

2002 Branson reunion

Wilma Hood

The 2002 Branson reunion was our first to attend. My name is Wilma Hood and my husband's name is Fred.....Yes, like the Flintstones.....Wilma and Fred.

I started having PPS problems around 1995, although not knowing that was what was wrong. At first I got to where I couldn't walk as far and found myself resting more often. I also got to staying home more. In 1999 I finally got myself an electric scooter so that I could go to parks, the zoo etc. I was finally able to go places again but I felt more comfortable going out of our town to the parks etc. where I had less of a chance running into someone I knew. After getting used to it a little I decided to go to the shopping mall but prayed that I would see anyone I knew. If I did and they hadn't seen me I would go a different direction and hide behind racks.

I had been searching the internet about PPS and in 2002 joined a group but within two days told them to take me off their list. It was a large group and I didn't have time for all the e-mails I was getting. Another lady (Sue) joined the same time I did and I e-mailed her privately and said I would like to keep in touch with her but that I was dropping out of the group. I wanted to find a support group and she had heard about the Branson Reunion so I wrote them and joined their group.

I was asking if anyone knew of any support groups in the St. Louis area and that's when Toni answered me and told me about one that her and Jack were going to in March that year I believe it was. Well I was so excited I was finally finding a support group close enough that I could go. Toni bless her heart gave me the directions to the location and since I didn't know Toni very well I wasn't aware that she gets her right and left directions mixed up. As they were driving to the meeting she realized that she had told me the wrong direction to turn and she was a nervous wreck all the way because she thought we wouldn't find it and of course she didn't know our cell phone number. She had told us the name of the church that it was at so we finally found it and she was so relieved to see us. She had been sending poor Jack outside every few minutes to see if we were there. Although it was a very small group I enjoyed it and was looking forward to going every month and then it disbanded and never had another meeting.

Anyway we arranged to go to Branson and I told Fred that if we didn't like it we could just stay for one day. Well when we arrived we were met with open arms and it seemed like we were really accepted. I was finally at a place that I felt so comfortable using my scooter. I knew that I was going to like the group but was a little concerned about my husband fitting in with them but he seemed to be enjoying it as much as I was. In fact we stayed an extra day to go to Kathy and Charlie's house on Monday.

I enjoyed the speaker's and the meetings that we had so much. Ann Post held our survivor meeting and I got so much from that listening to everyone tell about their experiences. I now knew that I was not the only one having problems and concerns. I remember Ann saying that it was hard for her at first too but she finally decided when she went out with her scooter she held her head high, smiled at everyone and found that it didn't matter who saw her. I came home with so much determination that I was going to do just that. But when I got back home without the support of my Branson buddies I

started staying home like I use to and finally one day I made up my mind that this is it I'm going to the mall. I was hoping I wouldn't see anyone I knew but the minute I got in there I saw a lady from work. I saw her coming towards me so instead of turning the other way I smiled and we started talking. I saw three more people I knew and I thought, this isn't so bad, Ann was right. I was finally comfortable enough to go out in public.

We had so much fun at that reunion that we didn't want it to end. Fred said he had a good time but I thought.....did he really. Well the next reunion Fred was packing a week before the reunion he was so excited to go again.

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