

For Immediate Release

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A Story of Compassion, Community, and Care: St. Joseph's Hospital Infusion Center Patient Finds Family, Support, and Hope

At WVU Medicine St. Joseph's Hospital, healing often extends beyond medicine - and few stories illustrate that more powerfully than that of Infusion Center patient Roger Leary.

Born deaf and given two birth certificates under the name *Baby Boy Leary*, Roger's life began with uncertainty and hardship. As a child, he was left on a rural property in Coalton, where a family took him in and named him Roger - the first place he would ever know as home. After his caretakers passed away, Roger faced additional hardships and years of instability, always carrying with him the pull of Coalton, the only place where he had ever felt he belonged.

Years later, that pull led him back - and to Jim and Pat Rossi.

The Rossis had recently purchased land in Coalton - the very property where Roger had grown up. While attending a church dinner, they learned about Roger's story and his desire to return home. Without hesitation, they welcomed him into their lives.

"We bought the property 20 years ago," the Rossis often say, "and Roger came with it." What followed was not just care, but family.

Over the years, Jim and Pat Rossi have surrounded Roger with unwavering love and support - providing him with a tiny home on their land built by the Wood Tech Center, transportation, hunting trips, meals out, and help with medical appointments. They've celebrated holidays together, including a memorable Christmas surprise when they dressed as Santa and gifted Roger a riding lawn mower. Above all, they've given him something priceless: belonging.

In December 2025, the Rossis brought Roger to St. Joseph's Hospital for a scheduled colonoscopy with Dr. Long. It was during that visit that Roger received a life-changing diagnosis - colon cancer.

Today, Roger receives treatment every two weeks in the hospital's Infusion Center, accompanied faithfully by Jim and Pat. Their presence, positivity, and deep bond have become a familiar and uplifting part of the Infusion Center experience.

"Our infusion nurses genuinely look forward to seeing Roger and the Rossis every time they come in," said Kellie Strawder, RN, BSN, Infusion Center nurse at WVU Medicine St. Joseph's Hospital. "They bring so much positivity, gratitude, and encouragement with them. Their love and support for Roger is evident, and it truly uplifts our entire team and the other patients in the Infusion Center."

In addition to the Rossis, Roger also receives ongoing support from the Coalton community - neighbors and friends who have embraced him and rallied around him throughout his treatment journey.

At St. Joseph's Hospital, Roger's story is a powerful reminder that healthcare is about more than treating illness - it is about caring for the whole person and recognizing the strength that comes from compassion, connection, and community.

As Roger continues his fight, he does so surrounded by family - both chosen and found - and by a care team honored to walk alongside him.

–WVU MEDICINE–

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Pictured left to right: Isabella Nieves, RN, BSN; Jim & Pat Rossi; Kellie Strawder, RN, BSN; Shawna Robinson, MA; Tera Shreve, RN, BSN; seated – Roger Leary.