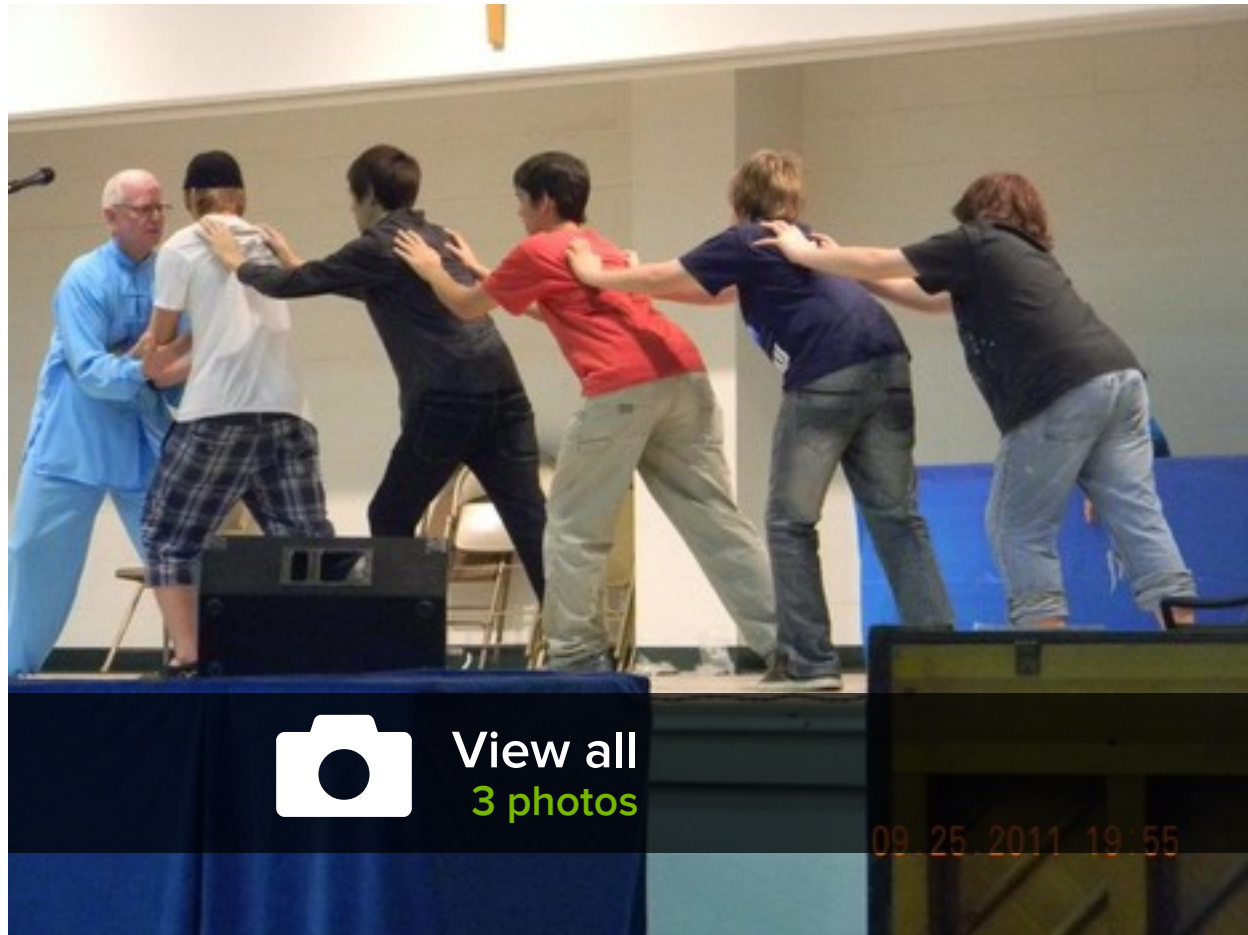


A lonely walker

July 26, 2012

4:38 PM MST



Rick Fife (in blue) was pushed by five teenagers.

TKA Academy

In a hallway at [the Advance Acupuncture Center](#) in Fleming Island, FL, a walker sits in a corner quietly. Occasionally, people push it out of the way. Most of the time, it just sits there by itself. But if it could talk, it would tell you amazing stories.



