

# 'I've regained full independence.'

## — Larry Berle, Courage Center client

Diagnosis: Traumatic brain injury; broken clavicle; frozen shoulder

Age when connected with Courage Center: 59

When treated: 2006

Services received: Occupational therapy; physical therapy; speech therapy;  
Courage Center at Home program

Gains made in independence: Return to full independence physically and mentally

Some people simply exude positive energy. They get things done, and they inspire others around them to do the same.

That's Larry Berle. He owned SRO Productions, a successful Minneapolis-based company that specialized in concert promotion, event management and CD compilations for radio stations. Andy Williams, Tony Bennett, George Winston, Yanni, B.B. King, James Taylor, Bill Cosby and Sinbad were among his many recording artist clients.

Berle sold SRO in 2004, and two years later, the energetic 59-year-old had nearly completed his first book, *A Golfer's Dream*, describing his successful quest to play *Golf Digest's* top 100 golf courses in the world. Abruptly, a near-fatal bicycling accident interrupted his plans.

Suddenly Berle's world was filled with words like "traumatic brain injury," "hematoma," "broken collarbone," "frozen shoulder with restricted range of motion." But Berle couldn't hear them: he was in a medically-induced coma for two weeks while a portion of his skull was removed to accommodate the massive swelling of his brain.

After the swelling subsided, Berle's skull was put back in place. As it mended, he was slowly brought out of his coma, but was kept still to allow unhindered healing. As his ability to think began to sharpen, "that's when my real work began," he recalls. "Rehab became my focus."

Berle spent the next four weeks at the Miland E. Knapp Rehabilitation Center in Hennepin County Medical Center, an acute rehabilitation program. While there, he learned of Courage Center and its programs.

"Hearing about Courage Center's at Home program was a blessing!" he says. "I could continue my rehab work at home without requiring anyone to drive me to therapy appointments."

For the next four months, Berle, with the support of his wife, Annie, worked diligently at their home with their team of visiting Courage Center therapists trained in occupational, physical and speech therapies.

"The team's physical therapist worked on my balance and strength so I could get back to walking with stamina," he explains. "But when she first observed the condition of my broken clavicle bone and extremely limited range of motion in my frozen shoulder, she immediately put her

‘professional ego’ aside and called in a shoulder expert. My shoulder would not be functional today if it had not been for her excellent professional judgment.”

Don MacLennan, previously with Courage Center, was the Berle therapy team’s occupational therapist. The two men have become good friends; in a recent e-mail, MacLennan reminds Berle: “You do all the work; I just take the credit. And I firmly believe that – about you doing the work, I mean.”

Today, three years after his accident, Berle is physically back in the saddle – “a stationary bike saddle, not a road bike anymore,” he smiles – and he’s back to playing golf, swimming and hiking.

And his mental prowess? “I had been completing a book when my accident occurred,” he says. “Afterward, I thought completing it was totally out of the question. But the Courage Center at Home team of therapists helped me focus, identify my goals, put together a plan to achieve them, and execute the plan. They helped me realize my dream of completing and publishing my first book, *A Golfer’s Dream*.”

Berle credits his family and friends, too, with supplying the love and support he needed to accomplish his recovery. “They were all there for me,” he says, “my wife, Annie, my friends – even my cat, Porkchop.”

The future looks bright for Berle and his family. “I plan on seeing other parts of the world, participating in more golf travel writing, and doing more volunteer work for things I care about.” A broad smile spreads across the face of a man who knows how fortunate he is. “I’ve regained full independence.”

**For more information about the Courage Center at Home program or any of Courage Center’s many programs and services tailored to meet specific client needs, go to [www.CourageCenter.org](http://www.CourageCenter.org) or call 763-588-0811. For more information about Larry Berle and his book, *A Golfer’s Dream*, go to [www.golfersdreambook.com](http://www.golfersdreambook.com).**