



Bright Light Foundation

Rudy P. Ledet

2011 BLF Recipient



My wife, oldest daughter and I decided to drive to the New Orleans French Quarter on a Sunday morning to just relax and take in the sights. We were having a good time just walking through the Quarter. After having lunch at my daughter's favorite restaurant, Masparo's Café, I felt nauseated and did not want to stay any longer.

After we left New Orleans, my feeling was not getting any better. I came to believe that I had food poisoning. We continued toward home and had to stop along the way because I was

feeling worse. A good friend stopped to check to see if Kandra needed help, but then insisted I go to the hospital after seeing me in my condition.

We stopped at Raceland (St. Anne) Hospital, and after initial thoughts I was having a heart attack, doctors concluded my pancreas was causing my sickness.

I was then transported to Thibodaux General Hospital to be closer to my family doctor, Dr. Thomas Greg Chaisson. After two weeks of observation, Dr. Chaisson and the surgeon recommended moving me to Ochsner Hospital in New Orleans, as any action they took would be simply experimental.

The doctors and staff at Ochsner made me as comfortable as possible for the next six weeks. My wife Kandra, mother Shirley, father Tookie and brother-in-law Frank stayed with me every night. After two weeks, doctors removed my gall bladder and a portion of my pancreas.

My hospital stay lasted eight weeks, in which I lost 50 pounds and much strength. During rehabilitation, family and friends continued to encourage me that I would get better. In these eight weeks, I lost employment, so my wife and father had to travel to Shreveport to clear out my work apartment by the end of the month.

My parents helped me financially for the two months while I was out of work. On the advice of a good friend, I took a position at a lower pay rate, but I was finally out and working. Although I still had bandages from the surgery and a drain tube through my belly for the next eight months, I was not one to lie around, full of pity.