Violet Li

The walker used to belong to Richard (Rick) Fife, 65, of Jacksonville, FL. In 2001, Rick carried a heavy couch down stairs. He tripped and fell on his back. That accident totally threw his back out. He received therapies and injections. But the pain did not go away. In May 2002, Rick got a back fusion, a bioengineered bone-growth product used in spinal surgery. Rick said it was great for two months. Afterwards, the pain came back and grew worse than ever. The doctors admitted that he probably should never have gotten that surgery. His condition was unbearable. He could not walk on his own without using a walker. He became disabled and could not work. He was confined to his bed and a couch. He seldom went out except for doctor's appointments.

His pain was so severe that he was on 9 different pain medications and a morphine pump, which was implanted inside his upper abdominal wall to deliver very small quantities of morphine directly to the spinal fluid. The walker accompanied Rick in and out of hospital seven times to have a pump implanted and replaced. Sometimes the pump leaked and Rick and the walker would go to a hospital four or five times a year to have the pump fixed. The walker witnessed Rick suffer from bad constipation, stomach GERD and serious heartburn and acid reflex, depression, diabetics, anxiety, neuropathy, Angina pectoris or chest pain and worse-off epilepsy from the pain medicines. In 2009, Rick's overdosed body could not take it anymore and collapsed and became unconscious in the doctor's office when they were trying a new medicine on him. Sometimes he was too weak to use the walker. He would use a motorized wheelchair then.

Rick's son, a bronze medal honoree from his military service, told him the great results he got from [acupuncture](#) treatment. Rick called the Advance Acupuncture Center's and asked to be seen soon. The receptionist Rachael was able to move the appointments around and fit him in on Oct 11, 2010. Rick

remember vividly that he came in at 11:30 a.m. and around 12:15 p.m. when Kam Lee, Acupuncture Physician, put the last needle on his right big toe, all of a sudden, he had a euphoric feeling and his pain was totally gone from the bottom of his feet to the top of his head. He walked out of the Center and rested the walker in the trunk. A couple of weeks later, he walked into the VA hospital with his walker like he used to be. In front of his doctors, he pushed the walker away and shocked them. Later, Rick gave Dr. Lee the walker as a souvenir.

Since he was chair-bound for so long, Rick had the urge to exercise to regain his old strength back. Dr. Lee is also a [Tai Chi](#) master, 12th generation of Chen Style Tai Chi Inheritor under Grandmaster Zhu Tiancai and the founder of [Taiji Kungfu Academy \(TKA\)](#). Tai Chi is known for relieving pain and a great whole-body exercise to promote Qi and blood circulation. At Dr. Lee's advice and special instruction, Rick started to study Tai Chi with TKA's head instructor, Charles Macabasco, on October 26, or 14 days after the treatment. Charles said that Rick was a little wobbly at the beginning. But the more practice he had, the stronger Rick got. At the beginning, Rick took two classes each week and practiced the other days on his own. "He is determined," commented Charles. Now Rick is taking Tai Chi lessons every day in addition to his own practice. Rick would practice the 74 movements Chen Style Old Frame Routine One ten times in a day. Sometimes, he practices four hours each day at home.

Nine months after his acupuncture treatment, Rick participated in the [ICMAC](#) tournament and won a silver medal for a Tai Chi form in July last year. Rick has studied a few Tai Chi forms and Push Hands, which is his favorite. One time at his church, he let five kids push him and another time he had three grown-ups totaling about 650 lbs. push him. His rooting was solid and they could not push him away. Last December, he attended [USAWKF](#) tournament and won a gold medal in a form in and a bronze in Push Hands. Rick attributed his power to Charles's training: rooting and 200 squats each day.

While Rick was getting stronger each day, both of his eyes stopped seeing late last year due to long-time eye micro degeneration. Eye doctors told him that they were sorry but they could not revive his eyesight. It was devastating. According to Rick, it felt worse than the back pain he had. It was a huge blow to him after he felt re-born with Lee's pain treatment. He sank back into depression. Then, he discussed the eye problem with Dr. Lee. Lee applied a few needles around his eyes. In ten minutes, Rick's eyes gained clarity and were able to see again. The walker sat quietly watching Rick sob for 45 minutes out of excitement and gratitude.

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