



August 21, 2020

New Direction

Ella Nobles turns COVID-19 experience into way to help others

One sunny day in May, Ella Nobles woke up and got dressed to go to work at Nacogdoches Memorial, just as she had every week day for the past 30 years. When the administrative executive assistant sprayed on some perfume, she realized she couldn't smell the fragrance. Later she was surprised to realize that she couldn't taste her breakfast either.

After alerting the chief nursing officer and immediately getting tested, Ella went home to quarantine for what she assumed would be a couple of weeks, her mind full of thoughts of her children, their love and concern and her own trepidation at possibly dealing with a "virus that even the doctors don't know much about."

Days passed and positive COVID-19 test results came back.

"I was overwhelmed with fear," Ella admitted, "but I held tight to my faith and belief in the word of God. 2 Timothy 1:7 tells us that God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind."

Over the next weeks, Ella says her walk with God was put to the test because she kept hearing about the fatal outcome for others in the world. "Knowing family and other acquaintances that did not survive the virus was heart-breaking. Fear and anxiety plagued me at night which increased my difficulty breathing," she recalled. "The feelings of loneliness from the isolation were the worst - not being able to see my loved ones or feel the simple embrace of a hug."

When the time to retest arrived, Ella was all ready to jump back into her life. First thing she wanted to do was see her kids. With one negative result under her belt, all she needed was one more negative test before she could get her "normal" back. But Ella's path wasn't going to take the normal route. Her second retest came back positive for COVID-19 and Ella was crushed.

"I won't lie, because my plans were crushed, my spirit grew weak. I couldn't believe that I wasn't yet done with the COVID-19 fight. As the days and nights grew longer, my symptoms returned and my body was tired," she said. "All I had was my faith in God and my family and friends' encouragement to stay strong. I know that God makes no mistakes and I feel like I was chosen to go through this for a reason."

Ella decided that making it through meant she was supposed to help other people through it too. How that would look became clearer when a friend called and asked her to donate convalescent plasma to help him recover from the virus. She was eager to help and reached out to the Gulf Coast Blood Center for guidance.

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Ella's experience continued...

This was such a new endeavor that the research process took a couple of weeks, so she wasn't able to help her friend who recovered on his own, but the conversation started the ball rolling. She ended up at the East Texas Blood Center, donating her plasma to literally help others fight the fight with her antibodies.

"This week, I got the best text message telling me that my donation was used to save the life of someone who is fighting for their life against COVID -19," she said, with delight. "Isn't that something?"

Ella is scheduled to donate convalescent plasma again this weekend and plans to do so repeatedly as long as she has antibodies, which could be up to six months. The medical experts are still learning the ins and outs and afterwards of this virus, so there's no way for her to know exactly how long she can continue.

The process of collecting the plasma takes about 45 minutes and a finger prick is all it takes to see if you have the antibodies. Ella said she was a little tired after her donation, but otherwise felt no ill effects.

"The Bible says 'I shall live and not die and by His stripes, I am healed,'" said Ella. That message resonates even more for her now. "If you are like me and have made it to the other side of this virus, by the grace of God join me in helping save lives by donating plasma."

Memorial hosts another successful blood drive

Thank you all who donated and attempted to donate at our quarterly blood drive last week. According to the blood center, we had 17 successful donations with 20 products, meaning 60 lives were saved. Every successful donor received a coupon for Blue Bell ice cream as part of the blood center's summer promotion. Donors were also tested for coronavirus antibodies, which means even more people were impacted by this batch of donations. The next blood drive will be in October, so watch for details.

Retirement will be a song for Kathy Gordon

Kathy Gordon dedicated the last five years of her accounting career to working hard for our Nacogdoches Memorial Professional Group. Now she intends to delve fulltime into her long-time hobby, songwriting.

Kathy, pictured third from left, recently competed in a songwriting contest sponsored by the Texas Music Hall of Fame. She placed in the top ten songwriters in a field of over 700 entries in the Christian music category. She is excitedly looking forward to the November songwriting extravaganza to see if she actually won the competition. Cross your fingers for our retiring songbird!



Let Healthy Wage help you shed 'COVID 15'

Get ready to shed the "COVID 15" in the \$10,000 Team Challenge from HealthyWage!

The 12-week statewide weight loss challenge pits teams of five against each other, competing to lose the highest percentage of weight to win over \$18,000 in total prizes. The challenge starts on Sept. 18, so start getting your teams together and stay tuned for more details on how to sign up.



A heart-felt thanks from a patient's loved one

"Thank you to the doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals who cared for my husband, Volker Gobel, from 8/20-8/29 at your facility. A special thank you to the nurse Marti, for her compassion and kindness. I am deeply grateful for all you do!"

- Sincerely,

~Marti Gobel