

# NEXUS CHAMPION

# SUZIE HUMBIRD



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Suzie Humbird contracted COVID-19 on the job as a surgical unit charge nurse. Categorized as severe, she was life flighted from Huntsville Memorial Hospital to San Antonio Methodist where she was placed on ECMO and mechanical ventilation, since she was in respiratory failure.

After a month and a half stay in the hospital, Suzie discharged to an inpatient rehabilitation facility before transitioning Nexus Neurorecovery Center's 26-acre post-acute rehabilitation campus. Suzie explained, "The first place didn't do much for me. They always used a lift to get me out of bed and into a chair, but that was the extent of the therapy they offered me. At Nexus, they worked with me to strengthen my muscles and taught me how to move for myself."

Suzie admits progress was slow, but that the physical and occupational therapy at Nexus helped her go from being wheelchair bound to walking without assistance in just three months.

Nexus physical therapist Julie Grimes explained, "The therapeutic programming day helped Suzie regain skills she needed to be successful both at home and as she returned to work. Individuals rehabilitating after COVID like Suzie also benefit from our community re-entry program. This helps them process and navigate new equipment, like oxygen tanks, in a safe, nurturing environment."

"All the Nexus therapists were fantastic," said Suzie. "After being in a bed for so long, I was extremely weak and had issues walking. They helped me build strength, muscle control, and endurance. They also helped me practice showering and dressing, doing the laundry, setting a budget for my new apartment, and other things I would need to do on my own once I left."

As a tenured healthcare professional of over 30 years, it was also important the vocational department work with Suzie on her journey to return to work. Her goal was finding a meaningful and productive role in healthcare. Therapists helped Suzie complete applications, schedule appointments, and complete virtual interviews. She also participated in counseling to prepare her for life after discharge and adjust to her new career path.

Suzie discharged at the beginning of 2021. She celebrated by ringing the discharge bell for the whole campus to hear. Nexus Director of Rehabilitative Services Charmé Jonker said, "Suzie's willingness to keep going was inspiring. She always stayed positive and focused on her goals."

"The therapy at Nexus has prepared me to get back out there," said Suzie. "They helped me meet my goals and I wouldn't be where I am today. I'm excited to be moving soon to be closer to family and starting my new job."

In fact, Suzie is about to start a new career with the Public Health Department, giving COVID vaccinations of all things!

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MENDING MINDS.