

First SJJ visit made lasting impression: www.jessaminejournal.com

By Rhonda Dragomir
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I knew it would happen some time. I've driven by the Saint Joseph-Jessamine facility several times, thankful that I hadn't needed to explore the hallways. But sooner or later, I knew I'd have to drive in.

I have what my father used to call the crud. The crud has traveled from my sinuses to my ears, and the latest arrival after a two-month journey is in my lungs. I only wonder what took it so long. I sound like a broken vacuum cleaner when I inhale.

Concerned, my gentle physician sent me for an X-ray at SJJ to rule out anything more exotic, like pneumonia. Surprisingly, there were only a few cars in the parking lot, a good sign when one doesn't want to make a simple outing to the hospital into a camping trip. Even so, a little smidgen of dread accompanied me on my walk into the building.

I needn't have worried. Both doors labeled "registration" were closed, understandable on a holiday when the staff was light. Instead I entered the door labeled "office" to find a very friendly and sympathetic staffer who checked me in, even though I don't think it is usually his job.

His friendly banter even lifted my spirits a little. He ushered me through secured doors and advised me to wait for the X-ray technician. A friendly, "I hope you feel better soon" was his farewell, and I believe he meant it.

I was the only one there, and in lieu of magazines (my only complaint - no home decorating magazines) I drank in the atmosphere of the new building. Clean - yes that's expected in a hospital. Warm and inviting - I didn't expect. The comfortable chair and original art made it feel more like a hotel lobby than a hospital.

Soon enough, the X-ray tech arrived, and her first question was, "How long have you been waiting?" I was floored. I've never been asked that question before in a hospital. It seems most health institutions expect patients to know that waiting is just a part of the package.

I replied that it had only been about ten minutes, and still she was apologetic. I followed her down a few well-lit hallways, and in a flash we were done. Before I left she handed me a yellow card with pre-paid postage, encouraging me to let the hospital know what kind of service I had received. She walked me out to the lobby, wished me well, and disappeared behind the closing doors.

Imagine my surprise the next day to receive a phone call, asking for feedback on my visit. The caller even asked the names of anyone who had been especially helpful. I gave my glowing report, impressed that SJJ seems to genuinely care about providing quality health care. I was truly impressed, and proud that my community has the advantage of access to such a nice facility with such kind people.

Two days later, a note arrived by mail. "Sure hope you get to feeling better, Rhonda!" The note was hand written by my X-ray tech. "It was very nice to meet you. Come see us again if you need more X-rays!" I appreciate her sentiment, and I hope she won't mind if it takes awhile for me to take advantage of her offer. At least I have the comfort of knowing that if I do need emergency care, it will be available, friendly and nearby.

It's interesting that such a small gesture made such a big improvement in my mood. My husband is truly grateful.

Now if I can just beat the crud.