

“You see how hard it is for her to walk,” Dick said. “But she walks. She ain’t going to quit.”

## ‘We can provide hope’

Helping people like Claysil and Dick is motivation enough for the staff at Rehab Services, owner and athletic trainer Jeff Pleasant said. He’s a lifelong Moffat County resident and he’s seen “too many people, too many friends” die from cancer.

“If you saw some of the cancer (patients) we treat, you’d understand,” Pleasant said. “There is passion and compassion (from us). We can provide hope, and that’s as human as it gets.”

For the past year, Pleasant and his eight-member staff have laid the groundwork for earning the business in downtown Craig a Center of Excellence for Cancer Rehabilitation designation.

That diligence paid off Tuesday when Rehab Services received its certification through Mountain Land Rehabilitation, an organization with various offices between Las Vegas and Salt Lake City.

Using structured exercise sessions two to three times a week, the program provides treatment for recently diagnosed cancer patients, or “others who have not achieved the quality of life they desire following their chemo and/or radiation treatments,” according to the Mountain Land Rehabilitation Web site.

“The primary function,” said Roger Campbell, Mountain Land Rehabilitation Program Director, “is to restore physical, social and emotional independence.

“Its focus is on quality of life.”

The program has been proven to reduce cancer patients’ anxiety, depression, social isolation and has earned endorsements from the American College of Sports Medicine and the American Cancer Society, Campbell said.

“What we’re trying to do,” Campbell said of program patients, “is give them back their life.”

“We’re not treating cancer,” Pleasant said. “The cancer is still there. We’re trying to improve the quality of life. We try to look at the whole person, really.”

Rehab Services new designation makes it the only center of its kind on the Western Slope, Pleasant said.

“We’re going to be the only one between Salt Lake and Denver,” he said.

Campbell said Pleasant and his staff are “visionary” in implementing the program in Moffat County. It will serve patients from “as far away as they want to come,” he said.

“This is a vision they’ve hailed for some time,” Campbell said.

## Sold on the program

Claysil, for one, is sold on the Rehab Services’ program.

Since she began physical and occupational therapy two years ago, her demeanor has improved, as well as her physical condition.

She still has trace amounts of cancer — August 10 marks two years since doctors were able to remove a walnut-sized portion, or 90 percent of the tumor — but she testifies as to how much the treatment at Rehab Services has improved her life.

Her left arm still is useless and it takes willpower and barked orders to get her left leg going, but she said she’s far better off with the treatment than without it.

“I can get up and down a lot better,” she said. “I can walk a bit.

“It’s been a tremendous boost. After coming here, I go home feeling 100 percent better. These people can boost you right up.”

She and Dick are no strangers to cancer, and they advocate on behalf of finding a cure.

The couple, who live about 14 miles northwest of Craig on the Butler ranch, make bluebird houses and sell them for \$20 each.

Proceeds benefit the American Cancer Society, which they also supported during the Craig Relay for Life event earlier this summer. They estimated they've sold 75 to 100 of the houses.

"We're trying," Dick said. "Maybe we can help someone down the road who is going through this."

And with that, Claysil got back to work on her rehab, pushing past the difficulty and grinding through another exercise tailored to improve her life. She followed up Dick's comment about not quitting with one of her own.

"No, I'm not going to quit," she says. "These people won't let me quit."

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### *Motivational works*

Below are two motivational works Rehabilitation Services of Craig uses in helping the cancer patients it treats:

"What Cancer Cannot Do"

Cancer is so limited ...

It cannot cripple Love

It cannot shatter Hope

It cannot corrode Faith

It cannot destroy Peace

It cannot kill Friendship

It cannot suppress Memories

It cannot silence Courage

It cannot invade the Soul

It cannot steal eternal Life

It cannot conquer the Spirit

Love, Laugh, Hope, Dream, Believe!

“Attitude” by Charles Swindoll

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important that the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do.

“It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company ... a church ... a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past ... we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10 percent what happens to me and 90 percent how I react to it. And so it is with you ... we are in charge of our attitudes